Distance parenting: The views of domestic workers and their partners in the eThekwini metro

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This is to all the women in my life:

My grandmother Patricia Nogwaali Bolofo (MaB)

My grandmother Mabel Mamgolo Tsiloane

My mother Nthabiseng Seepamore

My daughters Nandi, Ayanda, and Mbali Tshabalala

ABSTRACT

The separation of children from their parents is widespread in South Africa, more so in Black families where a majority of parents have historically lived far from their children (Montgomery, Hosegood, Busza & Timæus, 2006). This study was designed to understand how men and women parented their children whom they did not live with. I was interested in how they negotiated parenting from a distance, and what implications this had for themselves, their children and caregivers. The study also aimed at understanding the meanings attached to parenthood against dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood. Informed by critical social work, I used an interview guide to gather data through in-depth individual interviews and focus group discussions with the participants who were domestic workers employed and living in central Durban, in the eThekwini metro. Of the 33 females and 7 males who participated in the study, only one couple, who lived separately from each other took part. The inclusion criterion was that participants be domestic workers with children who were not co-resident for a minimum period of one year. Thematic analysis and critical discourse analysis constituted the basis of the analysis of the data.

Despite distance parenting being widespread and normalised in many rural communities, the findings indicated that parents wanted to live with their children and raise them. The challenges in recruiting men to participate in a study, which they perceived as dealing with "women's issues", is in itself, telling. The few men who participated supported my initial assumption that men and women parent differently. While women were more nurturing and emotionally close to their children, men tended to construct responsible parenting in monetary terms. Mothers depended on *othermothers* in the community to care for their children, and despite distance, these mothers reconstructed mothering practices to suit their reality. Distance did not necessarily affect fatherhood which was defined along dominant hegemonic masculinities, but put pressure on men to be providers even when they were employed in the low income sector of domestic work. The study also showed the resourcefulness of domestic workers, and how they developed social protection systems for themselves, and their children and families. Finally, the study showed the agency of domestic workers, and that power between domestic workers and their employers is not unilateral, nor one directional as is always thought; workers are able to assert themselves, and meet their needs even in this ultra-exploitative and oppressive employment sector. Based on the study findings and the literature, policy and practice recommendations, and recommendations for further research are made.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background

There is no doubt that global forces continue to impinge on the families who have to continue developing ingenious survival strategies to cope with "convulsed economic transition", poverty, underemployment, and increased consumption needs (Pantea, 2011, p. 379). Feminised labour migration has become a critical survival strategy for families worldwide. The absence of parents is felt even more when women migrate, taking their unpaid labour with them. In this study I investigated an area that is usually overlooked especially in Black African[1] households where children are frequently left in the care of others (Cock, 1980; Hall & Sambu, 2017).

Meeting the developmental, socioemotional and physical needs of children is challenging, more so when this role is enacted from a distance, and through a substitute parent. Children present with different life tasks as they grow, thus requiring parents or caregivers to respond accordingly. Various factors facilitate or hinder the relationship between parents and their children, and the responsibility lies predominantly with mothers to keep the relationship close. With widespread poverty, and some government encouragement (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002), women in the Global South leave their children behind to work in more affluent countries, or more affluent areas within countries, and so parent from a distance. Leaving children behind, in the care of a proxy parent is common in many developing countries (Boccagni, 2012; Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Parreñas, 2001).

Circular migration from rural to urban areas is entrenched as labour migrants continue having a 'base' in the home of origin where they return periodically during the year after lengthy periods of absence, especially in the Black, rural communities (Hosegood, Vanneste, & Timæus, 2004; Posel, 2010). The potentially detrimental effect of this on the social, emotional and physical development of the child, and between children and their parents is undisputable (Boccagni, 2012; Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Parreñas, 2008; Van Breda, 1999). This study aimed to understand how structural factors impinge on family functioning and relationships, particularly when parents undertake their roles from a spatial distance. The focus on the study

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[1] I use Black and African interchangeably to refer to the population group classified as Black according to the Population Registration Act Repeal Act, 114 (1991).

was not on people who are divorced or separated, but on those who would have been staying with their children if circumstances did not force them to migrate to places of employment. They live separately from their children, and have made arrangements for the daily care of their children through substitute caregivers such as relatives.

1.2   Rationale for the study

It is paradoxical that in order to improve the quality of their lives and to remain as intact families, parents and children are forced to live apart. With the need to meet consumption demands (Pantea, 2011) and mitigate against the cost of living, parents are forced to migrate to places of employment, often leaving their children with substitute carers. The focus of this study was on distance parenting, where parents leave their children behind in the care of relatives, friends or paid caregivers. It is against this backdrop that I asked what impact mothering and fathering from afar has on the individuals and their children, especially in a milieu where distance parenting has been normalised for most African communities. Most rural communities have normalised the phenomenon of distance parenting and see it as almost inevitable that children will be raised by grandparents and other relatives while their parents go to work in the urban areas. The danger of living in a society where taken-for-granted assumptions abound, is that they become ingrained, normalised, and invisible (Sewpaul, 2013) thus the parenting aspects of domestic labour may be over-looked as a focus of sociological investigation.

Various studies tend to focus on the effects of male migration on families (Ramphele, 1989), but not particularly on parenting from a distance. Those studies focused on female migration, also tend to do so from a perspective of their working conditions (Ally, 2009; Meyiwa, 2012), in relation to men (Parreñas, 2008) either in support of their partners or in terms of numbers employed in certain occupational categories, or in relation to other social problems such as HIV/AIDS and poverty (Dinat & Peberdy, 2007), informal trading (Nwonu, 2010), living conditions, but not as parents. This study was motivated by the lack of investigation into the effects of in-country migration on parenting. Further, studies on males and parenting tend to be focused on access to children for unmarried or separated parents (Langa, 2010; Nduna & Jewkes, 2011) or how parents, especially fathers, may have legal access to their children. Seldom is the focus on fathers who are still with their partners and their contribution to parenting when the fathers or both parents live far from the children. Local migration is historical and entrenched in South Africa (Bennett, Hosegood, Newell, & McGrath, 2014;

Posel, 2010). The effects of parenting from afar in relation to a generally marginalised group of people - domestic workers - is crucial.

Domestic workers are people who work as housekeepers, gardeners, nannies and domestic drivers, and they are recognised by the Labour Relations Act, 1997 as formally employed persons. Sectoral Determination 7 (Domestic Workers, 2002) (SD7) regulates the remuneration of full time domestic workers, who work over 27 ordinary hours per month for the same employer, and their remuneration rate is reviewed annually. Their working conditions, remuneration, leave entitlements, and the termination of employment process (Mbatha, 2003) is regulated by law, and it protects independent workers and those who are employed by employment services to do gardening in private homes, or look after children, the sick or elderly and people with disabilities. This implies that both men and women are legally protected although women dominate this sector. But the actual practice tells a different story with many domestic workers remaining unregistered, and therefore unprotected by the legal provisions.

It is estimated that just over 1 million people are domestic workers in South Africa according to the Labour Force Survey (2018) which shows that private households employ nearly 900 000 people, of whom a majority are women. Since colonial rule in South Africa, women have historically been employed in domestic service as servants, wet nurses, seamstresses or child rearers, while men were butlers and cooks (Gaitskell, Kimble, Maconachie, Unterhalter, 1983). The nature of domestic work, being regarded as women's work in private households perpetuates their invisibility and value in society (Bosch & McLeod, 2015; Donald & Mahlatji, 2006; Fish, 2006;). As a result of low or no skills required to carry out domestic work, it continues to be a point of entry into the workforce for many women throughout the world.

This study focused on a group of people- domestic workers who have historically been prevented from living with their families in their places of employment. In a society such as South Africa with high levels of poverty, for many people with low levels of education and skills, entry into the workforce is through low-paid work, which tends to be in the domestic work sector. The nature of domestic employment is such that employees stay on the employer's property, in "the backroom". Much has been written about the domestic worker's backroom (Cock, 1980; Gaitskell, 1983; Ginsburg, 2000; Preston-Whyte, 1969) which is often unsuitable for occupation by more than one person. Because this backroom is located on the employer's

premises, there are usually strict rules and conditions which regulate who has access to the backroom, with random searches being carried out at any time.

Even after the scrapping of influx control laws, domestic workers are still not able to reside with their families in their quarters. In addition, the conditions of employment of domestic workers prevent them from seeing their children often as they work long hours or for a number of employers in order to earn more money (Blaauw & Bothma, 2010). While some workers are able to stay with their children on their employers premises or in rented urban accommodation, a majority can only see them periodically, some on weekends, monthly or after a few months. For those whose children stay in the rural areas or long distances away, face-to-face interaction may only be possible a few times per year, for very short periods of time. Parents therefore depend on substitute caregivers for their children.

1.3   Problem statement

Studies focused on the parenting experiences of migrant domestic workers are concentrated in the Asian and Latin American countries (Boccagni, 2012; Huang & Yeoh, 2007; Illanes, 2010; Pantea, 2011; Parreñas, 2001), whereas studies in African countries have tended to focus on the working conditions of domestic workers (Ally, 2011; Hansen, 1990; Magwaza, 2011; Miles, 1996a; Tsikata, 2011). The aim of this study was to delve into the understudied area of parenting from a distance for low wage workers - domestic workers. Parenting involves the provision of physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development of a child from infancy to adulthood, is affected by the cultural context within which the family is located, parents' own experiences of parenting, and the resources and support at their disposal to carry out parental responsibilities (Hoff, Laursen, Tardiff & Bornstein, 2002; McNeely & Barber, 2010).

It is undisputable that parenting is physically, emotionally and financially demanding, and it is even more strenuous for those who do not co-reside with their children. The experiences of parents who do not reside with their children have been studied in other parts of the Global South (Hosegood, et al., 2004 ; Posel, 2010; Zontini, 2010). In South Africa, the impact of distance children of migrant workers has been studied, however there is paucity in the study of domestic workers and parenting. This study aimed to understand the nuanced meanings of parenting in women and men who typically leave their children behind in order to provide for them. Despite this phenomenon being common in the Black community, its prevalence has also normalised it. Leaving children behind has been a norm since the colonial times, and through

apartheid-era policies of segregation, living in homelands, influx control policies and accommodation arrangements have led to split families.

The participants were drawn from a segment of the population which usually do not reside with their children. This sector is feminized and depends on the labour of women whose reproductive role in society is synonymous with childcare. Even in instances where both parents do not co-reside with their children, women continue to be burdened with caregiving (Parreñas, 2002). Where biological mothers are unable to care for their children, other female relatives tend to step in and take over the nurturing of children (Boccagni, 2012; Carling, Menjívar & Schmalzbauer, 2012; Hall & Sambu, 2017; Mokomane, 2014; Pantea, 2011).

The irony of domestic employment is that these women usually take care of other people's children while their own children are left behind. Although the dissonance in caring for others while their own children are in the care of others may be overwhelming, most of these women have very little choice. They need the resources to care for their children, and they also need to ensure that the day-to-day emotional needs of their children are met. This is not a uniquely South African trend, but an international phenomenon (Isaksen, Devi & Hoschild, 2008). The practice of parents leaving their children to go and work in far off place, and in turn having to find substitute caregivers for their own children is ironical, yet a reality for many parents living in poor communities.

I was particularly interested in understanding how domestic workers negotiate parenting when they do not co-reside with their children and how they make sense of their parenting when the dominant constructions of what it is to be a 'good' mother or father is framed in terms of spatial closeness and co-residence. Because domestic work almost always involves childcare, I wanted to understand how they reconciled leaving their children in the care of others, while they took care of other people's children. This is a marginalized population whose work often means having to choose between co-residence with their children or leaving them in order to earn a living to support them, a choice that many parents are forced to make.

Finally, this study adds value to knowledge by using a different theoretical perspective to understand distance parenting. It also highlights the intersection of 'race', class and gender in parenting, within the South African context. Domestic workers are a marginalised group whose parenting practices, usually from a distance, are normalised for them ad not for other parents in the wider South African population. Normalising discourses maintain the status quo, and taken-for-granted practices are not challenged if the voices of the marginalised remain muted.

From a critical social work framework, this study was to understand the experiences of domestic workers from their own perspectives, as told by them.

1.4   Anticipated value of the study

The structural factors contributing to remote parenting are discussed with the aim of understanding impact on the family, children and caregivers. It is anticipated that this study will enhance the implementation of family-friendly policies in general, as well as workplace-related legislation. The conditions of employment for those living far from home, such as domestic workers have the scope to be more facilitative and supportive of parent-child interaction. It is further anticipated that the findings from this study will shed light on how parents negotiate and enact their roles within the wider societal constructs of "good parents" when they do not reside with their children.

The methodology of critical discourse analysis enabled a critique of both intensive and *othermothering*, with the former being normalised for those in the middle and upper class strata, and the latter for those in lower classes, which in the South African context highlights the intersection of race, class and gender. While presented as dichotomous in the literature, these, as the results of this study show, constitute parallel and competing discourses. It is also expected that the feminisation of parenting may be reduced as a result of discussions/interviews with men so that they take on a more nurturing role in parenting their children, and feed into growing national discourses that call for the more active role of men in parenting.

It is further anticipated that this study will add value to the sociological body of knowledge in relation to parenting, social work practice and challenge the taken-for-granted societal norms which continue to marginalise those who do not fit within dominant scripts, and challenge inequalities brought about by the intersection of factors which individuals cannot control such as gender, 'race' and social class.

1.5   Context of the study

This study was located in the eThekwini Municipality of Kwa Zulu Natal in South Africa. Statistics South Africa (Statistics SA, 2017a) estimates the mid-year population of South Africa is 57.7 million. Approximately half of the population (about 29.5 million people) are female, and the rest is male. The largest share of the population with approximately 14.7 million people (or 2.4%) live in Gauteng, followed by KwaZulu-Natal with about 11.4 million people (or 19.7%). About 4.9 million people are younger than 15 years, and they make almost a third (29.5%) of the total population. About 21.1% of children live in Gauteng, followed by

KwaZulu-Natal with 21% of those aged 15 years and under living in this province. Those over 60 years of age make about 8.5% (or 4.89 million) of the population. Children's statistics show that a majority of South African children under the age of 18 years, about 2,1 million (or 35.5%) lived with their mothers but not with their fathers, and only 3.8% (or 231 000) resided only with their fathers (Meintjes, Hall & Sambu, 2015). A further 1.8 million (31.6%) of children under 18 years live with both parents, and 29% (1.73 million) of children in South Africa do not live with either parent for various reasons, some of which are "historic population control, labour migration, poverty, housing and educational opportunities" (Meintjes *et al.*, 2015, p. 102). It is remarkable that in the poorest households (those living below the poverty line of R991 per person per month in 2015), only 19% of them lived with both biological parents.

A breakdown by population group shows that "less than one third (29%) of Black children live with both their parents, while the vast majority of Indian and White children (84% and 77% respectively) reside with both biological parents" (Meintjes *et al.*, 2015, p. 103). In the Black population group only 42% of children lived with their mothers, and about 4% with their fathers, both parents were absent but alive and living elsewhere. Black children were more likely to live in poorer households, headed by a woman. I wanted to find out where the parents were living, and with whom? Who was taking care of their children and what were the arrangements for caregiving? Rural-urban migration is linked to poverty in this province and as more people migrate to the city, they send remittances frequently to their families in the rural areas (Posel, 2010). The high rates of migrants to metropolitan areas are attracted by the infrastructure, services, development and the high probability of finding employment, or in the case of foreign migrant domestic workers – competent wages (Makoro, 2015; Kiwanuka, Jinnah & Hartman-Pickerill, 2015).In line with the aim of the study, critical theory was used. Issues of oppression at the personal, cultural and structural levels necessitated a theory that would bring these issues to the fore. The study was qualitative in nature in order to understand phenomena from the participants' points of view (Henning, 2004) by interviewing both male and female participants in order to understand the views of both gender.

1.6   Research aim and objectives

Adopting the lens of critical theory, the main aim of the study was to understand the structural factors that impact the family, the meanings attached to parenthood, and how parental roles are enacted from a distance.

1.6.1   The specific objectives were to:

- Investigate the factors that contributed to participants' decision to separate from their children.
- Understand participants' views about distance parenting, and the consequences of parenting from afar for themselves, their children and significant others.
- Explore how parenting roles and responsibilities were negotiated between parents, their children and caregivers.
- Examine the meanings attached to parenthood vis-à-vis dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood.

1.7   Theoretical framework

This study was underpinned by critical theory, which is in line with the social work values of social justice. Whether it is referred to as radical, feminist, structural, emancipatory, anti-oppressive, postmodern or postcolonial, it is concerned with deconstructing taken-for-granted assumptions of the world and examining their relationship with social structures (Humphries, 2008). The intersection of social criteria such as 'race', gender and social class affects beliefs, societal practices, and one's position in society. Domination is structural, and thrives on the exploitation of one group by another, and also through the internalisation of false consciousness, or self-defeating, self-oppressive beliefs (Fook, 2003; Freire, 1970; 1973; Gramsci, 1971).

Critical social work, with its focus on the impact of the existing social arrangements that contribute to inequality across and within groups, emphasises emancipation and social change (Dominelli, 2002; Fook, 2016; Mullaly, 2010; Sewpaul, 2013). It is inextricably linked to postmodernism, as it questions the location of truth and power, and it seeks to understand the sources of oppression, and how social criteria such as 'race', class and gender intersect to influence access to power, status and resources (Sewpaul, 2013). In critical discourse, the aim is to understand the meanings attached to underlying explanations, and to scrutinise how ways of thinking are constructed, enacted and expressed within and across contexts and by different players. Critical social work believes in allowing for difference, and not to see the world in binary and dichotomous terms. It valorises multiple truths, different ways of knowing, and contesting, competing and dialectical discourses.

This study focused on parenting and how it is affected by structural factors and dominant societal discourses. Parents are part of society and their ability to parent, the best way they can,

is determined by their situated-ness and subject location (Fook, 2016). Critical theory sees meanings as context-dependent and socially constructed (Weedon, 1987). Meanings are constantly reconstituted depending on context, for instance how ideal or good parenting is defined, which does influence self-conceptualisation. The "expression of an idea may carry certain associations of 'badness' or 'goodness which may produce particular effects" (Fook, 2016, p. 17). The focus on the location of social phenomena in their historical, and political contexts, rendered critical social work an appropriate theoretical framework for this study. Because it is usually women who parent children, while men tend to play a marginal role in the South African context, women are often the subject of parenting discourses. This, in itself, might further marginalise the role of men as fathers, as dominant societal discourses relegate them to more peripheral roles in relation to their children, thus reflecting a circular, dialectical relationship between structure and agency (Sewpaul, 2013).

The dominant and most acceptable way of raising children rests mainly on co-residence, selflessly meeting the needs of children and guiding them as they navigate life tasks. The participants in the study were part of a marginal group, whose parenting generally remains outside the dominant discourse. The intersection of various factors oppresses them, through their 'race' (Black), gender (women) and social class (working class, poor) and as parents who are non-resident. Sewpaul (2013, p. 119) acknowledged the subordination of Black women, but warned that as "class and context do mitigate this subordination, that we should not essentialise the experiences of all Black women."

Critical research rests on what Harvey (1990) described as critical-dialectic in that it draws attention to the way social reality is shaped by power, and also analyses subjective and objective realities, and how they influence each other (Humpries, 2008; Fook, 2003). Power cannot be given; it is something attained by one group, and it is not a commodity that can be transferred (Fook, 2016). She warned of the pitfalls of empowerment in that there is a danger of people empowering others to fit into the dominant discourse, which is usually along the lines of White patriarchy that controls the world. Leonard (1997) gave the example of Western capitalism attempting to homogenise the world despite the existence of different cultures, beliefs and histories. The tendency to valorise and universalise dominant voices, to the exclusion and discrimination of others, marginalises them and keeps their voices submerged. Because all groups have their strengths, it is important to consider who is empowered and what this empowerment means. Sewpaul and Larsen (2014, p. 238) conceptualised social/community work as empowerment, which:

"from a critical and radical and perspective has, as its key thrust, consciousness raising by engaging people in reflexive dialogue and activities to understand the sources of oppression and/or privilege on their lives, and in doing so increasing people's hope, self-esteem and creative potential to confront oppressive power dynamics and structural sources of injustices."

The above coheres with the Global Definition of Social Work, adopted by the IASSW and IFSW in 2014 and the Global Social Work Statement of Ethical Principles (IASSW, 2018) - both underscored by critical, postcolonial paradigms - that emphasize working *with*, rather than for people. This paradigmatic shift divests social work from its conservative-liberal stands, challenges the notion of social worker as expert, supports participatory approaches wherein people become the agents of change and development, and links the personal and political (IASSW, 2014; IASSW, 2018; Sewpaul & Larsen, 2014), with an emphasis on the self as the cite of politicisation (Sewpaul, 2015). Such an approach holds the potential to minimise the potential pitfalls of empowerment that Fook (2016) warned of.

Young (1990) discussed the five faces of oppression, which are exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural domination and violence. Exploitation constitute social processes whereby the dominant group accumulates power, status and assets from the energy and labour of a subordinate group such as women or people of colour. Marginalisation is where people are permanently confined to the margins of society, and the labour market cannot, or will not, accommodate them. Powerlessness consists of inhibitions against the development of one's capacities, a lack of decision-making power in one's working life and exposure to disrespectful treatment because of the status one occupies such as being a domestic worker. It is perhaps cultural imperialism which critical social work seeks to deconstruct, where dominant groups universalise their experience and culture and use them as the norm. Dominant group projects its experience and culture as representatives of all humanity, and those who are different, are thus seen as deviant, and this may be based on social criteria like ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and nationality (Sewpaul, 2013; Sim, 2012). Finally, Young (1990) presented the idea of violence which is suffered by oppressed groups. Systematic violence includes harassment, ridicule, intimidation, and stigmatisation, and it can be both personal and structural.

The labelling of a group as powerless has the potential to disempower them (Fook, 2016). Mullaly (2010) added that when a group hears so much negativity about self, they begin to

internalise this and reinforce dominant stereotypes. This process of 'inferiorisation' (Moreau & Leonard, 1989) and internalisation of oppression (Freire, 1970; 1973) maintain people in powerless positions. It may manifest in a variety of ways such as fatalism, or mimesis where the oppressed mimic or imitate behaviours and attitudes of the dominant group to gain slightly more privileged status or to be given authority over others of similar group. This is often seen with those who are oppressed being the harshest critics of others in the same group. These dynamics are clearly elucidated by Frantz Fanon, an eminent post-colonial writer in his seminal texts *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967) and The *Wretched of the Earth* (1963), and by Freire (1970; 1973) who discussed the dynamics of inferiority/superiority, the internalization of oppression, and the complex relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor. People can simultaneously be both perpetrators and victims; oppressed and the oppressor, and we must not lose sight of the agency that people possess (Sewpaul, 2013).

In line with Foucault's (1978) argument on the complexity and dynamic nature of power, Sewpaul, Osthus and Mhone (2014, p. 109) cautioned that power should not only be perceived negatively, and that it can be "used constructively and positively in the interests of people who we engage with." They drew on their experiences of working with children living in the streets of Durban, South Africa. They also reflected on the need to constantly be aware of their privileged positions as professionals, interacting with a marginalised group in society, and the need to promote authentic participation in research and community projects.

Difference is often seen to imply inequality, but the critical social work theoretical standpoint sees this as an opportunity for multiple perspectives to be recognised, and has the potential to redefine marginalised groups in empowering ways (Fook, 2016) by legitimating their experiences, as was demonstrated by Sewpaul *et al*. (2014) and Sewpaul, Ntini, Mkhize, & Zandamela, (2015). Domestic workers are often perceived to be powerless in relation to their employers. The subject location of domestic workers who are normally working class, Black women is lower than that of their employers, who tend to be White, middle class women. The binary oppositional relations between the powerful and powerless, often place them in less powerful positions.

The need for conscientisation of the oppressed is a Freirean concept used to alert people of the structural sources of their personal problems. Sewpaul (2013) argued that the conscientisation of people about hegemonic control of consciousness (Freire, 1970; 1973; Gramsci 1971) has the potential to disrupt dominant thinking and lead to their emancipation. The focus is on an

awakening to the external forces of their domination, and for people not to blame themselves, but to see alternatives and to act on them. People, Sewpaul (2013) argued, are not passive victims of society's control elements. Equally important to critical theory is the recognition and undoing of external sources of privilege (Dyer, 2003; Pease, 2010; Sewpaul, 2013). This approach is affirmed in the Global Definition of Social Work (2014):

> "The development of critical consciousness through reflecting on structural sources of oppression and/or privilege, on the basis of criteria such as 'race', class, language, religion, gender, disability, culture and sexual orientation, and developing action strategies towards addressing structural and personal barriers are central to emancipatory practice where the goals are the empowerment and liberation of people. In solidarity with those who are disadvantaged, the profession strives to alleviate poverty, liberate the vulnerable and oppressed, and promote social inclusion and social cohesion."

Drawing on the interpretations and theorization around the experiences of the participants in this study and existing literature, I conclude this study with recommendations underscored by the critical theory.

1.8   Definition of terms

Distance parenting refers to parents who do not co-reside with their children. In some studies (Liu, Sun, Zhang, Wang, & Guo, 2010, p. 32) the term "absent migrant parents" is used, or "migrant parent" (Boccagni, 2012, p. 261), but I have used the term distance parents. Long distance intimacy (Parreñas, 2001, 2005) or distance parenting (Cooksey & Craig, 1998) refers to parents (usually mothers) who do not share the same residence with their children for prolonged periods of time. It implies both spatial and temporal distance. These are parents who are separated from their children because they work far from home.

Domestic workers are people who work as housekeepers, gardeners, nannies, domestic drivers, who are independent workers and those working for employment services to do gardening in private homes, or look after children, the sick or elderly and people with disabilities (Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1997). They are both male and female and may also be employed through agencies.

Intensive mothering (Hays, 1996), also referred to as essential motherhood (DiQuinzio, 1999) is the ideal type of mothering which requires a selfless, ever present and available mother who

puts the needs of her children above her own. It is also the standard against which good mothering is measured.

Othermothering refers to the care for all children as if they are their own in community-based childcare systems comprising networks of family members, neighbours, friends or paid caregivers. They may be real or fictive kin, and contribute to co-operative childcare. Their role is central in the care of children, and for socialisation, reproduction and consumption (Collins, 1994). Their role ensures that there is central care of children which is not confined to biological mothers.

Part-time domestic workers are those employees who works less than 27 hours per week for the same employer (Matjeke, Viljoen & Blaauw, 2012).

Sectoral determination 7: domestic work – this is the sector specific legislation passed in 2002, operating under the Labour Relations Act (1997). It defines domestic workers as formally employed persons, and it regulates the remuneration of full time domestic workers, who work over 27 ordinary hours per week for the same employer. The working conditions, remuneration, leave entitlements, and the termination of employment process (Mbatha, 2003) for domestic workers are defined under this legislation. South Africa ratified the International Labour Organisation (ILO) Convention 189: Decent work for domestic workers in 2013, making it one of the 25 countries globally to have ratified this convention.

Social fathers. The concept of social fathers is an ascribed role, which sometimes confers status (Swartz & Bhana, 2009). These are men who provide financial and social support not only to their biological children, but to others who may or may not be kin. They can be grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, brothers, and other men who may perform various father-related roles for the children who reside with them or are in their care.

1.9   Outline of chapters

In this **first chapter,** I introduce the topic and outline the rationale and value of the study. I also introduced critical theory as the conceptual framework guiding this study. The brief literature in this chapter suggests that the phenomenon of distance parenting is imposed on women, and is not a choice. Those from rural areas are more affected by poverty and inequality, which makes distance parenting more prevalent in the Black community, than in any other population group in South Africa. I conceptualise ideas and concepts essential to this study, and I present the aim and objectives of the study which seek to understand how parenting is enacted from a distance.

Chapter 2 is a review of the literature and seeks to frame families, and the socio-political factors that impinge on them. In this chapter it is clear that migration and living in split families is a worldwide phenomenon affecting communities in the Global South that send workers to countries in the Global North, they care for others while their children are left behind in the care of others, forming care chains. I also outline a brief history of migration and the impact on families in South Africa. I outline caregiving arrangements and argue for the upward valorisation of women's work in the household.

 In **chapter 3** I focus on parenting and how it is historically and socio-culturally shaped including the dominant constructions of what parenting means, different parenting typologies, and parenting from a distance. Various studies have been undertaken in terms of parenting and they have influenced how parenting is viewed globally and practiced locally. This is followed by the consequences of distance parenting, the different parenting practices between men and women and how families are affected. In the end I discuss I discuss family support by different sectors globally and in South Africa.

In **chapter 4** I focus on the global and South African history of domestic work, conditions of employment and legislation regarding this sector. I argue that domestic work has been feminised and that it is not naturally women's work. I point out the intersection of gender and domestic work, in addition to 'race' and social class, and their implications for African women. Further I show how men and women are treated differently even when both work in this sector. This section would be incomplete without a discussion around the ILO 189 which was significant in placing the working conditions of domestic workers on the global agenda. Its ratification by South Africa in 2013 was mostly through the efforts of domestic workers themselves. But the seizure of union functions by the government has effectively silenced domestic worker unions thereby rendering them ineffective.

In **chapter 5** I focus on the global perspectives of mothering and motherhood. In this chapter I discuss the ideology of mothering, compulsory motherhood and how various developmental theories have shaped mothering globally. On the one hand, there is intensive mothering which has become the dominant discourse around parenting, and on the other, there are alternative forms of mothering which are marginalised and excluded from the mainstream, yet are practised in many communities from the Global South. This chapter also incorporates the positioning of nannies as mothers and how their role facilitates both intensive and distance mothering.

The research design and methodology are discussed in **chapter 6**, including the sampling strategies that I used, data collection methods, how I analysed the data, including the limitations of the study and ethical considerations. In this chapter I also reflected on my own personal growth as a result of this research. Prolonged field engagement meant that I had to venture into a world that has always been hidden in plain sight, and understand the group dynamics of domestic workers, and how they raise their children while living separately from them. The recruitment of male domestic worker was the most difficult aspect of this study because they were very few and not keen to participate in a study about parenting. But this was important data for the study, it showed just how feminised parenting is. I also reflected on the way I presented my findings in line with academic writing, which was a limitation because it tries to 'tidy up' the data and present it in a neat scholarly way of reporting, perhaps minimising the messiness of lived experiences.

In chapters 7, 8 and 9 I presented the findings of the study and highlighted how the participants made sense of their position as distance parents against the dominant conceptions of what good motherhood and fatherhood is. As employees in a stigmatised sector, I had assumed that they would be disempowered as parents, but this was not the case. Even as a group marginalised by their gender, 'race', social class and type of mothering, the women felt affirmed as good mothers because they could provide for their children. The findings showed that notwithstanding their marginalised positions, they were able to mobilise women-centred support systems to help them raise their children. The potential of these alternative ways of mothering to shift dominant mothering ideologies, was real. *Othermothers*, grandmothers and aunts were very prominent in the care of children. Regardless of which parent was away from home, the primary responsibility of parenting was borne by the mother. All the participants subscribed to the intensive mother ideal and the male participants also expected that the mothers manage the domestic affairs of their families even when both were working away from home. For the males, despite working in a stigmatised sector, they still carried out their responsibility, which was to provide for their families. As domestic workers, they were also able to salvage their masculinity by redefining their employment as specialisations, such as gardeners, handymen or drivers. By not being involved in any care work, and working outside the house they did not become feminised, and their employment was not only a marker of upward social mobility, it was also status-enhancing for their employers, at the same time, it provided the participants with income.

I present the final conclusions and make recommendations in **chapter 10**. This chapter summarises the main themes that emerged from the study and makes suggestions for social work practice in the South African context. It proposes the implementation of labour legislation, the White Paper on Families, family support specifically to parents of children who do not reside with them.

CHAPTER 2: THE FAMILY IN FOCUS - TRANSNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND GENDER PERSPECTIVES

2.1 Introduction

The cultural, political and economic environment in which the family finds itself has a bearing on its functioning and survival. In this chapter, I begin with discussing gender roles in terms of Fraser's (1997) position on the division labour in society, and this is followed by current debates around families such as dimensions of family living, and the impact of poverty and legislation. I deliberate on caregiving, parenting and breadwinning as families continue operating within the current socioeconomic and cultural climate. The discussion ends with the impact of distance on families, parenting and children.

Critical social work focuses on the intersectionality of gender, class and 'race' in society and in this study, attention is on their impact on parenting. Parenting is disproportionately women's unpaid care work and those working as domestic workers are often women of colour from working class backgrounds. They suffer all the five faces of oppression that Young (1990) identified: exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural domination and violence. They are oppressed socioeconomically and culturally, and Black women suffer more injustice, marginalisation and exploitation because they represent a group that falls outside the 'norm' of the androcentric, White, heterosexual (Fraser, 1997).

Political-economic and culturally induced injustices continue to undermine women in society. Fraser (1997) referred to the institutionalised socioeconomic and cultural injustices affecting societal groups differently, and in this instance I discuss the divided roles in parenting and breadwinning. Although women are not a homogenous group, they tend to be treated as such, and generally experience more exploitation, marginalisation and deprivation keeping them in the fringes or as supporters of men. Similarly, between different social groups cultural symbolic injustice "is rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication" (Fraser, 1997, p. 14) favouring mainstream, conservative groups which can be differentiated broadly by 'race', class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or religious belief.

In this study I am interested in what Fraser (1997) referred to as bivalent collectivities, those who suffer both socioeconomic and cultural injustices by being working class, Black men and women domestic workers. The debate whether difference should be transformed or affirmed, and if the best remedy is redistribution or recognition of marginalised groups seems to point towards finding middle ground. Global and national conventions, declarations and policies call

for the support of destitute and poor individuals and families, but at a cultural symbolic level, these policies only recognise and to some degree, affirm the differences in these communities. One can argue that there is a need for redistribution in order to remedy socioeconomic injustices for the poor and often Black to be positively valorised through universal affirmation, and a transformation of an environment which has constructed norms that privilege associated with dominant, groups such as Whites, men and heterosexuals.

Families, within neoliberal welfare states, operate within a "residual, personal deficiency approach", where they are expected to be self-reliant, without any significant structural improvements or state support (Sewpaul, 2006, p. 133), thereby maintaining the status quo. The poor remain poor, and women continue to be burdened with unpaid reproductive labour, while men continue enjoying the status and rewards associated with paid, productive labour in the public domain. Caregiving and breadwinning reinforce gendered roles in society where breadwinning is ascribed higher value than caregiving, although they both add value to society. Although women may move on to paid labour, they work in predominantly feminised workplaces such as domestic occupations, thus maintaining them in low-paid, low-status, menial jobs such as domestic work, caregiving, or serving others (Ehrenreich, 2002; Young, 1990).

2.1.1   The multi-faceted dimensions of family living

Families are dynamic, multifaceted institutions which adapt to their environment (Mathambo & Gibb, 2009). The global exposure of families to new values, urbanisation, and increased access to education, health care and technology (Bigombe & Khadiagala, 2003; Hochschild, 2000; Parreñas, 2001) changes the family structure. Within institutionalised cultural norms within the state and economy, families in the Global South face increasing poverty, inequality, unemployment, HIV/AIDS, global terrorism and the refugee crisis. Notwithstanding these challenges, families continue to function and to adapt to their environment. In the face of modernisation and socio-political changes, in some societies indigenous ways of life are preserved as much as possible as they reflect lifestyles in a globalised world. The value of the family cannot be underestimated, and its role in the provision of emotional, physical and material support to members is critical. In current literature, family is almost always equated to households and in the first instance I distinguish between household and family.

The distinction between 'families' and 'households' is usually subtle, as they are usually used interchangeably. Amoateng and Richter (2007) noted that households are not always made up

of family members, and that not all family members co-reside. As a culturally institutionalised term, the family tends to comprise groups of people who are related by blood or marriage, with reciprocal relations where the family is seen to be "an intergenerational social group organised and governed by social norms regarding descent and affinity, reproduction and the nurturing socialisation of the young" (Amoateng & Richter, 2007, p. 13). Similarly, the South African White Paper on Families (2012, p.11) defines the family as "a societal group that is related by blood (kinship), adoption, foster care or the ties of marriage (civil, customary or religious), civil union or cohabitation, and go beyond a particular physical residence." This means that members do not necessarily physically reside together in order to consider themselves a family - their blood ties and a socio-emotional connection keep them as a family. Family groupings and networks endure over time, and operate within sociocultural and economic constraints (Amoateng & Richter, 2007). Because families are diverse, the term 'families' is used to acknowledge the different family patterns and types. The composition of families in the post-industrial era has changed with a shift from the "heterosexual male-headed nuclear family" as the ideal, towards the normalisation of multiple family structures.

Although there are claims that many African families in South Africa are moving towards nuclear family formations (Russell, 2003), there are equally convincing arguments that this is not the case (Trask, 2003). Despite a recognition and acknowledgement that families are diverse, the White Paper on Families in South Africa assumes that families aspire to be nuclear (Social Development, 2010). Instead, the extended family remains intact, relevant, and diverse such as the three-generation family, single, remarried or same sex family (Trask, 2003; Rabe, 2016). In addition to families being centred on emotional ties (Siqwanda-Ndulo, 1998) with people who consider themselves to be a family residing together (Nkosi & Daniels, 2007) or sharing resources, time and space for mutual benefit (Amoateng & Richter, 2007), unrelated persons may also share living space, and comprise a household. Families can be defined through residence, blood or marriage. While living in a household could be an arrangement where people share a residence or resources, it does not make them a family. The general norm has been that those who usually share a residence or living essentials and resources are families. These household units may comprise a single person who makes provision for their food and other essentials for living, or a group of at least two people living together who make common provision for food and other essentials (United Nations, 1989).

2.1.2 Legislation and policy frameworks in relation to families

Socio-political and economic factors have a bearing on families thereby changing formation and functions. In line with international conventions and other instruments to safeguard the family, South Africa has ratified laws and policies to protect women and children. From the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) to the 1990 Convention on The Rights of the Child (CRC) the family's right to protection and support is highlighted. Although there is recognition and respect for cultural, political, and social systems in which families are located, they should not be at the detriment of women and children. Even with safe motherhood and women's control over reproduction being at the core of the CRC, this does not always translate into practice.

Various rights-based instruments have been ratified in the Africa region to safeguard and protect families, among them the 1992 Dakar/Ngor Declaration of Population, Family and Sustainable Development, the 1981 African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the 2004 Plan of Action on the Family in Africa and the 2008 Southern African Development Community Protocol on Gender Development. These advocate for the protection and strengthening of the family and also provide guidelines for governments to support families. Legislation and policies, International declarations, and conventions in relation to families, women and children, HIV/AIDS, urbanisation and migration not only affect the composition of families, but also their functioning (Bigombe & Khadiagala, 2003; Fraser, 1997).

Despite the global effects of capitalism which keep families in poverty and deprivation, policies around the family seem to assume that families have equal access to resource and opportunities. Social work, with its critical approach cannot be blind to the inextricable link between policy and practice, Sewpaul and Jones (2005) posited that social workers need to advocate for change in the structural sources of oppression, exclusion and poverty so that family policies reflect "our worldviews, our conception of humanity, our political will and where we are willing to locate our assessments and out interventions" (Sewpaul, 2006, p. 135). In this section the focus is on the White Paper on Families and the Children's Act in South Africa.

2.1.3 The state of families and households in South Africa

Some authors put forward that the state of families in South Africa is in crisis (Holborn & Eddy, 2011) due to the high levels of father absence in sub-Saharan Africa (Posel & Devey, 2006) brought about by the migrant labour system, and the devastating impact of HIV. The

broader structural issues of poverty, patriarchy and inequalities have an impact on families, their composition and living arrangements.

Statistics show that the of the four main population groups in South Africa, Black Africans comprise about 80.9% or 46.6million, Coloured - 8.8% (5m); White – 7.8% (4.5m), and people of Indian and/or Asian descent at 2.5% or 1.4 million (Statistics SA, 2017a). With over 9.6 million adults in about 4.6 million households, Gauteng had the most people, followed by Kwa-Zulu Natal with 6.6 million adults in 2.7 million households, Kwa-Zulu Natal had the highest number of children estimated at about 4 million. The 2017 Child Gauge showed the living arrangements of children where almost half of all children from birth to 5 years lived with their biological mothers only (46.6% or 2.9 million), this figure dropped to 39% (2.4 million) for 6-11 year-olds, and 35.5% (2.1million) of those aged 12 -17 lived with their mothers only.

The propensity of living with their biological fathers generally increases with children's ages (Seltzer, 1991), Hall and Sambu (2017) found that from birth to 5 years of age about 2,4% (155 000) lived with their fathers, this increased to 3.1% (198 000) in children aged 6-11 years, and the highest were in the 11-17 year-old category (3.8% or 231 000). Seen from a population group point of view, less than one third (30%) of African children live with both their parents compared to a clear majority of Indian (81%) and White children (78%) (Hall & Sambu, 2017). Black children were also less likely to live with a biological parent who was alive. The figures showed that about 42% of children lived only with their mothers, and not with their fathers - indicating high numbers of absent biological fathers (Khunou, 2006; Langa, 2010; Nduna & Jewkes, 2011; Roy, 2008). This does not mean that there are no adult males in the lives of these children as Rabe (2016) pointed to non-biological adult males living with children, as mothers' partners or husbands. Although these males are not related to children, they, together with other social fathers such as uncles, grandfathers and other males, have an impact on the lives of children. Focus is often on the importance of biological fathers as opposed to social fathers, who also have an important role to play (Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012).

Various factors lead to the changing composition of families, for instance as a result of declining fertility rates, contraceptives, changing lifestyles, and women's increased control over reproduction (Bigombe & Khadiagala, 2003; Spjeldnæs, Moland, Harris & Sam, 2014). The White Paper on Families (2012) recognises 14 different types of families which are: three-generational, skip generation, nuclear, single parent (unmarried), single parent (absent spouse),

elder only, one adult only, child(ren) only, married couple with adopted child(ren), one adult with adopted child(ren), siblings only (all adults), siblings (adults and children) and 'other'.

Although the nuclear family is still very common, it seems to have decreased between 1996 (46%) to 2001 (40%), with the extended family showing an increase in the same period, from 32% to 36%. A qualitative assessment on families by the Department of Social Development (2008) as shown in the White Paper on Families (2012) indicated that by 2005 nuclear families were the most common type (23.2%), followed by one adult only families (20.4%), and the three-generation family (16.1%). The least common type of family was the married couple with adopted child(ren) at 0.2%. An increase in single-parent households, typically headed by women shows that they often live with other relatives, and generally have high levels of dependants. There is a higher dependency ratio of women to children than males to children who depend on them. Dependents being not only children, but also other vulnerable people such as the aged, frail and people with disabilities. It is therefore not surprising that a majority of the poor are women, children, people with disabilities and those suffering from chronic illness. High levels of dependency tend to contribute to the vulnerability of women, exacerbating the status quo where female-headed households are poorer than their male counterparts, especially African women who are often "economically worse off as a category of income earners in the formal employment sector" (Rabe, 2016, p. 7).

2.1.4   The White Paper on Families

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 (1996) guides the implementation of legislation in this country. Sections 26-29 are concerned with the welfare of citizens such as housing, healthcare, social security, and education. Although the Constitution is rights-based, the realisation of these rights is within available state resources. The White Paper on Families has been specifically put in place to mainstream families and support them through effective service delivery (White Paper on Families, 2012). This draws from the White Paper for Social Welfare (1997), which promotes the welfare of all South Africans. Further, section 1 in Chapter 8 of the White Paper for Social Welfare commits itself to the strengthening of families and implementation of policies which will enhance families. The White Paper on Families is significant because it has a bearing on the support given to families. The Draft National Family Policy of South Africa and the White Paper on Families in South Africa have been critiqued by various authors (Hochfeld, 2007; Rabe, 2016; Sewpaul, 2005). Their arguments centre on the heteronormative, middle class assumptions of families by government. Although legislation around 'families' attempts to acknowledge diverse family forms and patterns, authors point to

a subtle assumption of heteronormality and a further assumption that families have equal access to resources necessary for their functioning. The caregiver role of women, and not families is taken for granted (Hochfeld, 2007; Mokomane, 2013), while the state seems to absolve itself from this responsibility. Sewpaul (2005) highlighted the neoliberal, conservative and personal deficiency thrust of the Draft National Family Policy, with its emphasis that families *adapt* to extremely challenging structural conditions, and called for it to be underscored by a structural social justice approach. Women continue to be burdened by care responsibilities while receiving no compensation for it (Fraser, 1997) and have to do this under difficult economic and social conditions (Rabe, 2016). Ubuntu is a valued ideal, but the misuse of collective responsibility and communal caring mean that women are expected to continue performing unpaid, invisible labour in the home. Further, the view of the state seems to value caretakers more than family as evidenced by the values of the foster care grant (FCG) vs that of the child support grant (CSG) which, at R960 ($ 63.40) the FCG is double that of the CSG at R410 ($ 27.08).

The White Paper on Families is also seen to be victim-blaming, in that it takes a macro level focus on families. Rabe (2016) takes exception to the definition of poverty and unemployment as social ills, as is quoted in the White Paper on Families. The stigmatisation and blame for poverty is laid at the feet of parents (Rabe, 2016), specifically women who are blamed for bearing children when they live in poverty. The welfare poor are "excoriated for their laziness, their persistence in reproducing in unfavourable circumstances, presumed addictions and above all for their dependency" (Ehrenreich, 2002, p. 220). By expecting to live off government handouts instead of seeking self-sufficiency through a job, they are often blamed.

Targeted support through various means of qualification for government social security, the state distinguishes between the 'deserving poor' and those who do not deserve any support. By accusing the poor of laziness, idleness and a feeling of entitlement to state support (Seekings, 2008), this apartheid era view of poverty is maintained without changing the structural, macro level causes of poverty. In relation to the Draft National Family Policy, Sewpaul (2005, p. 319) asked the following pertinent question: "If external socio-economic, political and cultural factors are maintaining families in poor dispossessed and helpless positions, how are such families expected to move toward independence and self-reliance within the same structural constraints? Although the White Paper on Families acknowledges the challenges faced by families, such as unacceptably high levels of domestic violence, diverse family structures and

poverty, it seems that policies tend to promote middle-class, heterosexual and nuclear family ideology, and not address the current lived reality of South African families.

2.1.5 The Children's Act

Another fundamental legislation in the care and wellbeing of children is The Children's Act 38 of 2005 and the Children's Amendment Act (No. 41 of 2007). The Children's Act clearly outlines the requisites for the care of children in South Africa. It protects the rights of children from birth to 18 years and replaces the Child Care Act, 1983 (Act No. 74 of 1983). The Children's Act outlines the rights and responsibilities of parents, caregivers and others who are involved in children's lives formally or informally, and is benchmarked against the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Chapter 3 of the Children's Act (henceforth referred to as 'the Act') focuses on parental responsibilities and rights. Considering the milieu of external factors that continue to impinge on the family, the Act is a standard against which children's constitutional right to care and protection are measured. It recognises that children need to live in a nurturing environment which develops their potential. Section 7 of the Act outlines the guidelines regarding the best interest of the child, application thereof needs to take all factors that may impinge on the child's well-being into consideration. This 'best interest' is subjective, as some factors such as the relationship between child and caregiver, parenting and the capacity to take care of children may fluctuate. Note further that this Act recognises the role played by the extended family, together with the importance of culture and tradition in the upbringing of children.

To keep children in families, extended families may 'appoint' guardians outside formal court processes, making this decision neither legally binding nor enforceable. Parental responsibilities are applicable to - in addition to biological parents - prospective, adoptive or foster parents, the Department of Social Development, or designated child protection organisations, any other person may be admitted or recognised by the court as a party. It is important to consider factors such as the child's age, maturity and stage of development, gender, background and intellectual and emotional development, including any disability or chronic illness when placing them with substitute caregivers in order to maintain their best interest. Even in the formal placement of children, family members need to monitor this 'placement' and intervene as appropriate.

The treatment and care of children, not living with their parents and families, needs monitoring because those not living with their parents generally have a lower quality of life than when

parents are hands-on in their upbringing (Carling, *et al*., 2012; Rabe, 2007). The Constitution and the Children's Act emphasise the need for a child to be raised in a stable family environment, but children still face harmful situations such as maltreatment, abuse, neglect, exploitation or degradation or exposure to violence and exploitation (Richter, 2008). Despite the legislative efforts and civic rights intended to safeguard children's rights, wrongs are perpetrated against many South African children with families being complicit in the abuse of children (Richter, 2008), therefore the application of the principle of the best interests of children remains critical.

Although all these instruments are in place, with clear plans of action, including monitoring and evaluation protocols, their implementation is not always in line with the aims. For instance, the emphasis of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Plan of Action for women to enter willingly into marriage, with both partners being equal, Thai (2002) demonstrated the extent to which this is fallacious, particularly in relation to women in developing countries. Bigombe and Khadiagala (2003) also pointed out that the prevalence of child marriages and polygynous practices in many African countries continue to undermine the rights of women in terms of marriage and reproduction. Sewpaul (2006) questioned the application of such instruments within a neoliberal context, and Fraser (1997) questioned the division of labour in the household, specifically the gendered nature of caregiving and breadwinning, which is institutionalised by both the state and the economy.

2.2   Feminisation of migration and the impact on families

Whether economically or politically motivated, migration is usually not a choice for those living in poverty. It is shaped by class and gender, as migration between the poor and the rich takes different patterns (Carling *et al.,* 2012). Whereas those living in poverty may see transnational employment as a desperate act of possibly rising beyond poverty, class-privileged families may migrate for professional or lifestyle reasons. Their class position makes it possible for the family unit to move together and maintain their standard of living, which is not an option open to the poor. Women continue their caring responsibilities even when fathers are left behind with the children. Gendered patterns of migration are also influenced by social class, with males entering professional work abroad compared to females performing working-class, care work abroad (Parreñas, 2005). Bennett, *et al*. (2014) explained the anomaly of children being taken with when parents migrate. Elements such as the parent's age and gender, employment status and length of migration episodes either hinder of facilitate this.

The separation of family members in the case of labour migration is often assumed to be temporary, transitional at first, with the hope of co-residing again in the long run (Boccagni, 2012). It is with the hope that migrant parents will return home after a spell of working abroad that normally makes this seem a necessary sacrifice. Long term spatial and temporal separation of migrant parents from their children shows a reconfiguration of families, and Boccagni (2012, p. 264) argued that it is a new family identity on its own which should be recognised. As has already been discussed in section 2.1.4 different family forms exist throughout the world and the South African White Paper on Families acknowledges migrant families who either migrate with the breadwinner or stay behind.

In addition to economic migration, other socio-political motivators are associated with leaving an abusive spouse or family (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002), professional or lifestyle reasons (Bryceson & Vuorela, 2002); war and displacement, human trafficking (Bales, 2002; Unicef, 2000), marriage and childbearing (Bigombe & Khadiagala, 2003; Thai, 2002), education and training (Bennett *et al*., 2014; Hochschild, 2002; Parreñas, 2001) or to pursue one's own interests and growth (Kielty, 2008). The system of capitalism is such that those whom the system of labour cannot or will not use such as the elderly, people with disabilities, women, or Blacks, are marginalised (Young, 1990). These marginalised people do not participate in the formal labour market and so depend on both the state and the migrant worker for support and remittances (Posel, 2010). Some 24 years into democracy, circular migration remains entrenched in many South African communities, chiefly because families depend on remittances for survival.

The direction of labour migration points towards the Global North with sending counties being characterised by weak, developing economies as people seek work in more urbanised and affluent countries. The relocation of people from rural to urban areas mirrors the migration from developing to more industrialised countries in search of opportunities and resources (Trask, 2003). Women now make up most of those who migrate to places of employment; an increase in the feminisation of migration is seen globally as women move in great numbers and travel great distances to more developed and affluent countries (Carling, *et al*., 2012). Some are trafficked into the sex trade (Bales, 2002), or married off to men in foreign countries (Thai, 2002), and still others into domestic work in slave-like conditions. Although socio-political motives may expedite the migration of people, economic hardships in their countries of origin force them to relocate in host countries (Parreñas, 2001). Other reasons such as war and lack

of political will to create environments which support vulnerable groups such as poor families, orphans, widows and people with disabilities, may force them to migrate.

Although lack of skills to work in the formal sector is often the reason for working in this sector, not all transnational workers possess low levels of education or come from poverty stricken communities. Some are professionally educated, and others come with high school education or retail and clerical work experience (Parreñas, 2001; Thai, 2002). It is common for professional nurses, doctors and nurses' aides to work in low skilled jobs as domestic workers, nannies and maids in host counties as a result of earning much higher wages than they would in their countries of origin (Parreñas, 2001, 2008). But there are also women with limited work-related skills and low earning capacity who enter the labour market to work in the informal economy as hawkers, vendors or informal traders, junk sellers or informal factory workers (Ojong, 2012). High levels of underemployment, coupled with a lack of education and skills, generally push women into the sex trade or domestic employment, jobs often with poor working conditions and remuneration (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002). The impact of migrant labour on families is well documented (Carling, *et al.*, 2012; Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Posel, 2010) with a growing literature on transnational families (Isaksen *et al.*, 2008; Illanes, 2010; Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Pantea, 2011).

Leaving children behind enables migrants to earn an income, and provide for both their children and the extended family (Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Millman, 2013; Parreñas, 2002; Smit, 2001). Individuals, families and entire communities may be negatively impacted by mass migration which depletes human resources and a sense of community in what Isaksen *et al.* (2008) refer to as 'the commons'. Women take their care with them when they migrate (Isaksen *et al.*, 2008) and this depletes the care from their communities of origin, for instance the care crisis in the Philippines (Parreñas, 2001) which has resulted from the mass exodus of Filipina women to countries in the Global North, usually to fill domestic jobs leaving their children in the care of others. The migration of women, robs families and communities of care. Children are raised by relatives, often grandmothers and aunts, and miss face to face interaction. Where governments actively encourage feminised migration (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002; Parreñas, 2005), structures have to be put in place to support their children or make it possible for them to visit home often. The migration of women continues to rob sending communities of care and their commons (Isaksen *et al.,* 2008), in addition to creating a care deficit in sending countries, it also undermines local structures and systems of care.

In South Africa, feminised urbanisation by women in Black communities working in urban areas, or from townships to the suburbs (Cock, 1980; Gaitskell, *et al.* 1983; Preston-Whyte & Zondi, 1989) also means that they leave their children in the care of others while they go to work. Apartheid policies, migration, poverty, inequality and HIV have re-shaped South African families.

2.2.1 Migration in South Africa

Apartheid policies forced the migration of workers in Black South African communities, particularly from rural to urban areas. Colonialism from the 15th century, the discovery of diamonds in Kimberley (1867) and thereafter of gold in the Witwatersrand (1884) transformed the country's economic, social and political environment. In addition to colonial laws that clearly discriminated against Africans, Coloureds and Indians, growth of the mining sector together with hut and poll taxes in the 19th century, and the land tenure system forced men to leave their homes to go an earn a living in urban areas to support their families (Siqwana-Ndulo,1998; Morrell, 1998). Even with racial discrimination in colonial South Africa, the formalisation of apartheid as a policy in 1948 brought with it many other types of exclusion and marginalisation. For instance, the creation of different departments governing people by 'race', the Departments of Coloured (1951) and Indian Affairs (1961) firmly entrenched separate development policies (Lund, 2008). The creation of Bantustans or so-called self-governing areas for different ethnic groups in 1971, relegated Africans to separate rural areas, which had limited opportunities and resources (McKendrick, 1987), thus exacerbating the vulnerability of Africans (Nkosi & Daniels, 2007). The Urban Areas Act (1923) controlled the movement of African people in cities. These influx control laws rendered much of the African population temporary residents in South Africa, and together with the Native Laws Amendment Act (1937) prevented Africans from owning land in urban areas (Smit, 2001).

Local migration is still endemic as both men and women have since the 19th century worked away from their homes, leading to split families (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Dinat & Peberdy, 2007). While the impact of labour migration, particularly on men is well documented (Bennett *et al.*, 2014; Nkosi & Daniels, 2007; Posel, 2010; Smit, 2001), there is a dearth of literature on women migrants (Cock, 1989; Dinat & Peberdy, 2007; Gaitskell *et al.*, 1983). In post-apartheid South Africa, new legislation has scrapped segregatory laws, but circular migration is still pronounced in Black communities. As a group suffering both economic and cultural injustice, or what Fraser (1997, p. 16) called "bivalent collectivities", these Black, poor communities

continue to live in poverty and they do not fit into the White, middle class standards, which are normalised.

Although legislation, declarations and international conventions are in place to protect families, structural factors continue to impact negatively on the family. Split families continue being normalised in Black communities as poverty continues to plague these communities, with over 23 million people of the population living in poverty in South Africa (Statistics SA, 2017b). The inability to secure livelihoods has as much to do with current economic policies as historical apartheid legislation, and the assumption that those living in poverty are lazy and unwilling to be sustain themselves. It is not surprising that inequality persists and keeps increasing in rural areas, informal settlements and previous 'homelands' (Van der Berg, 2010). Economic and cultural injustice keeps a large part of the Black population in poverty.

2.3   Migration consequences for families and communities

The migration of women spurs the reconfiguration of the gendered divisions of labour in the household, while men's migration generally preserves it by conforming to norms of breadwinner and financial provider (Parreñas, 2008). As migrant workers, their material provider role is affirmed. Although the man may not be able to go home every night, he is still expected to carry out his role as provider, albeit from a distance, making co-residence insignificant (Parreñas, 2008). But by leaving their homes in order to earn an income, women challenge traditional gender roles as they become material providers or breadwinners in addition to being caregivers. Although the quality of life of families and communities may be improved by migration (Contreras & Griffith, 2012), it does not always move them out of poverty. Ehrenreich (2002) also pointed to the belief that hard work is expected to get people out of poverty, but this disregards other costs such as food, housing, and transportation which often take up a sizeable part of their budget.

The ability to earn money independently may enable some women to access resources and opportunities which were otherwise not always open to them, such as acquiring assets, paying off debts, or improving their standard of living (Carling, *et al*., 2012). But this does not mean that they become wealthy or climb the social class ladder, but rather that they are able to live slightly better than before. This financial freedom not only benefits the migrant, but allows other family members opportunities such as furthering their own education and training (Boccagni, 2012; Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Pantea, 2011; Parreñas, 2001), and a general improvement in the living conditions of the entire family (Schmalzbauer, 2008). Some of these

women may manage to save some money to remit, this often involves sacrifice and financial struggle in the host countries, but when partners work together towards the same goal, they may be able to attain them despite being in low income jobs. It is often the practice that some people will team up and share resources in order to survive (Ehrenreich, 2002). Others may squander the money sent home such as in the study by Gamburd (2002) who showed how some men in poor communities like Naeagama, Sri Lanka, misused remittances as a way of asserting their own masculinity, showing social allegiance and identity through alcohol abuse and gambling, or children who used the remittances sent by their mothers for purposes other than those intended. Those who control the finances without necessarily being the breadwinners, may therefore choose to spend it on what only benefits them and not the entire household or family.

Remittances have a significant role to play in keeping families together. Not only do families benefit from remittances, entire communities do as well. In South East Asia, and Central to South America like Sri Lanka, the Philippines, Thailand, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Peru and El Salvador migration in search of jobs is encouraged by government (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002; Zontini, 2010). In some of these countries, government-sponsored and facilitated transnational migration is used to boost the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and it is an important source of income, without which the country would not be able to function. In 2005 the United Nations (UN) estimated that remittances sent by migrants, employed legally and in the formal sector to developing countries were about US$167 billion (Nwonu, 2010), and if remittances from those employed informally were to be included, this figure would rise exponentially.

Nwonu (2010) explained that the value of remittances in South Africa has risen from an estimated US$2 billion in 1990 to about US$8 billion in 2005. The popular channels of sending money being formally through banks, the post office and money transfer agencies, and informally through friends and relatives or taxi and public transport drivers. The material position of some families may not improve as a result of having a migrant worker even when they regularly send remittances (Gamburd, 2002). Social class, masculinity, and expenditure patterns are important factors to consider, for instance "poor migrants with low earning capacity are restricted in terms of the amounts they can remit and the frequency with which they can do so" (Carling *et al*., 2012, p. 202). But there have been stories of migrants who leave their families never to return even when they know just how much they depend on their remittances.

The feminisation of migration has taken different patterns throughout history (Sassen, 2002) with women from poor communities serving the rich. South Africa has been receiving growing numbers of regional and international migrants. There were 4 555 (or 67%) of approved residence permits issued to migrants from Africa and 2 245 (or 33%) from overseas applicants (Statistics SA, 2014). In the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region a majority were from Zimbabwe followed by the DRC. Migrants from outside Africa were mainly from Asia and Europe. This indicates not only the scale of split families on the continent, but also the importance of remittances to families and communities.

The powerful influence of the family, is cogently described by the UK based Centre for Social Justice (2010) that stable, healthy families are at the heart of strong societies, and it is within the family environment that an individual's physical, emotional and psychological development occurs. Parenting involves love and connecting with children, monitoring them and providing warmth, and guidance, support and protection (Grolnick, Deci & Ryan, 1997; Woodcock, 2003). Parents model behaviour, set boundaries for children, and provide a home with love, care, warmth and compassion for a person's sense of self and purpose. But ensuring the basic survival needs of children may be a challenge where parents function under extreme conditions such as poverty, HIV/AIDS, or lack of resources (Ward, Makusha & Bray, 2015). It is even more difficult in a situation where parenting is from a distance.

Where there is continued absence from the home, this may heighten the family's inability to form and maintain a sense of unity or common purpose (Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Van Breda, 1999). It may also limit the ability of parents to reinforce good behaviour or be nurturing, thus compromising the effectiveness of parenting, discouraging a nurturing environment by heightened physical punishment, weakened communication and decreased expression of affection (McLoyd, 1990). The likelihood of an erosion of family relationships, discipline issues, disruption of family roles and household routines is likely where parenting is not effective. It further exacerbates emotional distance between them and changes dynamics and roles in families.

Adult caregivers also have a substantial role in child-rearing where children live separately from their parents (Meintjes et al., 2015; Locke, Hoa & Tam, 2012; Pantea, 2011). Kinship care is dominant in many developing countries like Burkina Faso (Akresh, 2009), Cameroon (Notermans, 1999), Vietnam (Locke et al., 2012) Nigeria (Fapohunda & Todaro, 1988), Mexico (Contreras & Griffith, 2012) and South Africa (Budlender & Lund, 2011). Although

the migration of one parent is historical and generally accepted in many countries, the migration of both parents is new in places such as Nepal (Yamanaka, 2005) and Guatemala (Moran-Taylor, 2008). There are significant regional variations in domestic arrangements for the care of dependents (Ziehl, 2003), for instance in Vietnam the presence of the extended family, particularly the paternal relatives facilitate migration (Locke *et al.,* 2012). In counties with high levels of related foster care such as Cameroon (Eloundou-Enyegue & Stokes (2002), relatives automatically assume the care of children. Polygamous communities also absorb dependents into their families. In countries with high levels of single-parent families such as South Africa, the extended family is still common and caregiving is the responsibility of all living in the same multigenerational household (Schatz & Ogunmefun, 2007). However, parenting and caregiving remains feminised.

In the issue of the division of labour, Fraser (1989) discussed Habermas' (1981) theory of reproduction. This theory postulates that for every society to keep reproducing itself it has two functions, symbolic reproduction, and material reproduction. Fraser (1989) analysed this from a feminist perspective which shows just how gendered these reproductive roles are. A key component of the narrative on parenting hinges on clearly demarcated roles in the family. Women tend to take on a symbolic reproductive role by raising children, while men tend to have a material reproductive role, also referred to as social labour.

By socialising the young, transmitting and extending cultural traditions and cementing group solidarity, women's role is clearly in the home while material reproduction, on the other hand, focuses on the exchanges between humans and their physical environment and other social systems, which in capitalist societies imply paid social labour (Fraser, 1989), but childrearing activities constitute unremunerated women's work which is often exploitative as their caregiver role is often invisible and unquantified (Kasente, 2000). Their energies and labour go unnoticed and unacknowledged usually for the benefit of others (Young, 1990). By entering the labour force, women carry out the dual role of symbolic and material provider (Fraser, 1989) with competing demands on their physical, emotional, and financial resources.

2.4   Gendered family roles

While migration engenders changes in a family, it does not necessarily reconstitute gender roles (Parreñas, 2005). Many countries depend on the remittances sent home by migrant workers, In the Philippines for instance, here is a heavy reliance by families and the state, on remittances sent to those left behind (Parreñas, 2001) despite the government vilifying migrant mothers

and accusing them of child abandonment, placing their children in danger due to inadequate child care and absolving their responsibilities by leaving their children in the care of others (Parreñas, 2001). Men rarely take an active role in parenting, and instead of the entry of women into paid migrant work reconfiguring parenting and enabling men to take on more reproductive work, this has not been the case (Asis, Huang & Yeoh, 2004). Instead, the migration of women has not "initiated a complete shift in gender practices, but has instead result(ed) in a confluence of gender retentions and contestations in transnational family life" (Parreñas, 2005, p 331). This means that gender roles have in fact been more pronounced, with women as nurturers and men as family decision-makers (Parreñas, 2002). In addition to their provider roles, women are still expected to adhere to traditional gender roles and those which mirror nuclear, middle class families even they do not co-reside with their families.

The gendered division of labour implies that women carry a disproportional amount of unpaid care work. Mies (1986) argued that the division of labour with women as caregivers and men as breadwinners was created by capitalism through the modern notion of the nuclear family. She further stated that the "housewifization" of women (Mies, 1986, p. 74) comes from a division of labour in line with Christian, middle class values where the man is head of household, provider and authority figure. The current division of labour associates breadwinning with masculinity, while caregiving is defined along feminine lines, which is unpaid and undervalued despite adding value to the well-being of the family, community and society.

Supporting informal care work requires a reform of the workplace and sexist stereotypes, which maintain women in underpaid and unrecognized occupations such as care work. The breadwinner/caregiver model "clearly distinguishes between men and women's work and family responsibilities" (Fraser, 1997, p. 56), with caregiving being the sole responsibility of women when the duty to care should be shared by society. Care work is deliberately separated from economics and politics; it remains in the family space and not in the public arena. Society benefits from the unpaid labour of women and the poor, and it should therefore recognise their work and compensate them accordingly (Ehrenreich, 2002). Despite the entrance of women into the workplace as wage-earner mothers, they are still perceived primarily as caregivers, and not workers.

The male breadwinner model continues to be the dominant ideal, the norm towards which all should aspire. Fraser (1997) suggested a caregiver parity model where the work done by

women is given the same recognition, value and status as that undertaken in the formal economy, mostly by men. A proposed caregiver parity model would then require a "generous programme of mandated pregnancy and family leave so that caregivers can exit and enter employment without losing security or seniority" (Fraser, 1997, p.56). Proudlock (2016, p. 96) proposed a comprehensive social security reform in South Africa, which among others is the introduction of a pregnancy and maternal benefit for women, which is aimed at "remedying this gap by providing income support, combined with incentives to promote use of health services, for pregnant women during pregnancy and until the child is two years old." This will be in addition to the Child Support Grant (CSG) with a recognition, acknowledgement and compensation for their contribution to society through reproductive and care work.

A universal caregiver model (Fraser, 1997) would encompass aspects of both universal breadwinner and caregiver parity. Fraser conceded that this is an ambitious model, far from reality, but can be an ideal towards which we can work. Her stance is that gender equity can be achieved through a commitment to making differences between men and women 'costless' by supporting informal care work – childbearing, childrearing and informal domestic work associated with caring for children, the elderly and others with disabilities or any incapacitation. In other words, by elevating care work, or putting it on par with formal, paid labour within the household and not in the market recognises this type of work and minimises gender differences.

Making public funds available will ensure that women who leave the workplace at any point, are able to return to their old jobs at the same level, get retrained or helped with job searches and also get time off to accommodate care work responsibilities. Perhaps the most appealing aspect of this model is also that those in care work will qualify for social welfare benefits, such as health, unemployment, disability, retirement insurance in the same way that those in full time paid labour are. This way the vulnerability and injustice based on their gender would be reduced and gender differences will be rendered costless (Fraser, 1997).

In the post-industrial phase of capitalism, Fraser (1997) argued that presupposing that a single income can support the family implies that it is still the norm for a male, heterosexual head of household to support his family. Families have become more diverse, witnessing a rise in the feminisation of the workplace, and an increase in casual, part-time and temporary labour without any standard benefits, and higher rates of poverty. While female-headed households tend to be poorer than male-headed households, policy changes such as the proposed

comprehensive social security reforms advocate for either increasing the value of the CSG, removing the means test (Lund, 2011) or universalising social security (Seekings, 2008; Sewpaul, 2005). This implies that the caregiver burden may be eased and value added to the lives of children and society in general. A removal of a means test would also reduce the administrative burden of assessing poverty, and monitoring the use of social grants (Lund, 2011).

In reality, women still have to continue working and earning a living to support themselves and their dependents. Fraser's (1997) universal breadwinner model may also have some merit in achieving gender equity by promoting women's employment. Reforming the workplace culture and removing sexual stereotypes would mean reorienting both men and women about the workplace, on the one side changing how women view the paid, formal workplace and their aspirations in this environment, that is away from the household. On the other hand for men to accept the role of women in the paid labour force, removing sexual stereotypes and harassment of women in the paid, formal workplace. This model would remove the sexist stereotypes and associations of breadwinning with masculinity.

By upgrading the status and pay attached to care work and a commitment to a policy of "comparable worth" (Fraser, 1997, p.52) between paid work and care work, the disparities between work coded as inherently feminine or masculine, White or Black would decrease, and remuneration would be at breadwinner level. She proposed a universal caregiver model which will try to counterbalance the advantages of one model against its disadvantages in relation to the other. Women continue to work in workplaces coded as feminine, and engaged in care work whether it is paid as in formalised domestic work, or unpaid labour in their families and households. The discussion now turns to feminisation of the workplace.

2.5   Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the dynamics of family living, and the reconfiguration of families through the feminisation of labour. My argument is that household and family should not be used interchangeably as they are not the same, but family members tend to live together in the same household. With an increase of women in the workplace, gender relations in the household have shifted as these families adjust to the challenges of poverty, inequality and globalised post-modern spaces. Whether it is transnational work or local migration, the movement of women away from their homes, robs their communities of their labour and care - a burden which is absorbed by families instead of those who benefit from the labour of these

women – employers (Parreñas, 2008). Men's role is still predominantly peripheral in care work and this implies that women continue to carry a disproportionately high burden of care – both at home and in the workplace. It is clear that the feminisation of labour has an impact on parenting and that men and women continue to play different roles in society and various proposals (Fraser, 1997; Proudlock, 2016) to reform the division of labour and the social security system have merit. Families are negatively impacted by global, social, political and economic forces which place a strain on poor individuals and communities. In the next chapter, I focus on parenting, and I highlight distance parenting and its consequences on families.

CHAPTER 3 – PERSPECTIVES ON PARENTING

3.1   Introduction

Parenting has evolved over the years, with different aspects being the focus of attention in various historical periods. Hoff, *et al*. (2002) pointed to the historical developments which have influenced parenting, especially in the US and Europe. The 1930s and 1940s seems to have been focused on toilet training and weaning as influenced by impulse control (Bronfenbrenner, 1958), responsibility training in the 1950s, and phases of development, and in our contemporary world, the more global dimensions of parenting and child outcomes (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

This study focused on the participants' perceptions and experiences of distance parenting within structural constraints and dominant societal discourses. Daly, Bray, Bruckauf, Byrne, Margaria, Pec´nik and Samms-Vaughan (2015) defined 'parent' and 'parenting' as the main caregiver of the child; their definition is not limited to biological or legal parents, but those who take primary responsibility of children. The dominant discourse on parenting, at the micro level encompasses the extent to which parents are able to nurture, guide and prepare their children for the future, parenting styles, communication patterns, the extent to which parents and their children interact and the quality of that interaction (Grolnick, *et al.*, 1997; Woodcock, 2003; Richter & Naicker, 2013). At a macro level, the broader societal values in relation to childrearing, parental socio-economic status, societal expectations, morals, and culture, are factors to be considered.

The South African government has put various policies in place which are spearheaded by the Department of Social Development such as the National Policy Framework and Strategic Plan for the Prevention and Management of Child Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation (2005), the White Paper on Families (2012), the Integrated Family Parenting Framework (2012), and the Integrated Youth Development Strategy (2012). Others such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act no. 108 of 1996), and the Children's Act (38 of 2005) and various other legislation, policies and frameworks pertain to the welfare of children and families. In addition, the government has also made commitments on an international level, for instance the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948 (Article 16, 3) and the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1966 (Article 23, 1), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966 to support families and marriages, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990. Others include the International Conference on

Population and Development (ICPD) Plan of Action, 1994; the Dakar/Ngor Declaration on Population, Family and Sustainable Development (1992) which aims to protect families especially in terms of socio-economic distress, the Social Policy Framework for Africa (2008) proposing a minimum social protection package for families; the Plan of Action on the Family in Africa (2004) that addresses family needs holistically, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990), the African Youth Charter (2006), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), and the SADC Protocol on Gender Development (2008). These are meant to support families and to ensure that children are protected and supported. As can be noted South Africa, and Africa broadly, is not short on commitments in paper, but there are huge challenges with implementation and delivery, reflecting marked discrepancies between rhetoric and reality.

In her critique of the African Union Plan of Action on the Family in Africa, Sewpaul (2006, p. 130) pointed out that policies should "take into account the impact of global systems of injustices" which keep communities in dire poverty. She elucidated how the stated ideals of people-decentred development, social justice, human rights and equality are thwarted by global neoliberal, capitalist expansion that put the markets and profits above people, and that perpetuate inequality and various forms of social exclusions and oppressions. In South Africa almost four million children under the age of six (63%) lived below the poverty line (which stood at R779 or $51.48 in 2011) in 2014 (Sanders & Reynolds, 2017). It is important for global, regional and local commitments to be honoured, for support to be meaningful so that families may be strengthened. In this chapter, I begin with a discussion of the different theories around parenting, parenting practices, distance parenting and its consequences for children, parents and families. I distinguish between maternal and paternal parenting, but more nuanced analyses of mothering and fathering are found in chapters 8 and 9. I end with a focus on family and parental support, particularly in the South African context.

3.2 Types of parenting

Parenting practices are associated with certain beliefs and goals, that is, what parents see as their role in how they raise their children and the outcome of parenting. Parenting practices consist of the parental attitudes about childrearing, and the expression of the emotional climate they develop (Hoff, *et al*., 2002). The kind of environment parents create for their children is important, including the children's connections to the outside world and the extent to which parents permit or enable this. Different typologies of parenting were put forth by Baumrind (1967), which are: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent or permissive and

neglectful/uninvolved styles. The indulgent/permissive style is where parents are more responsive than they are demanding. They are non-traditional and lenient, and do not require mature behaviour from their children by allowing considerable freedom, and avoiding confrontation. Although nurturing and warm, parents seldom impose limits and boundaries. The authoritarian parenting style places high demands on their children and parents tend to be less responsive. Their controlling behaviour encompasses close monitoring and imposition of rigid rules. With these parents, unquestioned obedience is key and they are not likely to consult their children in any decision-making. The criticism of this parenting style is its rigidity and the inability of children to make independent decisions, or trust their own judgments. Their blind obedience to authority could put them in danger of not questioning what they are uncomfortable with. Perhaps uninvolved/neglectful parents are the opposite of authoritarian parents. Their style is such that they are so permissive that they do not make demands on their children; they come across as detachment and emotionally disengagement. In extreme cases this might encompass both rejecting and neglectful parents. They may be referred to as Disneyland parents (Stewart, 1999) whose love and attention is replaced with gifts and material things. Lastly, authoritative parents are able to balance demands with responsiveness. Their children know what to expect and they are assertive and socially responsible. Parents are likely to consult their children, provide explanations for undesired behaviour, and they tend to be more supportive than punitive.

Supportive parenting is seen as nurturing, affective, or companionate behaviour (Maccoby & Martin, 1983), this includes "showing love, care and attention, giving praise, doing enjoyable things together, talking over worries and cheering up the youth (children) when they are upset" (McNeely & Barber, 2010). Nurturing care includes practical caregiving, stimulation, responsiveness and safety (Britto, Lye, Proulx, Yousafzai, Matthews, Vaivada, Perez Escamilla, Rao, Ip, Fernald, MacMillan, Hanson, Wachs, Yao, Yoshikawa, Cerezo, Leckman & Bhutta, 2017). It refers to warmth and acceptance received from parents (Finley, Mira & Schwartz, 2008). Across their childhood and into adolescence, children need to be nurtured. Nurturing parents are involved in their children's lives, meaning that they participate in various activities on a regular and consistent basis (Day & Lamb, 2003).

McNeely and Barber (2010) named three forms of supportive parenting as emotional support, instrumental and informational support. Emotional support communicates care and love, while instrumental support focuses more on material and financial assistance and help with certain tasks. Informational support involves guidance and advice. Supportive parenting also involves

the enhancement of worth, companionship, respect, shared interests and concerns and the support for autonomy. These dimensions are seen as important for children to thrive and grow. Reproductive roles are gendered, and childrearing is almost always exclusively the responsibility of women who, some authors argue, detains women in domesticity (Rich, 1977) who are exploited, marginalised and rendered powerless by exclusion from material reproduction (Fraser, 1989), by the patriarchal construction of what it is to be a good mother. Because parenting is synonymous with mothering, which Parsons and Bales (1955) referred to as the expressive function in parenting, it is women who take primary responsibility for child-rearing even when both parents are not present. Women also parent within strict parenting guidelines, norms and practices.

Responsiveness is essential to a child's emotional security and emotional well-being (Britto *et al*., 2017). These authors explained the importance of nurturing care which is found in a stable environment, sensitivity to children's health and nutritional needs, and protection from harm. The availability of emotional support is as important as developmental stimulation where children feel that they belong. Belonging is an integral aspect of child development and attachment theory advances this argument.

Bowlby's (1969) maternal deprivation and attachment theory places much focus on the ability of mothers to bond with their children, and thus have favourable outcomes for children, and consequently society (Macleod, 2001). This theory presupposes that when parents show affection towards their children, then they are most likely to develop confidence and successful relationships with others (Allen & Land, 1999). They postulated that maternal support is important for the healthy development of children and this prepares them for future relationships with others. The importance of early childhood attachment cannot be denied, but the problems lies in its entrenched mother-blaming paradigm, as discussed in chapter 5.

In their study of perceived paternal and maternal involvement, Finley, Mira and Schwartz (2008) measured the extent to which youth perceived parenting nurturance, reported involvement and desired involvement. They used Parsons and Bales (1955) seminal work to find out if mothers and fathers had distinct functions in parenting, with fathers' roles being instrumental, that is, providing income and disciplining children, and mothers being expressive such as caregiving and companionship as well as sharing leisure activities. Their quantitative study Finley and Schwartz (2004) used Nurturant Fathering scales to measure young adults' perceptions of parenting. The scales were adjusted to measure maternal and paternal

involvement. They consisted of 20 domains of parenting and these were: spiritual, emotional, social, physical, school/homework, sharing activities, companionship, leisure/fun/play, mentoring/teaching career, intellectual, independence, caregiving, competence, advising, ethical/moral discipline, responsibility, being protective, and providing an income. Their findings supported the Parsons and Bales (1955) expressive/instrumental formulation that mothers would be more involved in nurturing children than fathers. In all the domains, mothers were rated as more involved than fathers in all domains, the only exception being providing an income. Mothers were also generally more involved than fathers who were rated as 'sometimes involved' (Finley, Mira & Schwartz, 2008). Fathers were rated low in the expressive domains and higher in terms of instrumental functions, especially providing income.

3.3   Gender, class and parenting practices

Parenting practices and norms around parenting should be contextualised. As discussed in chapter 1, critical social workers are cognisant of cultural domination and how certain beliefs and practices about parenting are normalised by society. Parenting practices are context specific, and occur within a specific historical era, therefore these practices are not cast in stone. Parenting being a predominantly feminised practice (Hays, 1996; Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010; Collins, 1994; Fraser, 1989), is practiced within certain norms which are universalised across communities, regardless or access to resources or power. They also keep women tied up to the domestic sphere, through prioritising maternal caregiving (Oppong, 2001), and through the presentation of ideal motherhood practices. The Human Development Report of 1995 showed that women spent two thirds of their time in unpaid work, while men spent roughly only one quarter of their time on any productive labour. I discuss in chapter 5 how motherhood is idealised and how it keeps women's voices submerged.

Parenting practices include verbal interaction, direct control practices and managerial control (Hoff, *et al*., 2002). Verbal interaction in terms of verbal speech, variety of words, and a higher proportion of conversation-eliciting questions implying a greater variety of and more interaction with children; this is found in mothers with higher socioeconomic status, than those in the lower socioeconomic status (Brophy, 1970; Bornstein, Haynes, & Painter, 1998; Hoff-Ginsberg, 1991). This implies that those in the higher class tend to be more verbally engaged and mothers in the lower social class, tend to be more controlling, restrictive, and disapproving. This grants their children less autonomy, because more punitive methods tend to be used for children from a young age through to adolescence (Hoff, *et al*., 2002; Lachman, Kelly, Cluvre, Ward, Hutchings, Gardner, 2016). Lachman *et al*. (2016) conducted a study with vulnerable

families living in isolated communities, characterised by high levels of poverty, violence and limited access to resources and professional services in Khayelitsha, Cape Town. Following the implementation of a parenting programme, their findings indicated that participants' (women) had challenges with: delivering non-violent discipline measures to their 3-8 year-old children; playing with the children; expression of feelings instead of scolding; using alternative ways of discipline and punishment.

The use of positive discipline has been found to have better long-term developmental outcomes, such as reduced aggressive and risky behaviour (Hall & Sambu, 2017). This study was meant to reduce the risk of child maltreatment in low income families, and the findings indicated that the participants needed to learn new ways of parenting, which were often different from how they were raised. Participants found it difficult to adjust at first, but eventually found these new ways of parenting easier to adopt with the support of others and a facilitator. Unfortunately, this option is not open to many women who must figure out parenting on their own, and all too often from a distance, which makes parenting even more challenging.

Another parental practice, managerial control, refers to the experiences parents provide for their children, and the physical environments they create for their children (Parke & Buriel, 1988). This includes the amount of stimulation provided, time spent on skill activities rather than watching TV and the extent to which they coordinated their own and their children's participation in community activities. Hoff, *et al*., (2002) concluded that socioeconomic status has an impact on parenting styles, beliefs and practices. Those in the lower socioeconomic level tend to be more concerned with their children's ability to conform to societal expectations, are more authoritarian, more punitive in their discipline and less conversational than mothers in the higher socioeconomic class. Lachman *et al*. (2016) found high lifetime prevalence rates of physical abuse (55%), emotional abuse (36%), and contact sexual abuse (9%) in adolescents in South Africa, this has implications for adult outcomes later in life as Font and Berger (2015) pointed out. Parental absence is an important factor that increases children's risk of violence and abuse (Mathews, Govender, Lamb, Boonzaier, Dawes, Ward, Duma, Bearecke, Warton, Artz, Meer, Jamieson, Smith & Röhrs , 2016).

Whereas Hoff *et al*. (2002) focused on socioeconomic status, McNeely and Barber (2010) focused on supportive parenting. In their multicultural study of adolescents in 12 countries, they found that adolescents needed emotional, instrumental and informational support. Across cultures adolescents felt loved when their parents were able to make them feel better, were easy

to talk to and were given attention. They also valued instrumental support, such as financial and practical support which could be in cash or assistance with homework and chores. Guidance and advice were important, and this included advice and guidance about life in general and for the long term, than advice about immediate issues, which could be worked out between the children and their parents. Across all the sites, the adolescents in McNeely and Baber's (2010, p. 622) study found that their participants cited that their parents were supportive when they provided "comfort, attention, physical affection, companionship, help …money, and things which were both desired and needed." Although some participants valued individual freedom more, others perceived their parents as loving when they gave them money or provided rare and valuable commodities. This is in line with the findings from Boccagni's (2012) study where the relationship between migrant parents, especially fathers, and their children was monetised, and was strongly leaned towards gifts and material items.

The provision of valuable commodities must include attention and being 'there' (Ratele, Shefer & Clowes, 2012) where parents spend quality time with their children and give them undivided attention. There are advantages to paternal involvement as children get improved access to resources in the community, increased protection, and enjoy the benefits of higher levels of households' expenditure (Morrel and Richter, 2006; Redpath, Morrell, Jewkes & Peacock, 2008). This is possible when parents and their children co-reside. In cases where they live in split families, other ways of being there should be found, where a third person might have to 'pass on' these feelings from parent to child.

3.4 Parenting and co-residence

It is assumed that when parents raise their children, they will co-reside and child development theories propose close proximity between children and their parents. The implicit argument is that children thrive when their parents (mothers) support them in a myriad of ways, for instance McNelly and Barber (2010) found emotional, instrumental and informational support valuable. The provision of emotional and companionate support is associated with parents making children feel better, offering praise, doing tasks together, and showing care and attention. This implies face-to-face interaction and that parents will be near enough their children to give support and supervision, and to be in tune with their emotional needs by observing behaviour, and correctly interpreting non-verbal cues, for instance when they are upset, excited, disappointed or happy.

In her criticism of the draft South African Draft National Family Policy, Sewpaul (2005) highlighted how the dominant discourse around families and parenting are perpetuated by the state. Arguing from a critical social work perspective, she pointed out that families are not homogeneous or equal, and are affected by external global issues differently. They also do not have access to the same power, privilege, resources and opportunities yet public policy related to the family, with its neoliberal thrust tends to pathologise families, and place inordinate responsibility on individuals and families for their own development (Sewpaul, 2005). Social workers are complicit in reinforcing dominant discourses of families and parenting (Hochfeld, 2008) although this may be inadvertent.

Working in state institutions gives officials latitude to enforce the law as they see fit, and working in the field of child and family welfare, gives social workers the latitude to enforce social norms. The training of social workers, in South Africa emphasises case-work (Patel, Schmid & Hochfeld, 2012) where individuals, not the social environment, need to be fixed. The findings from Hochfeld's (2008) study of South African social worker's notions of family, motherhood and fatherhood, indicated that social workers understanding of families rested largely on their personal value systems and experience. Perceptions around the roles of motherhood and fatherhood were rooted in socially constructed gender stereotypes. There was also no coherent professional vision regarding families, motherhood and fatherhood due to subjective interpretations of these concepts. Her sample comprised African workers from an urban area in Johannesburg whose training was from a position of power as professionals.

The construction of families as heteronormative, nuclear, and middle class with men as providers and women as caregivers - which is not the case for a majority of families in South Africa (Mokomane, 2014). The historical impact of apartheid and the "forces of oppression, exclusion and poverty that bear on the lives of people" (Sewpaul, 2005, p. 311) and that continue to disadvantage, exclude and marginalise families living in poverty, are submerged in favour of more individualistic discourses and practices. This tradition of turning a blind eye to the social, political and economic environments in which families exist, perpetuates the privileged positions of some over others - of the rich, middle-class, White, over those who are constantly on the margins.

The majority of African families are disadvantaged economically and socially, often having to fit into the dominant norm, of for instance living in nuclear families, which is not a reality for them. I discussed the distinction between families and households in the preceding chapter, and

statistics report that a majority of African children in South Africa do not usually co-reside with their biological parents (Hall & Sambu, 2017). Less than 30% of Black children live with both parents, 81% of Indian and 78% of White children live with both parents, almost a quarter of Black children do not reside with their parents who are alive but living elsewhere. KwaZulu-Natal mirrors these national averages in terms of child residence by age and social class, about 34% of children lived in households where there was no employed adult, this translates to 35% of African children, 14% of Coloured children, 7% of Indian and 5% of White children (Hall & Sambu, 2017). Further in the rural areas about half of children live in households with no working adult, and it makes sense that children in these households will have higher rates of childhood poverty, stunted growth and malnutrition (Hall, Nannan & Sambu, 2017).

In some instances parents make use of child-care services, such as day mothers or childminders. With 14% of children under five years in the care of day mothers during the day, and a further 33% attending early developmental centres, families (46%) tend to be the main caregivers of young children (Berry & Malek, 2017), however as they grow older and interact with other systems in their environment, these have a bearing on child development, for instance community services and networks such as schools, local government, libraries, health, and recreational facilities. This is undertaken within the broader economic, policy, political, social and environmental influences such as climatic conditions, policies and programmes, economic conditions, social norms and attitudes, and the political climate (Berry & Malek, 2017 adapted from: The Spoke, 2014).

Systems theory explains the symbiotic relationship between the person and their environment, and how they are interrelated and mutually influencing. Other community-based care systems that provide care to families and parents, play a critical role in child care, for instance Isibindi Circles of Care programme targeting orphaned and vulnerable children, that was developed by the National Association of Child Care Workers (NACCW). In 2015 the Isibindi home-visiting service was operating in 261 sites nationally, and was run through a social franchise model involving non-governmental organisations (NGOs) providing services to vulnerable children through trained community members and youth care workers, who are supervised by professionals (Bray, 2015). They offered regular and sustained support in family strengthening and child protection.

Where parents are unable to reside with their children substitute parents step in, although these parents by proxy may never replace the biological parents of children, their role is important.

It is clear from the literature that parents want to 'be there' for their children and raise them according to their own parenting style, goals and beliefs, but when this is not a choice, they have to work out a way of making sure that their children are parented even if it is through substitute others. In the next section I focus on distance parenting.

3.5   Distance parenting

Distance parenting refers to parents who do not co-reside with their children. In this study I refer to both spatial and temporal distance. Some studies focused on the number of kilometres that parents stay away from their children (Baldassar, Baldock & Wilding, 2007; Bengtson, 1997) and others focused on the length of time that they do not see one another (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Parreñas 2005; Zontini, 2004). In all these studies, proximity to children and length of time away affected the parent-child relationship negatively. In some studies (Liu, *et al.*, 2010, p. 32) the term "absent migrant parents" is used, or "migrant parent" (Boccagni, 2012, p. 261), long distance intimacy (Parreñas, 2001, 2005), or distance parenting (Cooksey & Craig, 1998) which refers to parents (usually mothers) who do not share the same residence with their children for prolonged periods of time.

Various issues lead to the separation of parents from their children, chief among them being poverty, labour migration, historic population control, marriage, divorce, customary care arrangements, education (Bennett *et al.*, 2014; Hall & Budlender, 2013; Rabe, 2007) or a desire to pursue one's own interests and growth (Hill, Hosegood & Newell, 2008; Kielty, 2008). Children are then left in the care of relatives (Amoateng & Heaton, 2007; Langa, 2010; Schatz, 2007), who are disproportionately female such as grandmothers, aunts or older daughters. Sibling caregiving is also prevalent in African communities (Oppong, 2001). The stratification of care (Ambrosini, 2013) in instances where rich countries make use of foreign women's labour, robs these communities of caregivers, who are unable to care for their children, thus depend on others, usually maternal grandmothers (Dreby, 2006) to take care of their children.

In the Caribbean, as in South Africa, the practice of child shifting (Plaza, 2000) is entrenched. This happens when mothers leave their children in the care of their own mothers in order to go and work. This care deficit is borne by women, who have to soothe, comfort and support children who become frustrated, resentful and upset by mothers who leave them, often for long periods of time. These new family forms are "born out of inequality in the global economy and reproduced by means of dependence on a transnational division of labour" (Schmalzbauer,

2004, p. 1329), reflecting both the burdens of affluence and the burdens of poverty. Family survival contributes to split families and parental absence.

Parental absence from home also affects the relationship or marriage, and Dreby (2006) found abandonment by fathers or formation of new families abroad, especially by men. In South Africa, family abandonment by men is also well documented (Denis & Ntsimane, 2006; Ramphele & Richter, 2006; Montgomery, Hosegood, Busza & Timæus, 2006). Parenting from a distance as a result of divorce is well-studied, often in relation to the parenting experiences of men. In the case of new partnerships, the effects of divorce on children and their mothers is also widely investigated (Amato, 2000; Cooksey & Craig, 1998; Meyer & Garasky, 1993; Michielin, *et al*., 2008). As discussed at length in chapter 2, the rural-urban divide, coupled with high levels of poverty and unemployment, often leads to labour migration and split families. For the most part, children in African communities are left in the care of people other than their biological parents (Hall & Sambu, 2017), and in these communities parenting from a distance has become a norm. Children are raised by substitute caregivers (Hall & Sambu, 2017; Russell, 2003) and only see their parents periodically.

Parenting from a distance is not the same as when parents stay with their children. The absence of parents in the formative years of their children affects their development, and has the potential to erode their relationships. Although there are different parenting beliefs, styles and practices, the proximity of parents to their children contributes to family cohesiveness. Studies on distance parenting (Boccagni, 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Parreñas, 2005, 2008;), show its negative consequences on children's development. The detrimental consequences of separating parents from their children for extended periods of time, include increased emotional distance between parents and their children, erosion of family relationships, discipline issues, disruption of family roles and household routines (Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Millman, 2013; Parreñas, 2008; Van Breda, 1999). Families may also become "sites for manifestation of power" (Pantea, 2011, p. 385), where parental authority is defied or undermined when children assert their independence from absent parents and establish their own ways of coping with extended and frequent separation.

3.5.1 Double belonging and emotional connections

Boccagni's (2012) ethnographic study which was undertaken in Trento Province, North Italy, showed how transnational Ecuadorian families tried to retain intimacy through long distances. Their construction of mothering from a distance in both host and home countries showed

constant 'double belonging' where they were simultaneously present in two different places. While the participants from Boccagni' (2012, p. 264) study said that "your body is here, your heart is there", Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila's (1997, p. 558) participants said "I'm here, but I'm there", indicating that the Latina mothers in their study were also physically located at their workplaces in Los Angeles, but their minds and spirits were in their home countries where their children were left behind. In both studies, the participants felt that they were physically present in one part of the world, and their souls on the other. Their findings showed the lengths to which these women went to maintain some intimacy with children left behind.

It is also noted that emotional caregiving was chiefly the mothers' role, and not the fathers even where both parents were absent from home, or when the father was left behind. The mothers made every effort to recreate some semblance of normalcy by frequently calling their children, sending remittances and gifts, and showing affective involvement through parenting. These did not make up for parental absence, as both mothers and children yearned for maternal co-presence and adults wanted "some feelings of proximity" (Boccagni, 2012, p. 267), something that cannot be achieved by telephone.

Not only did the mothers and children miss one another, they were also careful to maintain a "delicate emotional balance" (Boccagni, 2012, p. 268) by attempting to make the phone calls positive and happy experiences. They also felt powerless or 'impotent' (Boccagni, 2012, p. 269), especially when events back home required their attendance, but they were spatially unable to connect with them, for instance when children fell ill, missed them, had problems at school or in the community, needing maternal comfort or to celebrate achievements and birthdays (Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Pantea, 2011; Parreñas, 2008).

The level of trust by children was also reduced by the spatial and proximal distance between parents and their children. Participants from various transnational parenting studies indicated that their children lost trust in them due to the frequent unkept promises to 'return home very soon' (Boccagni, 2012; Illanes, 2010; Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Pantea, 2011; Parreñas, 2001). Children needed constant reassurance of their parents' love, which could not always be satisfied through phone calls alone. This implies that mothers had to work hard to maintain emotional connections and cultivating a feeling of 'closeness' with their children through long distances.

The initial plan to work away from home for only a short-term period, scarcely turned out this way. Although most of the participants planned to work for a season or a year, in reality, many

stayed far from home for years and the hope of returning home to the "ordinary relationships of co-presence" (Boccagni, 2012, p. 264) did not often materialise, thus changing household structures and creating new family formations, and new communities. The transient, short-term condition thus became a permanent living arrangement, also because of continued extensions of their stay (Illanes, 2010). In other instances, transnational families set up new homes, with new partners and created new families in their host countries, or simply abandoned their families in home countries (Dreby, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997). Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila (1997) showed how new Latina communities in California have emerged in neighbourhoods which were preciously African American or White. While transnational migration may be seen as a form of resistance and the triumph of migrants over stringent migration laws, Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila (1997) cautioned that this comes at great personal cost, and should not be seen as mere physical circuits of migration, but those of affection, caring and financial support transcending borders.

In order to cope, the use of 'emotional filters' (Boccagni, 2012) by parents were attempts to convey an idealised picture of life overseas. Their suffering and deprivations were often hidden from their children. Some sacrificed food, lived in poor accommodations and others did not spend any money on themselves just so that their families could be taken care off, something their children did not know. In order to maintain smooth relationships it was usual for the parents to engage in financial compensation for their absence. Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila (1997, p. 561) found that their participants frequently send money, clothing and gifts not only to their children, but also to caregivers, in order to "show my gratitude".

The other motivation seemed to be their ability to empathise with the caregivers of their children. Children learn customs and traditions, and are removed from negative cultural contexts, particularly when they reside where their parents are employed and are able to give adequate adult supervision (Ramphele & Richter, 2006). The extended family has a meaningful role to play, it offers emotional support and material resources, and socialises and protects children (Padi, Nduna, Khunou & Kholopane, 2014; Smit, 2001). Parenting involves child guidance and discipline which is meant to correct, guide and control the behaviour of children such as the use of corporal punishment (Dawes, Dawes, Kafaar, de Sas Kropiwnicki, Pather & Richter, 2004) and reward for good behaviour.

3.5.2 Disturbance of family roles

Frequent and prolonged parental absence from the home has an effect on the family (Boccagni, 2012; Parreñas, 2005; Van Breda, 1999). Pantea (2011) and Van Breda (1999) elucidated on the impact of parental absence on family dynamics. From his study of naval families in the South African defence force, Van Breda (1999) studied the impact of separation on families, resulting in eight dimensions which relate to the psychosocial functioning of families that experience frequent and extended separation of one or both parents from the family. These are: emotional continuity, positive perspectives on separations, support systems, financial preparation, the 'partner-aware' family structure, resilient children, flexible marriage, and family-oriented management. With emotional continuity, the family has a reasonable stable emotional life over the cycle of separation. They may experience some emotions, which are associated with depression, loneliness, decreased satisfaction with life and in some instances, physical illness. These symptoms beginning weeks prior to the separation and ending some weeks afterwards. The positive perspectives on separations refers to a person's ability to cope with separation based on their perception of the employer, and in this case – the military. This also had the potential to affect a spouse's response to the separation based on their perception of the employer-family interface. The support systems dimension focused on the comfort brought about available support for families during separation, leading to the spouse who is away feeling less sadness, and able to function better knowing that their families had support in their absence. The financial preparation dimension was important because it brought much stress and anxiety on the part of the men as they left their families behind.

The 'partner-aware' dimension referred to the extent to which the family was able to accommodate the separated parent. While some families could accommodate an away partner, others could nor. Two distinctions are made, one is where the family ranks are kept open, meaning that the family member is welcomed back on his/her return, but the family disintegrates without him/her. The other, where the ranks are closed, is where the absent partner or parent is pushed out of the family for them to cope with his/her absence. At various points, families are affected by the separation of their parent and children also develop their own coping mechanisms.

Pantea (2011) described four roles families may use to cope with an absent member: the hero caretaker, the protected/opportunist role, scapegoat and a deliberate separation of the absent family member. In the hero caretaker role, the eldest sibling who is usually a female, tries "to maintain a family routine independently of the migrant parent" (Pantea, 2011, p. 386) and

ensure that the siblings enjoy the same level of welfare as when the parents are home. This includes managing the family finances, sibling routines, and general running of the household which may sometimes compromise her/his own welfare. The protected/opportunist role is seemingly opposite to the caretaker role, this is where the youngest sibling usually takes advantage of the willingness of family to protect him or her and acts in such a way that she/he gets preferential treatment with no consequences for her/his actions. The efforts to protect this child may lead to her/him being out of control, taking advantage of the situation where parents are absent. The potential for children to lose respect for the absent parent as an authority figure is also high (Pantea, 2008) and gives rise to social problems at school and at home.

With the scapegoat role, one of the children may be unfairly blamed for parental absence, for instance if most of the resources go towards the financial needs of one family member, e.g. the sick or elderly who has more needs. This person may also feel responsible for the parent's absence and try to make up for it in any way she/he can. The last role may be that of deliberately detaching one from the parent and acting out in such a way that the parent is forced to come back home. Acting out behaviour such as truancy, rebellion and pushing boundaries may be too much for the caregivers such that the parent is called back home. The fear that adolescents may become uncontrollable is real for many parents, more so for parents not staying with their children (Contreras & Griffith, 2012). All these roles show a model of care which is transitory and reversible, the confusion on the part of children to be caregivers in parental absence and resume a dependent role when the absent parent returns home, creates tension and discomfort.

In terms of the resilient children dimension, Van Breda (1999) explained that this dimension touches on father absence and the detrimental effect it has on children, especially boys and younger ones. The fear here is that in the absence of the father, the eldest son assumes a parental role "which may precipitate enmeshment with the mother" (Van Breda, 1999, p. 599) and so lead to conflict with the mother. Parentification of the boy child is also similar to what Parreñas (2005) argued happens with girl children whose mothers are absent. These older girls tend to assume parenting responsibilities ranging from caregiving, to decisions regarding use of family finances.

Within this dimension it is argued that maternal coping is positively associated with children's ability to cope with their fathers' absence. The flexible marriage dimension touches on the ability of partners to secure stable and happy marriages in the absence of one partner for long periods of time. This requires that partners establish their own ways of coping with separations

and absence, but also that both partners develop flexible gender roles and responsibilities. The last dimension refers to family-oriented management where the family is able to resist separation stress. Here the frequency and duration of separation has an effect on adjustment to the absence of a family member, for instance families of those who travelled often and for longer periods were able to adjust to the absence. For others, whose family member travelled for shorter, but frequent times placed a strain on families, as they did not get time for stable functioning in the absence of that family member.

Dreby (2006) undertook an ethnographic study to find out the experiences of transnational Mexican parents living in New Jersey and New Brunswick. She interviewed the parents of children living apart from their children in Mexico in Spanish, members of the Mexican community including local leaders, teachers, psychologists, social service administrators and their friends. In this qualitative study, Dreby (2006) found that parenting in a transnational context has ramifications for the children, parents and their marriage. In cases where both parents worked abroad, it was the responsibility of the mothers to maintain emotional bonds, mainly through calling home weekly.

Entrenched gender norms meant that married women were likely to migrate only when this was understood as spousal support and the women were primarily responsible for maintaining contact with the children. While men could fulfil their provider role from a distance, the provision of emotional support lay with the mothers who not only sent money home, but also maintained emotional intimacy. It is therefore no surprise that many of the women in transnational mothering felt guilty for leaving their children behind or not giving them the attention they need (Boccagni, 2012; Dreby, 2006).

Irrespective of the reasons for parents not staying with their children, they still have the obligation to maintain and nurture them. Many caregivers in South Africa are parenting under extreme conditions such as exposure to violence, health conditions such as HIV, as well as single parenthood, which are all likely to increase the stress of parenting (Ward & Wessels, 2013), particularly in situations of poverty where parents are less likely to reinforce good behaviour, and are therefore less nurturing leading to increased levels of physical punishment, weakened communication and expression of affection (McLoyd, 1990).

Children living in households with a migrant parent are more likely to have frequent illnesses, chronic illness, emotional and behavioural problems compared with children living in households where the parent is present (Heyman Heymann, Flores-Macias, Hayes, Kennedy,

Lahaie, & Earle, 2009). Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila (1997, p. 561) found that the Latina mothers in her study frequently worried about the safety of their children even when they lived with relatives. The caregiver or *othermothers* provides care and supervision for the children, but sometimes problems occur when adolescents and youth are under the supervision of elderly grandparents, or "ineffective disciplinary figures", necessitating the need for the mother to return home prematurely or where possible, children be sent to live with their mothers in host countries.

3.5.3 Delinquency and parental authority

Migration is a factor that may give rise to social problems and fear that adolescents may become uncontrollable (Contreras & Griffith, 2012). The potential for children to lose respect for the absent parent - usually the mother as an authority figure is high (Pantea, 2008). Parental absence from home may render them unable to physically care for sick children (Contreras & Griffith, 2012), to guide their children (Pantea, 2010) and be generally involved in their lives (Boccagni, 2012). Mothers felt guilty for leaving their children and enacting their motherhood roles from afar. The irony of having to fulfil two very competing needs, such as the need to maintain a close relationship and bond with their children on one hand, and having to provide for them on the other, means that these women are demonised for neglect, and blamed for misbehaving children (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Macleod, 2001; Parreñas, 2002, 2008).

The fear of child delinquency is rife and is linked to parental gender (Demuth & Brown, 2004). Developmentally, many teenagers have not developed the capacity to make responsible decisions and they tend to engage in risky behaviours (Samuelson, 2010). Demuth and Brown (2004) conducted a quantitative study using data from the 1995 National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health in (Add health) in the US, where some 20 000 adolescents in Grade 7-12 were surveyed. The aim of their study was to investigate adolescent delinquency in single-parent families, specifically to find out if adolescent delinquency was a result of living within a single-parent family, or parental gender. They found that adolescents living in single father homes were more prone to delinquency than those living in two-biological-parent families. Increased adolescent delinquency seemed to be associated with weaker direct and indirect controls by fathers. Direct controls being supervision, restrictions and other physical controls and indirect controls referring to the amount of affectional identification with the child. Demuth and Brown (2004) concluded that physical presence was not as important as parents' psychological and emotional presence.

3.6   Fathers and parenting

Parenting may be assumed by a number of adults, and in some cases, youth themselves head households and are expected to carry out parenting roles competently (Oppong, 2001; Pantea, 2011; Richter, 1999). Irrespective of parents being biological or substitute caregivers, parenting should lead to the holistic development of a child. Research indicates gendered differences where maternal and paternal absence have different implications for parenting. Fatherhood is a socially sanctioned role where fathers have a role in families and society (Morrel & Richter, 2006). Fraser (1989) and Macleod (2001) pointed out the marginal role of fathers in childrearing. It is generally accepted that a father is a man to whom society assigns responsibility for a child or household. Fatherhood involves much more than financial support, it involves the cultural coding of men in terms of rights, duties, responsibilities and the status of being a father (Hobson & Morgan, 2002; Lupton & Barclay, 1997). Although fathering is the performance of fatherhood duties and can be seen as "doing" fatherhood, this terminology is rarely used (Plantin, Manson, & Kearney, 2003; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

One of the complexities of studying fathering is that behaviours, identity, and beliefs do not always neatly correlate into one fathering method or script (Marsiglio, Day, & Lamb, 2008), and not all fathers act in a 'fatherly' way, with some taking their fatherly responsibilities seriously while others do not. The focus of literature on fatherhood as a stressful, strenuous and "potentially pathological" experience (Lupton & Barclay, 1997) has not gone unnoticed. Defining certain groups of fathers as problematic, especially those who are "single, widowed, divorced, adoptive fathers, stepfathers, gay fathers and teenage fathers and fathers of disabled children" (Robinson & Barret, 1986, p. 7) implies that those who father outside the dominant discourse of what it is to be a father are automatically rendered bad and inadequate, as it is with mothers who do not fit the dominant script.

The seminal work of Lamb, Pleck, Charnov & Levine (1985) on paternal parenting focuses on three aspects of parenting which are father accessibility, engagement and responsibility. From their fatherhood project in the US, they drew their conclusions based on data from different national surveys and academic studies undertaken to measure father-time interaction, Americans' use of time and the quality of employment survey. Their findings indicate that paternal engagement positively affects a child's life prospects, academic achievement, physical and emotional health and linguistic, literary and cognitive development (Redpath, *et al.*, 2008). Another important aspect of paternal involvement is responsibility, which refers to the extent that a parent ensures the welfare and well-being of a child. But because paternal responsibility

tends to be measured in financial terms, most surveys miss the non-financial involvement of fathers in the lives of their children (Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012).

In tracing the history of fatherhood, Pleck (1987) gave a view of fatherhood and how this has changed in the American context from around the 18th century. This is where fathers were initially authoritarian and moral guides, to the second typology of 'distant breadwinners' around the early 19th century, the third typology being that of the father as a sex role model in the mid-20th century, and lastly the 'new' father typology emerged from the mid-1960s. As with motherhood, the dominant conceptions of what it is to be a 'good' father, tend to be generalised to all men across social class, regardless of educational levels and ethnic or cultural groups.

The construction of fatherhood is dependent on a myriad of factors which also affect its practice. De Kanter (1987) explained the complexity of fatherhood where it is seen as an embodied presence in terms of the man being a partner in the creation of a baby, the sociocultural position of a father who may be married to the mother even if not the father of her child. The father or father-figure may be symbolic as with social fathers. Although males may take on a fatherly role, not all men want to be fathers despite having the ability to procreate. The same argument made by Smart (1996) that motherhood is not natural, is also made by others regarding fatherhood (DeKanter, 1987; Lesejane, 2006; Mavungu, Thomson-de Boor & Mphaka, 2013).

Parenting, by implication, is perceived as mothering, as women's domain which women should control, and therefore exclude men - or perceive their participation as an intrusion (Pollock & Sutton, 1985; Rich, 1986). It seems there is a fine balance between men's engagement in childcare, and the extent to which women allow it or find it appropriate. Perceptions of it being intrusive and, as with patriarchy, a takeover of what women have historically claimed as their space warrants further scrutiny. Mothering remains women's work but the participation of men tends to be a takeover as 'experts' in childrearing as when they work as obstetricians and gynaecologists, thus taking away the role of midwives and other women in the birth process. In line with the mind-body dualism where men provide the theoretical aspects of childcare, seen in the case of child-development theories, women tend to occupy the role of raising the children, doing the dirty job of dealing with tears and comforting uncomfortable, sick children and related issues of growing up.

Men continue to enforce standards along which women must raise children, where any deviation is discouraged, sometimes punishable by law. As already explained in chapter 2, Fraser (1989) argued for the upward valorisation of women's symbolic reproductive role, which is often not perceived as work and largely unpaid. So too do others (Gilligan & Rogers, 1993; Surrey, 1993). Although there is merit in minimum standards of care which are acceptable to any society, the independence and creativity of parents in raising their children is regulated. These "regulatory apparatuses directed at families such as the child welfare system, social work and family health organisations" (Lupton & Barclay, 1997, p. 38) ensure that non-compliance is punished through a variety of means including fines, jail sentences and humiliation. Unlike motherhood, fatherhood has always been seen from a public perspective and constructed within the paradigm of provider and protector, and not from the point of view of men wanting to parent and be involved in raising their children in order to derive some satisfaction or intimacy with another person (Lupton & Barclay, 1997).

Men as parents have been studied widely, although to a much lesser extent than motherhood. In the 'psych' professions various theorists explain gender and intimacy, child development and have been largely influential in constructing good motherhood or fatherhood. The proof of 'good' parenting, seems to be on how their children turnout to be as adults (Lupton & Barclay, 1997), removing all responsibility from the child. Problematizing fathering as potentially hazardous to children justifies the interventions of 'experts' from the fields of psychology, sociology, medicine and religion. Their role being advisory, as they monitor and enforce discipline especially for those who stray from the imposed norm.

Even if norms protect children from abuse, their strict enforcement may also disadvantage those who parent differently. Depending on the social class, geography and norms of each society, fathering may be practiced differently. Lupton and Barclay (1997) argued that, from a phenomenological perspective, parental roles are subjective as all those involved in parenting have various roles which are fluid and not so easily identifiable. This is in contrast with other views, including the functional structuralist view which tends to focus on the roles that men and women play in society, and in relation to parenting. Further, the critical discourse view has often focused on power relations in society across all categories, gender, ethnicity, social class, disability, level of education and so on, and how this plays out in parenting.

3.6.1 Paternal absence

Parental absence impacts on the parent-child relationship and while the role of disciplining children tends to be the responsibility of fathers, this further widens the emotional gap between them and their children (Parreñas, 2008). Padi *et al.* (2014) explored the issue of absent, unknown, and undisclosed fathers. Their study shows the complexity of fatherhood and the need to find more appropriate ways of understanding the extent to which fathers are absent, unknown or not disclosed to children. Even in their absence, men tend to have authority over family-related decisions, despite not being the involved in the daily care of children (Dreby, 2006; Jamieson, Berry & Lake, 2017; Nduna, 2010; Richter, 2009). Parreñas (2008) argued that the emotional gap between children and their parents, especially fathers, may result in feelings of embarrassment or ambivalence where children are so unfamiliar with their fathers that they find it difficult to display emotions in their presence.

Parreñas (2008, p. 1058) found that men in Filipina families with fathers living away from home, often "do not reconstitute fathering to adjust to the needs engendered by the temporal and spatial distance that defines transnational family life." However, Illanes (2010, p. 217) saw a complexification (or flexibilizing) of the roles of the mother and father where women still maintain their caregiver role, but also become providers, and depend on other family members to provide care and supervision in their absence. The ability to create a loving relationship while also being expected to maintain order and ensure that the children behave, might be perceived as an inconsistency by some parents, which requires a shift in the cultural and traditional roles of parents and caregivers.

Either as a result of or a response to distance, fathers then tend to perform a heightened version of conventional fathering and masculinity which enables them to project the role of a disciplining father from a distance. The data were gathered from interviews with men living far from home, their children and couples who had a transnational father. These were mainly middle-class 'father-away' families. These men worked as professionals and had been away from home for a minimum of five years. Most of them had left their children in the care of their wives who were not allowed to enter paid work, but could run small enterprises in the community. Their social class also confirmed their conventional gender roles where men were providers and women were nurturers.

Although fathers may be absent for long periods of time, Dreby (2006) found that Mexican fathers working in New Jersey rarely felt guilty for being away, as long as they were able to

fulfil their provider role and send money home. The findings indicated differences in parenting along gender lines. While the men tended to focus on financial provision, emotional ties were expected to be maintained by the women. Sacralizing women's maternal roles meant that they were expected to maintain contact with the children and 'suffer' without them, as an expression of good motherhood. Lupton and Barclay (1997) also pointed to the care burden placed on women, especially by the reluctance of men to take on more housework or an increased role in childrearing, perpetuates their subordinate position of women in the household and in society. Further, the dominant belief that women achieve ultimate satisfaction and sense of self through motherhood continues to be used as justification for lack of or limited involvement of men in childcare.

3.7   Contextualising fatherhood in South Africa

Research shows that fathering is socially patterned, and in the South African context it means that it is intricately linked to histories of apartheid, unemployment, poverty, migration, racism, family structure, and masculinities (Ramphele & Richter 2006). Beliefs and upbringing in relation to fatherhood influence the role that some men may play in the lives of their children. South African communities are unequal and families operate within the available resources at their disposal. Due to large parts of South Africa being patriarchal, the powerful position of men in relation to women and children is clear. The cultural, political and economic environment in which the family finds itself, has a bearing on its functioning and survival. South Africa with its patriarchal system, means that men have massive power over women and children. Men exert their authority and coupled with a history of state and community violence, physical discipline and corporal punishment are not uncommon (Dawes, *et al.*, 2004); this is what Parsons and Bales (1955) referred to as an instrumental function in parenting.

Cultural practices and beliefs continue to essentialise gender roles, with childcare being a predominantly women's role. While there is expectation for men to show authority in their households, which may take the shape of physical discipline and punishment, this puts both women and children at a disadvantage or long-term harm (Richter, 2008). The relationships with their children may stem from their own experiences of fatherhood and interaction with fathers and father figures (Lamb, 2010; Langa, 2010; Marsiglio, 2004).

The literature on fatherhood is dominated by the 'absent' father in South Africa, especially in the African community. It has been found that the propensity to reside with fathers increases with children's ages (Hall & Sambu, 2017, with children over 9 years of age being more likely

to stay with their fathers as opposed to younger ones (under 9 years). Father absence is widely reported in South Africa (Richter & Morrell, 2006); only 3% of children lived with their fathers in 2015 (Hall & Sambu, 2017) and these were mainly over the age of 9 years, conversely about 46.6% (about 3 million) children under 5 years stayed with their mothers only in 2015 (Hall & Sambu, 2017). This suggests that the level of absence of fathers from their children's lives is ubiquitous (Roy, 2008), with implications for their future relationships.

Fathers' own beliefs and expectations about fatherhood and relationships with their children are often based on their own experiences of being fathered (or not) together with notions of ideal fatherhood (Lamb, 2010; Langa, 2010; Marsiglio, 2004). The absence of fathers in families is often interpreted as absence of financial support. But the study by Madhavan, Townsend & Garey (2008, p. 648) highlights the importance of "a more nuanced conceptualisation and more inclusive measurement of father connection and support in order to determine the contributions that men make to their children." This also emphasises the current dominant construction of families as whole or complete, only when both parents co-reside with their children. Robinson (2014) found that women from middle class households perceived two-parent families as ideal for children, thus buying into the dominant discourse of parenting. It further suggests that perhaps it is not family structure *per se,* but associated factors such as a higher income in two-parent families which might enable them to be in a position to provide greater opportunities for children.

There is also an expectation that fathers will be supportive, positive role models who are 'there' for their children, even if this is from a distance in order to support women as they undertake childcare. The view that men support women in childcare also assumes that women are primarily responsible, men merely playing a 'helping' role. In the context of high unemployment, low wages and poverty in South Africa, masculinity - which tends to be measured in terms of their ability to provide - is threatened and has been a contributing factor for family abandonment (Campbell, 1992; Swartz & Bhana, 2009). Children whose fathers are migrants grow up in an environment where absent fathers are a norm, this may have a disconcerting impact on the lives of these children where this disruption of family life may lead to problematic relationships between fathers and their children (Smit, 2001).

In their 2008 study of men's involvement in South Africa, Montgomery, *et al.* (2006) saw a surge in the involvement of men in the care of other adults and children. They found that more men were actively involved in the day to day care of children and other sick adults in the home

in the absence of female caregivers. Smit (2002) clarified that in dual earner families the entry of women into the workforce also alters the role of men in the household. Her study showed that in addition to the provision of financial support, there was also increased participation of men in domestic tasks and child rearing. Similar to Cooksey & Craig (1998), Smit (2002) also found that some factors that have a positive bearing on the involvement of men in the family are related to higher levels of education. The man's age at the birth of his first child, higher occupational level (Cooksey & Craig, 1998; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012), shorter working hours and the availability of paternity leave (Mokomane, 2012; Smit, 2002) were also positively related to paternal involvement. Despite motivation and pressure from different sectors of the community, including trade unions, to change the South African Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA), to include paid paternity leave, this law remains unchanged and men's participation in childcare remains largely marginal. Similarly, the BCEA gives employees 21 working days of annual leave per year, but this option is not open to those working in low wage labour, and where they are able to visit home, other impediments such as the high cost of transport make this an impossible option.

The entry of women into the paid workplace has had ramifications for families. For those who can afford it, especially in rich countries, childcare is outsourced (Oppong, 2001) in the form of nannies, and day care mothers. For those who are unable to do this, siblings, grannies and aunts assume this unpaid work and, where possible, from the state-funded crèches which assist with day-care facilities for children. But Oppong (2001, p. 40) argued that "people and institutions have been free riding on care provided by women" and with the reconfiguration of families, this role may have to change. Men have to take more responsibility for their children and parent them, whether women are present or absent.

In summary, the division of labour in the household is gendered and in relation to parenting, men's role remains that of being one who imposes discipline, maintains order and asserts authority (Parreñas, 2008; Smit, 2002). Even when men are left behind with the children, their role tends to be practical and seldom supplants that of the mother, thereby reaffirming her absence (Illanes, 2010). This contributes to a widening gap between the fathers and children, particularly if they do not share a close relationship. Men's role is reduced to that of material provider, often at the expense of closeness and bonding.

3.8   Maternal absence

Maternal absence as a result of labour migration means that mothers live away from their children for long periods of time. Idealised notions of mothering emphasize and recognise biological motherhood over other forms of mothering such as communal or '*othermothers*' (Collins, 1994), who share childrearing responsibilities. From their ethnographic study of Latina mothers in Los Angeles, Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila (1997) found a reconfiguration of motherhood. The cultural prescriptions of solo mothering were still held as an ideal, and women went to great lengths to preserve this, for instance some made strategic employment choices such as working in in the sewing and garment industry or domestic work so that they could earn an income without sacrificing childcare. In domestic work for instance, some incorporate their children into paid house cleaning (Romero, 1992) so that they can look after them while they work. The integration of childcare into paid work thus enables them to keep children in close proximity (Collins, 1994) while they earn a living.

Those who are transnational mothers are unable to keep their children close, but rely on their own biological mothers or god-mothers or *comrades/mandrina (*Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997) who are closely related or ceremonially bound, to serve as primary caregivers. This is a way of ensuring that caregivers do not transcend cultural mandates which prefer biological mothers to care for their children. In their study of transnational parenting by migrant women working in the crab factory in the United States, Contreras & Griffith (2012, p. 54) found that mothering from a distance presented "three paradoxes: constructing quality family life while separating the family, transgressing while reaffirming traditional gender roles; and striving to become better mothers apart from their children." These were 20 women who were interviewed in the US crab factory in Beaufort County, and again in their homes in Sinaloa. Their ages ranged from the early 20s to late 50s, and all but one had a child. The aim of the study was to find out how participating in migration influenced the families and their abilities to produce higher-quality lives.

The findings from this study were that despite migration offering their families access to material resources, the emotional, physical and cultural gap brought about by distance is immeasurable. Even when they were able to provide for their families, emotional support to children was their responsibility, a space where the man had very little involvement. Mothers' roles in the family was still central and it seemed a contradiction that the desire to be better mothers pushed them to leave their families. The quality of their lives under separation showed that the women were material and emotional providers to their families. The participants were

able to improve the financial positions of their families, could send and keep their children to school and university, expand the material possessions of the family. Their absence also presented some disadvantages such as children presenting with behaviour problems at home and at school, being shuttled among multiple caregivers, abusing drugs and alcohol and losing respect for their mothers as authority figures.

The second paradox found by Contreras and Griffith (2012) was the transgressing while reaffirming traditional gender roles. The migration of the Mexican women in their study to work in the US fostered self-reliance and independence which redefined gender roles and at the same time reaffirming them. While these women became independent material providers, they also reaffirmed gender roles by taking a central role in nurturing their children from afar, usually through the support of other women, not their fathers. They maintained emotional contact, constantly worried about the well-being of their children while continually justifying their absence as a necessary sacrifice to show responsibility. The fathers were either absent or unreliable and in some cases, unfaithful and abusive.

The third paradox emanating from their study was the participants' strife to become better mothers even when they lived apart from their children (Contreras & Griffith, 2012). Parenting from a distance for these mothers created a tension within motherhood where on the one hand, they wanted to be providers, and on the other to be good mothers. Ideal motherhood kept implying strongly - co-residence.

Illanes (2010) conducted a qualitative study with 21 Peruvian mothers living in Chile. Their stay ranged from ten days to five years, they had children of mixed ages from four years to adulthood. She used drawings, letters and poetry to help participants express their perceptions about motherhood. Good motherhood was couched in terms of co-presence, faithfulness and married life. Although a transnational mother was physically absent, she needed to look for suitable caregivers to be considered a good mother. Their expression of good motherhood was within a sacrificial context, meaning that they left their children in the care of others in order to provide for them. They often spoke of the pain of living away from their children, words such as "trauma, sadness, regret" were often expressed to show how they felt about leaving home. Similar to Contreras and Griffith (2012), they also justified their migration as necessary in order to show responsible motherhood.

While fathers may consider employment a crucial aspect of parenting, mothers' contact tends to supersede financial support, but children whose mothers – and not fathers - leave them

behind are often stigmatised and mothers are accused of child abandonment (Dreby, 2006; Parreñas, 2002), departing from the ideal or good mother who makes sacrifices for her children and suffers in their absence. The level of support given to families is important and may determine the extent to which parents are able to narrow the gap between them and their children, even when they do not co-reside.

3.9   Family support

The types of support given to families vary widely. It is contextual, and depends on the definition of family needs. While support may be related to services such as social, care and psychological services to families, others focus on the establishment of economic support to families, in the form of cash payments (Daly *et al*., 2015). Family services tend to target certain families such as those considered to be at risk, who are excluded or marginalised, such as those with children/parents with disabilities, children at risk of violence, child neglect, abandonment or abuse. Other services are concerned with the financial and material provision for families (Daly *et al*., 2015). Social work intervention generally tends to be case-based and problem-oriented, and t together with these interventions, cash transfer programmes are sometimes put in place.

In countries such as Chile, family support services are offered as part of a conditional cash transfer programme within a general social protection system where each family has a personalized intervention aimed at creating or restoring the family's capacities and basic functions (Hardy, 2011). Chopra (2015) explained that conditional cash transfers are especially popular in the Latin American region. In Europe, some parts of Asia and Southern Africa, unconditional cash transfers are put in place to enhance child rearing. The child support grant (CSG) in South Africa which, at R960 ($ 63.40) is paid to primary caregivers of children, is often used for the benefit of the entire family. In addition to cash transfers, the South African government also gives free education to qualifying schools, free maternal and infant health care, and other forms of social protection, including the public works programme (Bray, 2015). In her critique of the national draft Policy, Sewpaul (2005) argued for the introduction of a basic income grant (BIG) for citizens. The proposal for a universal (not targeted) social security provision for all would benefit not only individuals but entire communities. The introduction of a BIG would close the poverty gap, and help the poor access jobs and opportunities that may otherwise not be available to them such as labour productivity, reduced hunger and spending on healthcare, but the refusal of the South African government to implement the BIG on the grounds of it being expensive, shows the extent to which government abdicates its social

responsibility. The White Paper on Families is one such example, where families and society are encouraged to provide care and support for young, ill, disabled or otherwise vulnerable members, thereby minimizing public responsibility for care of vulnerable, dependent individuals (Department of Social Development, 2012).

In their study of families in 33 UNICEF countries, Daly *et al*. (2015) found that parenting support is primarily focused on imparting information, education, skills and support to parents in the form of health-related interventions for parents and young children, education and general support for parents, and on parental engagement and parenting practices. The focus on children was "furthering children's rights, ameliorating child-related risks, enabling positive early childhood development, and addressing antisocial and aggressive behaviour, especially on the part of adolescents." (Daly *et al*., 2015). In line with Sewpaul's (2006) emphasis on giving attention to the context in which families operate, their study on Family and Parenting Support Policy and Provision in a Global Context, Daly *et al*. (2015) focused on family-related rationales to improve family functioning and child-rearing, including the prevention of child-family separation, alleviation of poverty, and supporting the entire family as an institution and way of life.

While the support given to families regarding parenting usually targets women, Richter and Naicker (2013) argued that this enforces gender roles and the focus should rather be on families. Daly *et al*. (2015) highlighted some interventions such as the Empowerment and Reaffirmation of Paternal Abilities programme in the Philippines, and the Father School initiative in Minsk, Belarus which provide educational and psycho-social support to imminent and new fathers. Various programmes have been implemented in South Africa to enhance paternal involvement in parenting, and these include the Fatherhood Project. One of the main aims of these projects is to include men in the care, support and protection of families and to change social perceptions regarding men and childcare (Peacock & Botha, 2006). The projects generally focus on advocacy, material development, networking and research. Parenting support is usually targeted at women and these interventions directed at men, sometimes by men, to be more involved and supportive of families and children, are a welcome change.

Bray (2015) explained that parenting support in South African has been mainly in the form of home visits to promote early childhood development, group-based parent training courses and intensive parenting programmes to reduce child risk. All these are meant to help parents prevent or manage risks which could make children vulnerable. The Department of Social

Development's Integrated Parenting Framework (2012) recognises 16 different types of families, but this list does not include families where parenting is from a distance. The child-headed households as a result of parental death, and single parent households as a result of divorce, abandonment, death or birth out of wedlock are identified, but not distance parents. The historical and widespread parenting of children from a distance is not included in this framework, despite millions of South African children living in split families and in the care of substitute caregivers. The emphasis on the family and community to care for their children through focusing on *Ubuntu* and using proverbs that promote the village taking care or children, are misplaced in the context of widespread poverty and high rates of child abuse. This calls for real commitment to issues that affect families and parenting, and not "inane strategies" (Sewpaul, 2006, p. 133) which will make no real difference to communities.

3.10   Conclusion

The separation of children from their parents is widespread in South Africa, more so in Black families where a majority of parents have historically lived far from their children (Montgomery *et al*., 2006). Despite various legislation and policies being put in place to support parenting and families, it is important that these be implemented. The care deficit caused by labour migration robs families of care. While parents from rich communities or countries are able to outsource care, for poor families, this option tends to fall on to relatives, leading to stratified care (Ambrosini, 2013) and child shifting (Plaza, 2000).

In transnational families, the provision of intimate close relationships between parents and their children is affected by strict host country legislation and border control laws which prevent migrant workers from inclusion into host societies. Parreñas (2002) suggested that migration be relaxed laws so that parents can bring children to join them abroad, being able to bring families across or for workers to visit their families often, and policies that will make employers accountable for their workers' children (Parreñas, 2002). For local migrants, accommodation near their workplaces, or the use of domestic worker quarters to accommodate their children in the backrooms they occupy, would enhance their lives. The conditions of employment allow for employed persons to take 21 days of annual leave, but most workers are unable to take leave or are prevented by high transport costs from visiting home.

Several authors call for the inclusion of fathers in childcare, so that they take more responsibility for the welfare of their children (Langa, 2010; Mavungu, 2013; Nduna & Sikweyiya, 2015; Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017; Parreñas, 2002; Rabe, 2007; Richter & Morrell,

2006; Roy & Dyson, 2010; Smith, Khunou & Nathane-Taulela, 2014). Their level of engagement is often affected by context, access to resources, beliefs and practices around parenting, but children need both parents to ensure their holistic biopsychosocial and spiritual development. Both motherhood and fatherhood includes 'being there' not only physically but also emotionally. Gendered roles in society tend to perpetuate the belief that women are naturally suited to provide care, and in the next chapter I show how domestic work was feminised in South Africa , and the current legal and financial repercussions of working in this sector.

CHAPTER 4: THE FEMINISATION OF DOMESTIC WORK – IMPLICATIONS FOR FAMILIES WORLDWIDE

4.1 Introduction

Various factors precipitate the large-scale transnational and in-country movement of women from their homes to places of employment. A change in the organisation of work, with a move away from manufacturing to service industries, has re-organized the nature of work leading to new types of workers required by advanced economies. International trends in care work show an increase in domestic service workers who are either internal migrants (Dinat & Peberdy, 2007) or transnational workers, a majority of whom are women (Illanes, 2010; Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Parreñas, 2001, 2008). The International Labour Organisation (2015) estimates that over 150.3 million people are migrant workers globally. Of these 66.6 million are estimated to be women, of whom 11.5 million are in domestic service. The most highly mobile are Filipina women working in about 130 countries (Parreñas, 2001).

Just as the international migration of workers shifts from rural (poorer) areas to urban (richer) areas, so have workers moved from the Global South to the Global North (ILO, 2015; Sassen, 2002). It is thus not surprising that 80% of the world's migrant workers travel to high-income countries such as the Arab states, North America and Western Europe (ILO, 2015). While it can be argued that the transnational movement of women in domestic service shows a "re-emergence of a serving class in contemporary high income households and neighborhoods" (Sassen, 2002, p. 262), transnational work in the domestic work sector is not a new phenomenon. Keeping the house clean, cooking and caregiving has not always been women's work and is not natural for women to know how to cook and clean (Meagher, 1997) as is always claimed. Domestic work was predominantly monopolised by males until the mid- to late 1800s; women made inroads into domestic work in 19th century from Europe, to Latin America, India and sub-Saharan Africa (Moya, 2007).

The aristocratic life cannot be discussed without the role of servants. From the 1500s a clearly masculine domestic service is evident in the roles that men played in the household (Romano, 1991) with positions such as "stewards, valets, butlers, bailiffs, coachmen, postilions, cooks, footmen, doormen, gardeners, stable-hands…" (Sarasúa, 1994, p. 73). From the 14th century to the early 1800s, men dominated the domestic work sector in Europe (Hill, 1996; Maza, 1983) with women almost entirely dominating this space from the late 1800s in Europe (Lacelle,

1987), Latin America (Arrom, 1985), sub-Saharan Africa (Cock, 1980; Pape, 1993) and India (Singh, 2001). Although McBride (1976) and Tilly & Scott (1978) attributed this increase to industrialization in the 18th-19th century, others disagreed (Moya, 1998) particularly because of two reasons, a) female labour was cheaper and b) the propensity for women to engage in industrial action was lower, thus making them more attractive to factory work and manufacturing.

Yet, Moya (2007) postulated that a variety of factors propelled the feminization of domestic service, one of which was the massification of capitalism and industrialization which moved men away from the dominantly agricultural economy in the early 17th century, creating a vacuum which was quickly filled by rural women and children. This move towards an industrial economy allowed servants who had previously worked as farmhands or did general household work both inside and outside the home to work in industry and manufacturing (Sarasúa, 1994). The resulting gap meant that the only available labour, of women and children was in this sector. Another significant dimension was the change of definitions in relation to domestic service (Ebery & Preston, 1976) with increasingly more differentiation of domestic worker roles. Specialization meant employees ceased doubling up in other roles and specializing in only one area, for instance where farmhands had been expected to also do other general work, they could now do a specific task of butler or cook or driver.

Women could also be housekeepers, housemaids, table-maids, chamber-maids, or nannies (Sarasúa, 1994), but the tasks of domestic workers seem to have evolved with time to suit the needs of the employer where the domestic worker may assume a number of roles. As 'burgeoisification' expanded, those who could, employed servants in their homes (Moya, 2007, p. 566), but they were somewhat different from the aristocracy who still kept a large number of women in specialized positions to serve them such as "…governesses, housekeepers, housemaids, table-maids, chamber-maids, scullery-maids, nursemaids…" (Sarasúa, 1994, p. 73). The rise of the bourgeoisie, merchants and minor officials meant that larger numbers of people could now afford to employ 'the help', albeit on a much smaller scale, popularising the employment of maids-of-all-work, people who did all the household work including caregiving, cleaning and babysitting (Earle, 1994).

The Arab states have by far the highest demand for domestic workers, with migrant women making up 60% and males 10% of the domestic worker sector – the other 30% being local

domestic workers. The increase in domestic work also coincides with the change in lifestyle where more families live in nuclear rather than extended households. Those employed in domestic service are almost entirely women. A similar trend in North America and Europe, shows that domestic workers tend to migrate to more affluent communities leaving a vacuum in their communities of origin. For instance an estimated 23% women and 3.5% of men migrating from Africa to more affluent countries (ILO, 2015) such as Italy, Greece and Spain to work as domestic workers (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002) create what Panayiotopoulos (2005) calls a 'southern workforce' to meet demands in the Global North.

The movement of women for domestic work across borders is historical. By the 1870s a growing number of German women who migrated to the US named their occupation as domestic work or maid in addition to seamstresses, day labourers, spinners and midwives (Harzig, 2006). For some women a taste of adventure motivated migration, learning a new language, the novelty of a new country, access to beautiful foreign clothes, and increased prospects of marriage in the US and France. For others, participation in the imperial colonial project from 1880 – 1994 influenced their migration, they were part of the project meant to establish nursing and education training associations in Southwest and East Africa (Harzig, 2006).

In South Africa, about 1.045 people are domestic workers (Labour Force Survey, 2018). Despite the enumeration of domestic workers being difficult, it is estimated that 96% of domestic workers are African women (Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012). With an unemployment rate of 27.5%, year-on-year, as many as 61,000 domestic worker jobs have been lost, to 984,000 in September 2018, from 1.045 million (Labour Force Survey, 2018). These are statistics of legally employed persons, the numbers may double if those working illegally or unregistered are included. A lack of universal definition of a domestic worker, which is often fraught with racist and gendered undertones, further complicates the picture. The global definition of domestic work by the ILO (2015), and country-specific laws show just how challenging it is to define domestic work, and the implications of this for the treatment of domestic workers.

4.2 Introduction of domestic service in South Africa

Domestic service was formalised as law following the abolition of slavery in the Cape and Natal colonies in 1839. The Master Servant Ordinance 1 of the Cape was introduced in 1841, followed by the 1850 Master and Servant Ordinance in Natal (Delport, 1995). The terminology used referred to these works as 'domestic servants' and not the domestic workers, and they were mainly men who worked in the houses of settlers, their presence providing both service

and status to the household. With both industrialization and legalization of the terms of employment, domestic service was no longer just a status, but a contractual relationship with specific terms and conditions, albeit biased towards the employer (Delport, 1995). Although both parties entered into a contract, the master-servant relationship moved slightly from a status-enhancing relationship to a contractual one, with obligations on both parties to fulfil their contractual obligations.

The employment of domestic servants who are of a different ethnic or 'race' group is a worldwide phenomenon with colonial roots, and domestic work in South African is synonymised with Black people who are poor. It was an occupation for men, and gradually became feminised in the mid-1800s. African males were largely driven into domestic service after the drought and a rinderpest outbreak in the 1890s to work in the towns, in Natal, they monopolized the laundry service (Atkins, 1986). The growth of the urban community following the discovery of minerals in Johannesburg and Kimberley, enlarged the urban population between 1891 and 1911 (Packard, 1989) despite a perception of towns and cities being considered white spaces, and a general aversion to Africans living in the towns.

In different southern African countries, domestic work was performed initially by African men, and then by women, for instance in Zambia, African men worked as domestic workers well into the mid to late 20th century (Hansen, 1989). But further south by the late 19th century African women were already synonymous with domestic service and became a common point of entry into the labour market (Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012). It is often seen as an anomaly for men to work as domestic workers, yet in Zambia this was the norm. It would be amiss to discuss domestic work in southern Africa without mention of the Black peril, which refers to sexual relations between African men and White women, or the yellow peril where White men and African women had sexual relations (Hansen, 1989).

The fear that African servants would rape White women was one of the reasons for the recruitment of African women into domestic work, although this was intensely debated within the White settler community. Sexual relations between different 'race' groups was not only discouraged, but also made illegal in South Africa through the 1950 Immorality Act, amended to be the Sexual Offences Act (1957) prohibiting sexual intercourse or immoral/ indecent acts between people from the different 'race' groups in South Africa. The Black peril together with poisoning scare justified settler violence against female domestics (O'Donnell, 1999). This also led to the castration and lynching of African males, and was a strong motivation for the

employment of African women in domestic work. Together with the shortage of male labour in the mines, and a growing White population, the need for women to work was formalised through the training of African women in domestic science (Denzer, 1992).

The initial resistance of women to enter domestic service had also to do with the reluctance to sacrifice both "the productive and reproductive capacity of their families and communities" (Nyamnjoh, 2006, p.117) which had the potential to annihilate the people and way of life. However, in Zambia a sizeable proportion of men (41%) still work in the domestic work sector (Kanyembo & Kusanthan, 2016) performing the same work as women, this includes nurturing work such as "child caring, cleaning the house and surrounding, gardening, washing cars, washing plates, and clothes, ironing, shopping, cooking, care for the elderly, and the disabled" (p. 115). This is different from South Africa where male domestic workers tend to perform non-nurturing duties.

In the formal workplace, women tend to be relegated to feminised service work which is low in status which makes use of their 'mothering skills' (Fraser, 1989). They parent, not only their own children, but those of employers. Historically Black women in domestic work positioned themselves as wet-nurses, cleaners, seamstresses, and housekeepers (Ally, 2009; Gaitskell *et al*., 1983) and by the 1950s this sector was almost entirely feminized in South Africa. Yet, men still worked in and around the home and were preferred for being "more reliable, malleable, industrious and prestige-conferring than women servants" (Gaitskell, 1983, p. 245).

Having servants, particularly male servants was status-confirming (Sarasúa, 1994), but having White English immigrant maidservants was "the highest mark of prestige" (Moya, 2007). Domestic service was, and still is, status enhancing and gives both men and women the freedom to pursue other interests outside the home. Although domestic work may be a point of entry for people with low levels of education and marketable skills (Cock, 1989; Miles, 1996a), this is not always the case as they may come from well-off families and possess high levels of education (Parreñas, 2001). Transnational domestic service often offers better remuneration than working in their own country in a professional capacity (Parreñas, 2001).

Unlike other Asian, Arab and European countries, it seems that a majority of domestic workers in South Africa are local residents (Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012) although there is an upsurge of domestic workers from other neighbouring southern African countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Makoro, 2015). The Department of Labour requires that domestic workers be registered by their employers, therefore the official figures contain only

local and registered workers, meaning that the estimated 1.4 million is much lower than the real figure.

Women dominate this industry, they are African and mainly poorly educated (Ally, 2008; Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012) doing work which involves, among others, cleaning, babysitting, caregiving, cooking, laundry and running errands or any other work desired by their mainly female employers. The single general worker or 'maid-of-all-work' is prevalent especially in the working class, while in other, more affluent countries, a single household may have a staff of workers, each allocated their specific task such as driver, guard, or gardener, cook, or babysitter (ILO, 2015). Despite women dominating the domestic work sector in South Africa, this space was once monopolized by African men. *Amawasha* the washermen's guild operating in Natal from the late 1850s and from the Witwatersrand in the early 20th century, their operation disputes the assumption that domestic work is naturally women's work. Men occupy the domestic work sector as drivers and gardeners or guards, which is usually status-enhancing for their employers (Hansen, 1989). Even though this is not nurturing work, it is still performed in the household. Presentation of their work as a skilled job, seems to de-stigmatise their work. Unlike female domestic workers who are often seen as powerless, marginalised and stigmatised, male domestic workers, working as cooks or doing other specialised domestic duties seem to operate from a slightly negotiated position.

4.3   The ILO Convention 189 (2011) - decent work for domestic workers

The low status of domestic work is further lowered by 'race' and gender. In addition to the social stigma of being unworthy, it is also dominated by women who are usually poor, with low skills levels and ordinarily African. Their position is best defined by Fraser (1997) as bivalent, meaning that they suffer both economic and cultural injustice, needing upward valorising and a positive recognition of their position as women doing work which adds value to society. For ILO Convention 189 to finally be passed, it was through the efforts of domestic workers seeking recognition as a group through international mobilisation in Brussels in 2005 (Visel, 2013). This not only meant improved working conditions, but also recognition of themselves as workers and as women. But as attitudes towards domestic workers are institutionalised both culturally and economically, radical change would have to take place for domestic workers to be free of cultural *and economic oppression.*

4.3.1   Towards a definition of domestic work

   a)   The term 'domestic work' means work performed in or for a household or households

b) The term 'domestic worker' means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship

c) A person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not a domestic worker.

This broad definition of what constitutes domestic employment is widely used, despite not all countries ratifying this convention. In its endeavour to ensure decent working conditions, this Convention sets the minimum hours of work, freedom of association, safety in the workplace, social security and minimum wage for domestic workers, who should be recognized as formally employed persons (Visel, 2013) or upwardly valorised as formally employed paid workers. Both male and females work in domestic service with women working primarily as nannies, caregivers, cleaners and cooks, and men being primarily engaged in gardening services, driving, personal protection or guards.

Promotion of decent work is essentially through four strategic areas, which are social dialogue, extended social protection, rights at work and job creation (ILO, 2011). These provisions seek to transform the division of labour by recognising the value of domestic workers through transformation of the current economic and cultural injustice (Fraser, 1997) suffered by poor, Black women. The attempt to transform the status quo encroaches on the comfortable lifestyles of the privileged and are not always welcome by employers as it means restructuring their entrenched positions of power. Redefining domestic service as formal employment merely affirms this group of people and does not really transform their class and 'race' position. Globally, domestic work is considered natural, women's unpaid work and this androcentric division of labour perpetually oppresses and marginalises women. Even with the inclusion of domestic workers in Convention 24 of 1927[2] and 39 of 1933[3] (Delport, 1995), domestic workers continue to be marginalised in a low status and low paying job.

Recently, ILO Convention 189 was put in place specifically to protect those in domestic service in countries which ratified this convention. Not all countries have ratified Convention 189, by 2018 only 25 countries had ratified this convention, and there is continuous pressure for more countries to complete the process of ratification. In addition to each country being given the latitude to decide on the methods of implementing the ratification, the definition of 'decent' work and wages varies from country to country. For instance, there is no specific international

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[2] the Sickness Insurance for Workers in Industry and Commerce and Domestic Servants
[3] the Compulsory Widows' and Orphans' Insurance for Persons Employed in Industrial or Commercial Undertakings, in the Liberal Professions, and for Outworkers and Domestic Servants

minimum wage for domestic workers, this implies that remuneration is determined independently by each government and this may well defeat the purpose.

To illustrate this, domestic workers in Lesotho were paid a minimum wage of R350.00 ($26) per month in 2011 for employees who had been with the same employer for less than 12 months, this increased to R386.00 ($28) after a 12-month period with the same employer (ILO report, 2011). Makoro (2015) asserted that the minimum wage for domestic work in Lesotho was R468.00 ($34) per month in 2014, this does not compare well to R2065.47 ($151) paid to domestic workers in neighbouring South Africa in the same period. It is therefore no wonder that many women from Lesotho choose to migrate to South Africa to work as domestic workers. The determination of minimum wage as part of decent working conditions, means that there is a minimum acceptable threshold that domestic workers may not be paid under.

Minimum wage is seen as a non-traditional form of "investing in people and transforming the lives of the poor without much government spending" (Midgley, 2012, p. 11). Despite its transformational benefit, it may have unintended consequences where the unlawful termination of workers increases. Fauber (1981) found that the introduction of minimum wage in Zimbabwe led to unexpected job losses. Legislation in relation to domestic workers, is either obfuscated (Ghana) (Tsikata, 2011), outdated (Swaziland) (Miles, 1996b) or simply non-existent (India) (Neetha & Palriwala, 2011) and problems with defining domestic work, further complicate the picture.

In addition to unfair labour laws, legislation may also be outdated, for instance in Swaziland. Since the repeal of the Masters and Servants Act (1880), the Regulation of Wages Act (1964), and the Employment Act (1980), the 1993 Regulation of wages (Domestic workers) Act saw an improvement in the wages and working conditions of domestic workers, but they have remained relatively unchanged (Miles, 1996b). Domestic workers include cooks, gardeners, babysitters, herdsmen, laundresses, and house attendants (Dlamini, 2010). The wages of domestic workers vary widely in African and in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. For instance, in Zambia domestic workers were included in the minimum wage and conditions of employment through Statutory Instrument 3 of 2011, which sets their wages at 250 000 kwacha or ($52) per month, for a 48 hour week. Employers are also requited to give a transport allowance of 102, 400 kwacha ($21.5) per month. They are still he lowest paid workers after orderlies, sales assistants, general cleaners and clerks. They are also

entitled to paid sick leave, maternity leave and overtime pay, as well as double pay on public holidays and Sundays.

In Swaziland, the 1993 Regulation of wages (Domestic employees) Act is clear regarding the applicable benefits to domestic workers, such as 12 days annual leave, 14 days sick leave and free accommodation where possible, but their rate of pay remains relatively low (Miles, 1996b). As of 1 August 2016, order no. 186 increased the monthly wages for domestic workers from E670 ($ 44,28) to E800 ($ 52,87) for all workers except those herding livestock in the rural areas at E777.40 ($ 51,38) (Ncongwane, 2017). The Swaziland Department of Labour has mandated employers to provide workers with two sets of uniforms, 13 days paid annual leave, 14 days sick leave on full pay and 14 days on half pay after working for a year, one month's maternity leave on full pay, clear working hours and a payslip (Ncongwane, 2017). The position of domestic workers remains that of doing work which others are reluctant to do such as housework, caring for children, the aged and are characterized by low pay, long hours, and poor working conditions, despite legal instruments being in place.

Lack of political will has a role to play in the oppression and exploitation of workers. The continued lack of binding and meaningful laws in India keeps frustrating those in the domestic work sector. Starting with the Domestic Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill which was moved in 1959, but never enacted, several laws have been introduced and allowed to lapse, including the 1972 and 1977 Domestic workers (Conditions of Service) Bills and the 1989 House Workers (Conditions of Service) Bill. Government also showed a lack of commitment in the welfare of domestic workers when they disregarded the 1974 recommendations of the Committee on the Status of Women in India.

4.3.2 Domestic work in South Africa

Domestic workers have not always accepted their position as weak and helpless, even in apartheid South Africa. I focus the discussion on the South African context where domestic workers have, to a large extent, been able to advocate for a change in their sector through their own efforts. Domestic work in South Africa is unique in that it was legalized in colonial times (Cape Ordinance 1 of 1841) and through apartheid policies (The Native Labour Relations Act 15 of 1911). Almost all sub-Saharan countries such as Swaziland (Miles, 1996b), Zambia (Hansen, 1989), Zimbabwe (Pape, 1993), Malawi (Mkandawire-Valhmu, Rodriguez, Ammar & Nemoto, 2009) and South Africa (Cock, 1980) have a history of local African domestic servants serving their White colonial masters. However, following independence and

democracy, and the rise of the Black middle-class, the domestic worker-employer relationship seems to have shifted from a primarily racial issue to a class-based one.

Despite employers being increasingly more of the same 'race' as domestic workers, the conditions of domestic workers have not changed much (Dilata, 2008; Hansen, 1989). There is still a great need to improve the working conditions of domestic workers despite improvements in labour laws (Ally, 2008; Donald & Mahlatji, 2006; Miles, 1996b; Mkandawire-Valhmu *et al.*, 2009;). The Labour Relations Act has also made special provisions for domestic workers under SD7, which was introduced in post-apartheid South Africa. Under SD7, a domestic worker as "anyone who is employed by a household such as a gardener, a nanny, domestic driver and this person may look after children or the elderly/sick and includes those employed through agencies." The 'steep road to recognition' as formally employed persons can be credited to the efforts of apartheid era mobilisation and unionisation (Ally, 2008; Magwaza, 2008).

4.4   Domestic worker oppression and exploitation: The convergence of gender, 'race' and social class

Domestic work operates in a gendered space, and women generally do housework by caring for others in the home, with the assumption that they are naturally able to do housework. Because domestic work is largely feminised, unpaid and stigmatised, it does not pay much. In some countries it is still considered informal work with no clear remuneration in place.

The general perception that women are intrinsically able to perform domestic work is socially constructed and untrue. A caregiver is defined "a person who provides paid or unpaid assistance and support to another person who, for reasons of illness, disability and/or age, cannot independently perform the usual activities of daily living" (Bruhn & Rebach, 2014, p.5). This definition highlights the relationship between one who gives personal care and another who receives it. This relationship may be formal or informal with formalised caregivers being paid professionals who provide this service, and those who are informal caregivers include family, friends, neighbours and volunteers.

Ozawa and Tseng (1999) explained that the engagement of formal caregiver services, whether outsourced of provided in-house depends on age, social class, mental status and dependent's level of education. When family members step in to care for someone, it is often considered a normal part of their care for an incapacitated relative. Caregiving is usually considered women's work which takes place in the home, it is unpaid and feminised as women tend to

care for the sick, young or elderly. With an increase in women entering the paid work sector, even though in feminised service such as secretarial, social work or nursing, or even entering male strongholds in business, medicine or law, they need other women to continue with the domestic tasks of childcare, cleaning and cooking.

The male model of formal employment is based on working long hours, outside the home, and hence a substitute is needed to carry out home-related work which falls increasingly on women from other countries (Parreñas, 2002). Women who work as nannies, cleaners, or caregivers are usually employed by other women and do work which is predominantly feminised, but the power relations between them remain unequal. Bosch and McLeod (2015) focused on maternalism in the domestic worker-employer relationship. A paternalistic relationship associated with colonialism is based on power and control (Bosch & McLeod, 2015) which can disguise oppression in the form of concern and/or protection of the domestic worker by her employer.

This is contrasted with maternalism which is associated with warmth, nurturing and mentorship, the asymmetrical power dynamics between employer and worker, resembles a mother-child relationship. By assuming a maternal role, the employer infantilises her employee who is deemed to need guidance and assistance, like a perpetually irresponsible child, and "through kindness, pity, charity, the employer asserts her power" (Anderson, 2000, p. 110), this friendliness between them ensures that both their positions are cemented firmly in place.

Domestic work tends to mirror wider societal configurations where women are in a subordinate position and marginalised (Delport, 1995). Cock (1980, p. 5) summed up the position of African women by saying that they constantly navigate between two systems "one of racial domination and one of sexual domination" thereby maintaining them in a subordinate position even in relation to other women. This perceived situation of care, protection and affection may also discourage enforcement of legal rights by domestic workers (Cock, 1989; Jacobs, Macinom & Durrheim, 2013) thus leaving them in a compromised position of cheap and abundant labour with limited rights.

The stigma attached to domestic work is invariably linked to 'race' and social class, in addition to gender. Domestic work has not always been feminised, as shown by the history of domestic service discussed above. The involvement of women in paid domestic work only became dominant in the late 1800s, after the sector had been dominated by males from around the 14th century (Moya, 2007). There were just over 1.045 million domestic workers in South Africa,

and of these about 1 million were women, and the rest were men (Labour Force Survey, 2018). Men tend to work outside the home as gardeners, drivers, or guards all of which are high visibility spaces, while women perform care work, cooking and cleaning out of sight, keeping the employment of male domestic workers status-conferring (Sarasúa, 1994).

Even in domestic service, males are generally able to negotiate better working conditions. Bartolomei (2010) alludes to male domestic workers in the Congo who refused to perform any other work than what they are employed for - to cook, whereas women performed a variety of jobs in the household which were over and above their job description. It is also noted that where men are employed in domestic service, they perform highly visible jobs such as driver, gardener or guard which is not related to keeping the house clean or caregiving. This delineation of chores further shows the hierarchy in domestic work with women performing the most demeaning chores such as cleaning after other people, laundering dirty clothes, preparing meals for others, and caring for employers' children and pets (Du Toit, 2010).

In instances where males are caregivers, such as Keralites working in Italy (Bartolomei, 2010), they care for other males and choose this occupation for mainly two reasons: a) it is performed outside their social circles in foreign countries and b) it pays as much as ten times more than their professions in Kerala, therefore they are able to go back to amass wealth and still retain their masculine positions in their countries of origin. The legacy of apartheid in South Africa has led to the continued admission of women into domestic work as a result of low levels of education and training especially for African women. Their inability to escape domestic work is further exacerbated by a lack of formal or recognised education or training for better skilled jobs (Wessels, 2006), thereby trapping them in domestic service.

4.5   Domestic workers in post-apartheid South Africa

The end of apartheid was a turning point for all South Africans, including workers. On the one hand there were gains in the form of the legislation campaign being won, and on the other hand, the loss of power and depoliticisation of unions (Ally, 2008). The new democratic government which positioned itself as a caring and responsive partner, took decisive action to meet the demands of domestic workers. Three years into the new administration, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA) included domestic workers, with specific legislation for domestic workers in the form of Sectoral Determination 7 in 2002 (Mbatha, 2003).

This way of operation is in sharp contrast to the apartheid-era Department of Manpower, which was largely unresponsive and uninterested. For instance, the 1982 memorandum demanding

the legal protection of domestic and farm workers which was sent to the Department of Manpower in 1982, was only acknowledged in December 1984 and a commission to respond to worker demands only appointed in 1991. NEDLAC (National Economic Development and Labour Council) Act 35 of 1994 has since replaced the Department of Manpower. From inclusion into the BCEA, other gains were made such as inclusion into the Unemployment Insurance Act 63 of 2001, the Unemployment Contribution Act 4 of 2002 which also makes it mandatory for both employers and employees to contribute to the UIF and also most importantly, SD7 which regulates the working conditions of domestic workers, their remuneration, leave entitlements, and the termination of employment process.

Inclusion into the UIF cannot be taken for granted. This process is perhaps a watershed moment in the history of the unions particularly when, together with other NGOs, they pushed for the inclusion of domestic workers in the UIF through the gender monitoring and advocacy coalition (Ally, 2008; Fish, 2006). This 2001 campaign bore fruits when domestic workers were recognised as employees and finally had access to protection such as minimum wage and social insurance, such as UIF payment in the case of illness (s20), maternity (s 24), adoption (s27), and unemployment (s16) (Mbatha, 2003). The number of working hours determines protection by legislation where those who work less than 27 hours per week are considered part time domestic workers and those who are full time, work 27 hours or more per week (Matjeke, *et al.*, 2012), and thus qualify for other benefits such as unemployment insurance. Those who are considered part time are not covered by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (Fish, 2006), for instance 'chars', *togt* workers or dailies who do hourly or daily work for several employers are not recognised as full time employees, rather as part-timers who have to negotiate working conditions with each employer. Casual employment does not have benefits at retirement or incapacitation, implying that these workers will have an income as long as they are able to work.

For those reaching retirement age in the absence of private savings, the only available alternative is application for the state non-contributory old age pension under section 27(1)(c) of the South African Constitution, or they may fall back into informal social security measures, such as family or mutual aid associations. They simply earn too little to afford social insurance. Where non-contributory social security schemes exist such as in South Africa and other neighbouring countries such as Botswana, Swaziland, Namibia and Lesotho (Chitonge, 2012), they are means-tested and targeted. In South Africa various social grants exist which cover

children, people with disabilities, older persons, war veterans, and those undergoing crises such as fire or floods.

Despite its good intentions, it seems that government has substituted itself as a union for domestic workers by trying to act on their behalf, and in their interests when this should have stayed a union function (Ally, 2008). The reasons being that an Employment Conditions Commission appointed by the state consisting of members elected by the Minister of Labour (Ally, 2008) and not led by the unions, established the wages and working conditions for domestic workers. The notable absence or mandate of domestic workers means that this body almost unilaterally determined remuneration, working conditions and the employment processes for domestic workers. In its eagerness to be 'partners' of unions, the state has turned the union to one of its 'beneficiaries' of service, thereby weakening the only domestic worker union in South Africa. "The positioning of the state as the articulator, representative and protector of the collective interests of domestic workers" (Ally, 2008, p. 13) has altered the playing field. While well-meaning, the substitution of unions by the state has compromised the position of domestic workers, and the gains made in the apartheid-era seem to have been reversed after their life long demands for legislation, protection and a minimum wage were not only met, but surpassed by a democratic South African government.

The achievement of the domestic worker demands for formalization and protection and earning a minimum wage were seen to have been met, therefore mission accomplished, implying no necessity to continue with the struggle for better conditions for domestic workers. SADSAWU is no longer militant and confrontational, but has become a mere intermediary between government and workers, through its auxiliary and supportive role to the state (Ally, 2008). This 'referral agent' merely refers domestic workers with employment-related issues or complaints to relevant government departments such as the CCMA (Commission for Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration), Commission for Gender Equality or the Department of Labour for advice and intervention regarding labour related disputes (Ally, 2008). A weak union further compromises its constituents because employees then have no mouthpiece or representation, especially in matters that concern their welfare such as social security.

The build-up to the adoption of ILO Convention 189 stems from the efforts of different organisations, unions and women's associations who worked together for the decent work agenda to be discussed at the ILO European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) in Brussels in 2005 (Visel, 2013), eventually being adopted in Geneva, 2011. Although adopting ILO

guidelines is not obligatory, those countries which ratify a convention are legally bound to implement these obligations (Delport, 1995). Although South Africa ratified ILO Convention 189 (2011), the working conditions of domestic workers were formalised through the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 (1997), and specifically by the Labour Relations Act, SD7 in 2002.

Adoption of ILO Convention 189 on decent work for domestic workers has implications in terms of their welfare, standards for hours of work, minimum wage and safety in the workplace. It also makes it a right for domestic workers to access social security, although this is not always the case. Domestic worker wages are so low that they are unable to save for retirement or incapacitation, therefore those who are registered, are able to have access to the UIF for a limited period. Even with the proposed national basic wage of R3 500 ($ 256.4) per month, domestic workers are lowest paid at the revised minimum wage of R2 422.54 ($ 177.5) per month in urban areas. There are multiple goals to social security, which are based on principles of prevention (pre-emptive), mitigation (palliative), coping (preservative) and promotion (transformative) (Chitonge, 2012). Prevention aims to safeguard people from becoming vulnerable, that is, to reduce the occurrence of shocks and therefore putting proactive measures in place so that risks and shocks are reduced or not be severely felt.

4.6   Decent work and social security for domestic workers

It is the democratic right of all employees in South Africa to have access to social security, social insurance and all other provisions such as leave and fair working conditions. Since incorporation into the formal employment category, domestic workers have the right under the Unemployment Insurance Act 63 of 2001, and the Unemployment Contribution Act 4 of 2002 to contribute and claim benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF). They have the right to access all benefits enjoyed by formally employed persons, such as paid sick and maternity leave, access to a healthy occupational workplace, earn minimum wage and access the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) in instances of unfair labour practice. But in reality most do not enjoy these benefits. The following is a discussion on the issues related to domestic worker employment rights.

The contributory nature of social insurance makes it inaccessible to most workers, particularly those in the lowest income sector such as domestic workers. Although some employees are able to make private arrangements for social insurance, it is costly and often takes a back seat when daily survival is prioritised, over saving for future risk (Malherbe, 2013). Standing (2007,

p. 513) referred to social insurance as 'a model of privilege', mainly applicable to employed people who are able to make monthly contributions to a state or private insurance fund. It is thus not accessible to a majority of people as a result of pervasive unemployment and high numbers of unregistered and casual workers.

Social insurance seems more realistic in a vibrant economy with high levels of permanent, stable and well-paying jobs found in more developed countries. Registered domestic workers may have access to the UIF through the Unemployment Contribution Act (2002) as discussed above. Although formally recognised as employees, not all domestic workers are registered or are full time employees. The UIF does not sufficiently meet the numerous needs of beneficiaries as it is payable for a limited time only, and the pay-out is very little, therefore loss of income from injury, death or short term events such as maternity may lead families to destitution (Midgley, 2012). The low remuneration of domestic workers keeps them poor, and many in casual employment as they work for less than 27 hours per week for the same employer. The introduction of minimum wage was meant to invest in people and to improve the lives of the poor without much government spending (Midgley, 2012). Its transformative function (Devereux, 2011; Chitonge, 2012) can, in the long-term respond effectively to chronic poverty. One of the functions of SD7 is to regulate minimum wage, this is reviewed from 1 December annually.

Minimum wage is determined by geographic location, domestic workers who work for over 27 hours per week for one employer, living in the area A category (mostly urban areas) should earn an hourly rate of R12.42 ($0.90) or R550.09 ($40.3) per 45-hour week or a monthly rate of R2 422.54 or $ 177.5 (Department of Labour, 2016). The rate is slightly lower in Area B (mostly rural areas) where the hourly rate is R 11.31 ($0.82), or R 508.93 ($37.3) per week or R2 205.16 ($162) per month. The Department of Labour (2016) explains that wages in Area A are subjected to a Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1% increase for the period 1 December 2018 to 30 November 2019. The annual increment of over 8% is legislated, although employers are encouraged to pay above the minimum rate. I turn the discussion to the implementation of SD7 and its impact, if any, on domestic workers since it became law almost 15 years ago.

Sectoral Determination 7 regulates the working conditions of domestic workers, together with their remuneration and leave entitlements. It is legislated that the annual remuneration of domestic workers increase by 8% annually from 1 December, with workers being entitled to 21 days annual leave, paid sick leave and fair labour practice. Guidelines in the termination

of employment process seems to have brought some dignity to domestic work, unlike in apartheid era South Africa where domestic workers could be summarily dismissed (Ally, 2009). The correlation between legislation and practice in domestic service has been tested by Hertz (2005); Blaauw and Bothma (2010) and Matjeke *et al.* (2012) where they found a positive relationship between the inclusion of domestic workers in labour laws and improved working conditions and wages in their study of the impact of minimum wage for domestic workers in South Africa.

Blaauw and Bothma (2010) carried out a survey with domestic worker employers South Africa in 2007 to study their compliance with labour legislation regarding domestic workers. They found a reduced number of domestic workers from their survey in 2001, but there was a general improvement in wages paid to those who had previously earned below minimum wage. Employers were generally found to be compliant with the prescripts of the law, with an increase in the formal registration of employees with the Department of Labour, and having written contracts for their domestic workers. The general increase in real wages, average monthly earnings, and total earnings of domestic workers have risen since, and Hertz (2005) attributed this to the implementation of SD7. Although full time domestic workers received higher wages and enjoyed better working conditions than casual workers, the number of domestic workers in full time employment has decreased (Blaauw & Bothma, 2010).

There has also been a marked increase in the number of part-time dailies who work for more than one employer per week. This may be attributed to the higher wages earned by those working for different employers and earning better in combined wages than those working for only one employer all month (Blaauw & Bothma, 2010). In order to afford a domestic worker, most employers cut back on the number of hours or days worked, meaning that domestic workers are expected to do more work in less time (Blaauw & Bothma, 2010). This has the unintended consequence of exacerbating the exploitation of workers. By working less hours, workers have to find employment with a variety of employers, thus casualising domestic service, a reverse on the gains made through SD7. Casual domestic workers are not protected, and also do not have access to employee-related benefits such as the UIF. The application of minimum wage does not consider the skills and work experience of workers, which continues to place domestic workers at a disadvantage (Du Toit, 2010; Miles, 1996b) because they are grouped into one general category.

4.6.1 Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act (COIDA)

In line with the provisions of the ILO convention on decent work for domestic workers, one of the four strategies of the decent work agenda includes the promotion and inclusion of a safe working environment (Visel, 2013). Domestic workers often work in unsafe conditions, and usually have no medical aid cover for the treatment of serious injuries. Injuries include cuts, fractures, bruises and burns resulting in incapacitation or discomfort and may affect the face, legs, arms and malnourishment (Tsikata, 2011). Because their workplace is in someone else's home, their workplace is not seen as hazardous and domestic workers are therefore "expressly excluded from the scope of COIDA" (Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act) (Malherbe, 2013, p. 124), but they are covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act 85 (1993) to the extent that they can prove employer negligence. This cumbersome process is problematic as domestic workers are "exactly the type of vulnerable employees who cannot afford litigation against their employers" (Malherbe, 2013, p. 125). Furthermore, litigation has the potential to not only sever the employment relationship, but is also time consuming and expensive. Because domestic workers are not covered by COIDA, they are precluded from claiming benefits related to injury on duty.

Both the UIF and COIDA are short-term social insurance measures. The UIF covers the employee for loss of income for a period of about six months, this may also be full or part of normal wages. COIDA may also be paid out as a lump sum or in tranches and will run out. Because of their short-term nature, these social relief and income protection measures may act as a safety net for a limited period only. In the case of retirement, domestic workers may not be able to earn an income unless a comprehensive public retirement funding scheme is established. As with most people without any form of social assistance, they may turn to informal or indigenous social security measures such as family and community support, and many fall back on rotational savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) or SACCOs (savings, and credit cooperative societies, better known as *stokvels* or *diswaeti* (Ngwenya, 2003; Smets & Wels, 1999) for survival.

Stokvels are based on members' weekly or monthly contributions to a central fund or paid out to members on a rotational basis. Stokvels are an existing type of indigenous peer lending arrangement (Biggart, 2001) which gives members access to periodic large amounts of capital (Biggart, 2001) to which they would not usually have access. This peer lending system is contributory, but not to the extent that it is prohibitively expensive and shuts people out. The members determine the minimum contribution amount and so build a safety net for themselves.

Membership is based on mutual trust and it is common for membership of a *stokvel* to be based on ethnicity, gender or the same workplace; it seldom crosses different social classes (Biggart, 2001; Ngwenya, 2003; Smets *& Wels,* 1999). This is an important form of social security particularly in an occupation where workers earn very little and have no other forms of social insurance or security.

The working conditions of full-time and part-time workers are different, with live-in domestic workers enduring the worst conditions (Case, 2010; Delport, 1995; Dilata, 2010). In addition to an isolated workplace with no boundaries between the workers on and off-duty times, they tend to be on call 24 hours a day. In line with ILO Convention 189 and SD7 on decent working hours, overtime, night work and standby duty have to be mutually agreed by both employer and employee. In an asymmetrical, unequal relationship the negotiation of overtime, night work and standby duty between domestic workers is difficult (Ginsburg, 2000; Magwaza, 2008). The lines between normal working hours and overtime are often blurred, therefore making them more vulnerable to exploitation, out of the public eye. While it is easier for live-out domestic workers to determine overtime or standby hours, some do not enforce this with their employers out of fear, embarrassment or loyalty and so continue to work beyond normal working hours without compensation.

There is still a need for regulation of the domestic work sector (Bothma & Campher, 2003; Hertz, 2005; Matjeke *et al*., 2012; Mbatha, 2003). Monitoring employee working conditions is a challenge not only in South African but throughout the world (De Waal, 2012; Singh, 2001; Tsikata, 2011). ILO Convention 189 emphasises the compulsory capacitation for guaranteeing the rights of domestic workers through the strengthening of the labour inspection system. Efforts by the South African government include the introduction of a hotline in 2010 for domestic workers to call labour inspectors should the need arise, but this was hampered by the shortage of inspectors (De Waal, 2012), thus rendering this service impractical.

Whether in response to a complaint or in the execution of their work, labour inspectors do not always have access to private properties which are domestic workers' places of employment (Du Toit, 2010), they intrude into someone else's private residence. This imposition has the potential to severely affect the employer-employee relationship (Magwaza, 2008) and possibly lead to dismissal. Fearing job loss and the unprotected nature of domestic work may discourage workers from challenging unfair labour practices and abuse (Marais & Van Wyk, 2015). The invisibility of labour inspectors and lack of monitoring the working conditions of domestic

workers, coupled with their isolated workplaces keeps them vulnerable (Marais & Van Wyk, 2015; Matjeke *et al*., 2012), therefore the role of labour inspectors has to be clarified and strengthened in this sector with violations being clearly defined and penalized (ILO, 2016).

4.6.2   The employment contract and other 'benefits'

The deprivation of the right to choose, decision-making power and exercising one's capacity in a meaningful way in society marginalises people. I have already discussed how 'race' and gender in addition to low social class have historically marginalised people, particularly workers in the domestic worker sector. These workers are treated differently and with suspicion throughout the world.

The colonial practice of gifts is well entrenched in domestic service. It is the responsibility of the employer to make food and accommodation available to their domestic staff. Although the cost of food and accommodation should not be deducted from workers' salaries, SD7 allows for a deduction of not more than 10% of the worker's salary, and also stipulates that all the deductions made from the employee's salary be clearly shown on a payslip. All deductions are to be made through mutual agreement between the employer and employee. But it is estimated that only a third of domestic workers have an employment contract, let alone a payslip. The lack of clarity on the part of domestic workers regarding gifts and payments-in-kind exacerbates their exploitation (Blaauw & Bothma, 2010). Jacobs *et al*. (2013) highlighted that gifts are provided for in SD7, through clear stipulation in the employment contract, together with the value of the gift. It is common for employers to give "clothing, pensions, transport costs, unwanted household items, leftovers" (Jacobs, *et al*., 2013, p. 278) as 'gifts'.

Because a gift fosters a feeling of loyalty and gratitude (Cock, 1980), it also entrenches the unequal relationship between employer and employee if one cannot reciprocate, which is often the case in a maid and madam relationship. It keeps the employer-employee relationship tipped in favour of the employer, thereby enforcing unequal power relations. The laborious administrative task of quantifying and ascribing value to each item may also discourage disclosure, but not the act of gift-giving. These gifts do not form part of the worker's payment, therefore, the employment contract has to be clear around the act of giving gifts, and all to be declared as such, not as any part of payment.

4.7   Conclusion

In this chapter I highlighted domestic work globally and in South Africa, and the conditions of domestic employment. While domestic employment has been formalised internationally

through structures such as the International Labour Organisation, ILO 189 to date, only 25 countries have ratified this convention. In the SADC region only Mauritius (in 2012) and South Africa (in 2013) have ratified this convention and it remains in force in both countries. The improvement of working conditions for this feminised sector would have implications for women, children and their families. The next chapter focuses on the constructions of motherhood, and how it is shaped by various socio-cultural conditions globally and in the South African context.

CHAPTER 5: PERSPECTIVES ON MOTHERHOOD – WOMEN AS PRIMARY CAREGIVERS

5.1   Introduction

In this section I focus on mothering and motherhood because of the centrality of women in childcare. I begin with a focus on the dominant constructions of motherhood and how the practice of mothering has evolved through time in Europe and Africa.

Motherhood is multi-layered (Walker, 1995), and is "encased in culturally variable rules, regulations, expectations and patterns of behavior" (Sudarkasa, 2004, p. 1). Mothering is referred to as the social practices of nurturing and caring for children from birth to adulthood and it is performed by anyone who commits to this task (Arendell, 2000; Ruddick, 1994). In their deconstruction of motherhood, various authors cogently disproved the misconception of motherhood as naturally occurring in women, or their preparedness and willingness to enact this role (Kruger, 2003; Macleod, 2001; Smart, 1996;). In addition to politicising and ascribing meaning to women's bodies, they are also regulated. Femininity, womanhood and motherhood are often sites of contestation influenced by religion, legislation, medicine and psychology. The current practice of intensive mothering (Hays, 1996), also referred to as essential motherhood (DiQuinzio, 1999), has become the blueprint along which ideal motherhood is measured. Motherwork involves meeting the physical, emotional and socialisation needs of children (Frizelle & Kell, 2010), and this is expected of all mothers regardless of social class, age, beliefs or experience. While motherhood can be assumed to be naturally occurring in all women, there are many guidelines, laws and regulations around childrearing. In this chapter, I discuss how the current practice of mothering was shaped, the various mothering practices, and I also discuss distance parenting among domestic workers.

5.2   Mothering as an ideology

Various cultural, social and political discourses shape motherhood and its practice globally, and the general blueprint remains one where women carry a disproportional amount of unpaid and undervalued care work in the private sphere of the family (Collins, 1994; Fraser, 1989). Motherhood has also been argued to be more than just a practice and discourse, but also an identity (Walker, 1995). Normative ideas about what it means to be an ideal or good mother abound, and it is presumed to be a natural, dyadic, domestic relationship exclusively between mother and child across the world. This conceptualisation of motherhood as universal and naturally occurring in all women requires mothers to be constantly present, ever giving and

selfless (Hays, 1996), thereby prioritising their children's needs above their own and loving them unconditionally. While this may be seen as characterising good motherhood, it can also be oppressive and exploitative of women's labour (Collins, 2000).

Hays (1996) referred to 'intensive' mothering where the mother is the ever-present, loving nurturer, and whose sole preoccupation is childrearing. But mother work is time and energy consuming, it also exploits women and their labour as they are expected to focus exclusively on, or prioritise caregiving of their children. The idea that women derive ultimate fulfilment in motherhood, and that their sole desire is to bond with and raise their children is mistaken. Mothering is layered with contradictions (Hays, 1996), and it is often guided by strict cultural, legal and social norms. In a patriarchal society children belong to their fathers despite the responsibility of childcare falling disproportionately within the domestic, feminised sphere, which Fraser (1989) referred to as the symbolic reproductive. Women are delegated the responsibility of socialising the young and transmitting societal traditions, while men engage in social labour, which manifests as material reproduction. Her argument being that women's subordination is entrenched by this division of labour. There is also an argument that women are best placed in the household, and can use their God-given skills to rear children. But childrearing practices are shaped by society, and the work of mothering is further complicated by capitalism and patriarchy (Rothman, 1994).

Some 300 years ago, children were seen as animalistic, fragile and demonic (Hays, 1996) needing redemption and cure from their lazy, ill-informed and frightening selves. At the time children were deemed to be virtually worthless (Hays, 1996) and some were valued for their potential in society. They seem to have been valuable in as far as they could add value to the household and take care of their ageing parents. From as early as 5-6 years old they were expected to work, starting as apprentices and eventually masters of their crafts. Childcare was generally the responsibility of servants – often males, and was not very complicated. Practices such as swaddling to protect children from themselves, tossing children, and putting them on the peg, out of the way was common, so was abandonment or boarding out in Europe (Hays, 1996). Their care and well-being seemed to be very low on the social scale. But the care of children, especially those of the aristocracy, changed around the 18th century, influenced by Rosseau's 1761 *Julie,* and *Emile* in 1762. His writings highlighted the innocence and sacredness of children, and the need to value them.

It is also noted that although the treatment of children improved throughout the 18th and 19th century, religion played an important part in childrearing. Perhaps the first child rearing manual is the Bible with its emphasis on children being born in sin, therefore needing to be cleansed and moulded. The patriarchal household, with the father as head and provider responsible for the physical and moral well-being of the family entrenched his position as head of the family. The location of women in the family hierarchy also confirmed their subordinate positions as caregivers, in the domestic sphere, safe from an immoral and corrupt world. They were also seen as needing guidance in childrearing, especially with a fear that their emotional indulgence and excessive affection (Demos, 1986) towards children would 'spare the rod and spoil the child' (Proverbs, 13 v24).

The rise of the moral mother can be seen in the 20th century where middle class urban dwellers dramatically shifted their childrearing ways. The value of women and children increased, women were tasked with protecting the innocence of children by shielding them from the bad outside world. Intensive mothering became the ideal way of raising children, and a sole focus of women's time and energy. The added advantage of removing women from the social reproductive sphere or relegating them to domesticity, was a reduction of their competition for employment (Collins, 1991). Also, domesticity conveniently elevated the position of the middle class, they fitted well between the frivolous rich and the promiscuous poor (Cott, 1977). This new model of raising children soon spread over the world, and evolved as society advanced.

Intensive motherhood, the ideal type of mothering which requires a selfless, ever present and available mother who puts the needs of her children above her own (Hays, 1996), has become so universalised that only a few critical feminist have challenged it (Alldred, 1996; Phoenix, Woollett & Lloyd, 1991). Its criticism as "racist, colonialist, masculinist" (Alldred, 1996, p. 127), and leaning heavily towards White, middle class, nuclear, able-bodied families, has not diminished its centrality or status. Other forms of mothering, which I discuss later in this chapter, are often marginalised.

5.3   Compulsory motherhood and politicising the female body

Many role-players have a stake in the regulation of women's bodies. The definition of femininity through a woman's ability to procreate synonymises womanhood with motherhood. But not all women want to have babies. Motherhood has been ideologically constructed as compulsory only for those women considered fit (Phoenix, 1996; Wane, 2000) based on a

variety of factors such as one's age, ethnicity, and social class. Phoenix and Woollett (1991) pointed out the subtle intervention of the state in regulating women and their bodies. Compulsory motherhood by the state is glaring (Shchurko, 2012) and women are encouraged to reproduce. Policies and laws, supposedly safeguarding the health of women and children, are in place for the sole purpose of forcing them to procreate. Women are also manipulated into have children by a baby-obsessed world. Remaining childless is interpreted as infertility, a problematic situation, and not as a choice. In return for prioritising women and children's health and their welfare, tacit pressure is put on women to fulfil their obligation to procreate - anything to the contrary is pathologised. On the other hand, those deemed unfit to mother are discouraged from reproducing. There is constant pressure on African women in working class communities to sterilise or prevent a pregnancy (Phoenix, 1991).

Solinger (1994) also pointed out that Black and White babies are not valued the same in society. Whereas White babies of unwed mothers have historically been cared for by the state and the community, Black babies have been seen as draining state resources, and an indication of the immorality and irresponsibility of their mothers. But Kline (1995) conceptualised motherhood as a privilege rather than as a right. "A privilege that can be withheld, both ideologically and in more material ways, from women who are not members of the dominant groups in society or who are otherwise considered unfit. Within this framework, so-called unfit women who want to have children are often confronted with serious barriers and difficulties" (p. 122).

Compulsory motherhood, and the responsibility of childbearing is placed squarely on women (Rothman, 1994; Sewpaul, 1995; Sudarkasa, 2004), which puts pressure on women to procreate. Infertility medicalises women's bodies through processes and procedures which are not only highly invasive and remarkably unsuccessful, but also emotionally draining and expensive (Michaels, 1996; Sewpaul, 1995). The female body is expected to reproduce and failure to do so leads to women-blaming which may manifest in women seeking religious, traditional or cultural explanations and remedies (Sewpaul, 1999). Those who choose a different lifestyle are pathologised and seen as reneging on a social script which has already been put in place (Macleod, 2001; Malacrida, 2009). There is stigma in infertility and depending on one's worldview, this can be perceived to be retribution for wrong-doing (Sewpaul, 1995) often met with pity, anger or misunderstanding (Wollett, 1991).

When 'natural' childbirth fails, scientific breakthroughs and other reproductive technologies are put in place despite this nullifying the position of women in procreation (Arendell, 2000;

Michaels, 1996). Ovarian mothers supply eggs, uterine mothers give birth to children, and social mothers raise them (Stanworth, 1990). Hiring of the womb thus invalidates women and their bodies. In addition, the reproductive process and space has been claimed by men, or rather stolen from women (Rich, 1986). Other women are used to reach the goal of reproduction. Surrogacy is often seen as exploitative as working class women are used to procure babies. This further indicates conforming to the patriarchal construction of attributing some qualities as core attributes of hegemonic femininity (Kruger, 2003; Macleod, 2001; Ruddick, 1994).

Legislation in relation to conception, birth and abortion also take away the autonomy and control of women in relation to their own bodies. This patriarchal construct links mothering with marriage - another way that continues to control women, and their mothering practices. Women are expected to want to be mothers, which may not always be the case. In the event of unwanted pregnancy, there are strict rules around abortion or the termination of pregnancy. The earliest abortion laws in England criminalised the termination of pregnancy through the 1861 Offences against the person Act (Smart, 1996), and in South Africa it was criminalised through the Abortion and Sterilisation Act (1975). This limited the conditions for elective termination of pregnancy, which could only be performed with the permission of a magistrate after recommendation by two independent state surgeons. If a pregnancy was carried to term, it was common for women to perform infanticide. This too, having been outlawed in 1623 in England, and in 1845 in South Africa, so became the only option for those who were unable to prevent a pregnancy, or could not abort the foetus after conception, was to carry the pregnancy to term.

While Phoenix and Woollett (1991) pointed out the subtle intervention of the state in regulating families, Shchurko (2012) did not. She argued that the Belarusian state ensures compulsory motherhood through the use of policies and laws supposedly safeguarding the health of women and children, for the sole purpose of procreation. Through practices applied directly to the body as in medicine, the female body is objectified and regulated. Women's bodies are subjected to scientific and medical procedures, and legislation is passed to ensure that women procreate - in the name of nation-building. The health and well-being of women and children is also prioritised with the goal of reproduction. In addition to Phoenix and Woollett (1991) Shchurko (2012) argued that motherhood becomes compulsory, even if it is masked by the state's production and passing of ideologies that serve its interests such as self-care. Her argument was against the manipulation of women into becoming mothers, and a regulation of their bodies in order to ensure that they reproduce. Biological motherhood is valued above all forms of

motherhood therefore, infertility is a disaster for the entire community, threatening the growth of the family or the clan (Sewpaul, 1995).

5.4   Religion and motherhood

In all cultures powerful "religious imagery sentimentalizes and idealizes motherhood" (Akujobi, 2011, p.2) as shown by the Madonna in Christianity, the Devina in Hindu tradition, and the "archetypal female Bodhisattvas" in Buddhism. All embody creation, the gift of life and nurturing. Akujobi (2011) pointed out to the sacredness of women in all African cultures, even the African continent is given women-like qualities, referred to as Mother Africa and the land of one's birth. These associate motherhood, birth and nurturing with women and femininity. From a historical perspective, colonisation and religion played a pivotal role in shaping motherhood throughout the world, and Oyewumi (2011) lambasted colonialism, specifically Christianity and Islam for their gendering of motherhood, particularly in Yoruba communities. She highlighted the use of western language to redefine Yoruba culture and practices, such as mothering. Her issue is that mothering was traditionally based on seniority (and spirituality) and not on gender, implying that both sexes could mother children in Yoruba communities.

In contemporary South Africa, Christianity also shaped motherhood. Walker (1995, p. 432) shows the variability of motherhood and she links the dominant discourse around motherhood in African women to "Euro-Christian and Victorian notion of the 'good mother' as the emotional centre of the family." Drawing from Gaitskell's 'devout domesticity', Walker (1995) explained that as church membership among African women grew significantly in the twentieth century, it reshaped the practice of motherhood. Through the *manyanos or* prayer groups, African women formed a common identity as Christian mothers, thus shaping their own practice of motherhood. This patriarchal construct links motherhood and marriage by conferring legitimacy to resulting offspring born in wedlock. This is another way, which Arroba (1996) argued continues to control women. Compulsory or mandatory motherhood pathologises those who choose to remain childfree or childless, labelling them deviant, unfeminine, selfish, or unfortunate (Akujobi, 2011; Gillespie, 2003; Sewpaul, 1999).

Although marriage is often seen as a precursor to motherhood, declining marital rates, and a rise in the independence of women, imply that some women will not have children in wedlock, as is the case for a majority of women in South Africa (Maqubela, 2016) who do not to get married, but still yearn to become mothers. This is despite Christian values that promote the

birth of children in wedlock. Within the dominant marriage discourse, the mother's marital status determines the position of her children, for instance in the Black community, the paternal family has no claim to children born out of wedlock until *inhlawulo* (or damage in isiZulu) has been paid. Marriage between the partners becomes an important factor for parents to exercise their responsibilities and rights towards their children. Guidelines by legislation, in terms of section 21 of the South African Children's Act (2005) outline the responsibilities and rights of fathers towards their children. It states that if at the time of the child's birth the father is living with the mother in a permanent life-partnership; or if he, regardless of whether he has lived or is living with the mother - (i) consents to be identified or successfully applies in terms of Section 26 of the same Act.

To be identified as the child's father or pays damages or *inhlawulo* in terms of customary law, contributes or has attempted in good faith to contribute to the child's upbringing for a reasonable period; and (iii) contributes or has attempted in good faith to contribute towards expenses in connection with the maintenance of the child for a reasonable period" then he has automatic rights and responsibilities to the child. This implies that he is considered an active and willing parent in the life of the child. Major decisions such as schooling, religion and medical care would have to be taken jointly with the child's mother. The Children's Act also makes provision for drawing a parental plan in the case where parents do not reside together, this is a legally binding agreement between the parents in terms of responsibilities and rights towards the child by both parents. But other cultural formalities such as the payment of damages, *inhlawulo*, are significant in the South African context as they determine the extent to which unmarried fathers may have contact with their children or be involved in any way; they may hinder or facilitate father-child relationships.

The Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (120 of 1998) provides for the payment of *inhlawulo*, whereby a fine is imposed on someone who impregnates a (young) woman out of wedlock, thereby 'damaging' her. Similar to *inhlawulo*, *ilobolo* (bride wealth) has cultural and social significance. The customary payment of *ilobolo* signifies marriage plans between parties, where-after children belong to the paternal family, even though their everyday needs are met by the mother with the support of her extended family. Acknowledgement of the pregnancy and the payment of damages not only validates the position of the offspring, but also cleanses the mother and her family of the shame of unmarried pregnancy. She also gains access to a social support structure from his family to help not only with parenting, but other rites or ceremonies that have to be undertaken in relation to the child.

5.5 Developmental theories and the alteration of mothering

Despite the belief that mothering should come naturally to women, child development scientists and 'experts' direct how women should mother (Rich, 1986). Developmental theories encompass ideals about what constitutes good mothering (Kruger, 2003). Those who practice mothering differently (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991; Sudarkasa, 2004); choose not to be mothers (Kruger, 2003); postpone motherhood (Gillespie, 2003) or those who mother 'too early' (Macleod, 2001; Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017; Phoenix, 1991) are often pathologised. They determine circumstances under which mothering should be practised and how mothers should interact with their own children (Phoenix & Woollett, 1991).

As discussed in chapter 3, these normative ideas which have been heavily influenced by males, such as, Bowlby (1969), Spock (1946) and Winnicott (1965) studying able-bodied, middle class, White women in heterosexual, nuclear families, generalised their findings to women living in different circumstances. Phoenix and Wollett (1991) deliberated the impact of parenting styles and child development theories on child rearing. From Baldwin's (1948) theory on the level of control and democracy afforded children to Baumrind's (1967) categorisation of different parenting styles, mothering keeps being shaped by others, or 'professionals' – often male - who have come to be regarded as 'experts' in the practice of mothering (Phoenix & Wollett, 1991).

An emphasis on mothers as sole caregivers whose mothering practices will manifest in psychologically healthy and well-rounded children tends to be mother-blaming (Boonzaier, 2006). Attachment theories place much focus on the ability of mothers to bond with their children, and thus have favourable outcomes for children, and consequently society (Macleod, 2001). But these theories attribute much of adult mental problems to mothers and do not take into consideration different child-rearing practices and beliefs. By portraying happy mothers with well-behaved infants, the media hides the difficult aspects of mothering such as crying babies, sleepless nights and illnesses. Good mothers, can therefore keep their children occupied and happy, notwithstanding any physical or emotional strain on their part. Mother-blaming in psychiatry reached its extreme with Frieda Fromm-Reichmann coining the concept "schizophrenogenic mother" in 1948.

Some of the justifications for keeping mothers under surveillance and giving them assistance and support can be punitive and judgmental. This intervention (or rather interference) is disguised as support for mothers to carry out their role better. But institutionalised motherhood

ideals do not factor in structural differences such as poverty, 'race' and ethnicity which so often impact mothering. Therefore, the conditions under which mothering is practiced are often minimised. Making mothering "a socially constructed object of desire and a punitive normative order against which women are destined to fail" (Malacrida, 2009, p.112). Professional 'support' merely masks the surveillance, imposition, instruction, and supervision of mothers deemed unfit and incompetent. This expectation for all women to 'measure up' and conform to institutionalised notions of childrearing thus justifies their constant criticism, scrutiny and blaming.

Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) attributes much of adult mental problems to mother blaming. This so-called children's "instinctual attachment to their mothers, particularly between seven months and three years of age" (Ichou, 2006, p. 107) is rather prescriptive and narrowly defines the practice of mothering. It also does not take into consideration different child-rearing practices and beliefs, and presumes that all mothers have the same level of interest to bond with and raise their children and do so effortlessly, in order to derive 'ultimate fulfilment' (Kruger, 2003; Macleod, 2001; Ruddick, 1994).

The emphasis on mothers as sole caregivers whose mothering practices will manifest in psychologically healthy and well-rounded children tends to be mother-blaming (Boonzaier, 2006). By failing to honour the unspoken, social contract of bonding with their infants, and continuing with this maternal role throughout childhood, marginalised mothers are seen as incompetent and unable to care for their children, thus "reneging on their care-giving duties" (Macleod, 2001, p. 499). This justifies the need to be keep them under surveillance and give them assistance and support, this intervention (or interference) is meant to help them to become 'better' mothers. Highlighting ideal mothering across the board, consistently, and regardless of the circumstances that mothers find themselves in, undermines women, making motherhood "a socially constructed object of desire and a punitive normative order against which women are destined to fail" (Malacrida, 2009, p.112). It automatically renders those who fall outside the norm as deviant, unfit or bad because they do not fit into the script.

5.6   Alternative mothering practices - African motherhood

Children and mothers have always been celebrated in African communities (Walker, 1995) and both Akujobi (2011) and Sudarkasa (2004) viewed mothering from a perspective that valorises motherhood and fertility, thereby liberating instead of oppressing women. In the Yoruba culture, Makinde (2004) explained why motherhood is revered and respected. The female body

is ascribed both positive and negative qualities. The distinction between wives and mothers is evident. While wives are seen as slaves, mothers are likened to precious stones and the eulogy that refers to both the breasts and the vagina show just how powerful the female body is. Makinde (2004) referred to the power of the breast to nurture, while the vagina can give life or take it. These are contrasting qualities ascribed to the female body and show its power and importance in procreation.

Collins (1994) presented the history of mothering among African-Americans from the period of slavery where African-American women formed women-centred networks to raise children, this form of care is still evident in modern day America and Africa. Perhaps out of necessity or practicality, mothering was shared by slave women who were often separated from their children for one reason or another. From confinement, the inability to engage in physical labour necessitated sharing childrearing duties, and these women-centred networks, regardless of real or fictive kin, contributed to co-operative childcare by biological and *othermothers* whose role was important in the care of children, and for socialisation, reproduction and consumption (Collins, 1994). These networks also ensured emotional and economic support for mothers, but mothering remains the responsibility of women.

It is often claimed that it takes a village to raise a child because community ownership of children is prevalent in Africa. Women - other than biological mothers – can and often do raise children whom they have not given birth to. Historically women were "assigned" or "given" children who were not theirs in an exclusive sense, but to whom they could relate "as a mother" (Sudarkasa, 2004, p.1). *Othermothers* are central in childcare and Buchi Emecheta's classic, *The Joys of Motherhood* is an excellent example of the role of *othermothers* in society. Polygamy – a practice in the Black and Muslim community in South Africa, is legislated under the provisions of the Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (120 of 1998), is an important example.

Biological mothers give birth to and raise their children, but "other mothers" share child rearing tasks (Collins, 2000; Wane, 2000). Social mothers may raise non-biological children as if they are their own regardless of whether they are given or assigned children by the extended family (Sudarkasa, 2004). Others are "co-mothers" who raise children as a result of being co-wives of the same husband (Sudarkasa, 2004). Other mothers may also be defined by their mothering practices or their position in society such as age and young mothers (Macleod, 2001), ethnicity and Black mothers (Phoenix, 1991), mothers with disabilities (Malacrida, 2009) or lesbian

mothers (Lorde, 2007). This further emphasises the significance of the extended family in childrearing where all female kin have culturally defined roles – and depend on their own women-centred networks for support. But Maqubela (2016) argued that the proximity of extended family impacts on the viability of this option. It is not always possible to depend on other female kin for childrearing and support. Her study of middle class Black women undertaken in Limpopo, indicates while there is still a dependence on female kin for childcare, women also employ nannies to look after their children. Where female relatives live far, they may be invited to come and live with a mother who needs their services, and although she may pay her relative for childcare services, this is often not seen as domestic employment, but rather a reciprocal arrangement which mutually benefits both parties. Grandmothers may also be asked to move in or, if the mother stays with her parents then a domestic worker may be paid to do other chores in the house including childcare (Maqubela, 2016).

5.7   Womanhood, femininity and adulthood

The importance of childbearing as an expression of femininity has always been celebrated in many communities (Walker, 1995). The birth of a child signifies that a woman has brought life into the world, and there are accompanying assumptions about her role as a mother, which shape her relationship with her child, the family and society. The link between femininity and motherhood pressurizes women to have children even when they are not emotionally or financially ready for this responsibility. Malacrida's (2009) study on women with disabilities, highlighted the lengths to which women with disabilities strive towards ideal motherhood, often at great personal exertion to affirm their femininity. Motherhood is perceived as a gateway to normalisation, therefore these marginalised women seeking to affirm their sense of self as gendered beings may become mothers even when they are not ready for this role. Pregnancy and motherhood not only show femininity, but also that these are gendered people who can also fit into society, and thus remove the stigma of disability.

Similarly, other authors questioned the link between childbirth, femininity and adulthood in the case of teenage mothers (Kruger, 2003; Macleod, 2001). Society pathologises teenage motherhood (Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017), although as a marginalised group, childbearing sometimes serves as a way for these young women to become adults, despite society perceiving them as unprepared for this role. Motherhood continues to be a pathway to recognition, respect and acknowledgement of their femininity. Despite motherhood being a pathway to adulthood for girls, it is not the case for teenage boys. Preston-Whyte and Zondi's (1989) findings from a study in a Soweto township, shows just how powerful the idea of ideal motherhood is even

in teenage pregnancies, in her study the teenage participants felt that pregnancy affirmed their femininity, instead of making them feel ashamed.

In their study of teenage mother and fathers in Inanda, a low income community in Durban, Ntini & Sewpaul (2017) found that often these young women become single mothers who shoulder the responsibility of child-rearing alone. Teenage mothers are often perceived as physically, financially, academically and emotionally immature (Macleod, 2001; Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017). Although women's ability to create life and reproduce can evoke feelings of "self-worth, celebration and power", locating womanhood and femininity within childbearing is rather short-sighted if it focuses solely on the event of childbirth (Richardson, 1993). This essentialising of motherhood minimises women's work of providing physical and emotional protection of children, their guidance and socialisation (Frizelle & Kell, 2010, p. 27).

5.8 Mothering from the margins

The mothering practices of some women is different, and continuously stigmatised if not marginalised (Collins, 2000; Parreñas, 2008). In this section, I deliberate on two forms of alternative and marginalised mothering: distance mothers and nannies as shadow mothers.

5.8.1 Reconceptualising motherhood – the complexities of distance

Deviancy discourses tend to "other" those who do not conform to the norm, and single Black women are no exception. Maqubela (2016) emphasised the simultaneous provider and nurturer role of many Black mothers, and in South Africa the separation of mothers from their children is historical (Gaitskell, *et al*., 1983). Apartheid laws which relegated Blacks to homelands, forced the separation of mothers from their children. Women working as domestic workers often left their children in the care of relatives, or on their own (Ally, 2009; Gaitskell, *et al*. 1983). These women concurrently work and mother their children through *othermothers* – not fathers. The absence of men from childrearing is glaring, the rigid roles assigned to both men and women in terms of material provision, reproduction and child rearing keep gender roles firmly in place. While men are not entirely absent from day-to-day childrearing, they tend to have minimal and marginal childrearing responsibilities that emphasise their roles as providers, enforcers of discipline, and decision-makers on behalf of the family. Men conveniently rationalize their absence from active parenting by emphasising the provider role, thus leaving the responsibility of childcare squarely on the shoulders of women.

Gendered parenting makes mothers the primary caregivers of children despite spatial and temporal re-arrangements. The same standard of ideal motherhood being selfless, ever present

and available to their children applies to distant or remote mothers - women who mother their children from a distance - usually through surrogate mothers or other female caregivers, even when the fathers co-reside with the children. Regardless of the reasons for parents not staying with their children, women take primary responsibility for childrearing. This may lead to feelings of "double belonging" (Boccagni, 2012, p. 266) that is living in two environments, despite being physically separated, as their thoughts are with their children.

Perhaps Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila's (1997, p. 558) "I'm here, but I'm there" captures the feeling of physical separation and emotional intimacy, succinctly. By migrating to places of employment and mothering their children from a distance, these women contest and entrench gender roles simultaneously (Parreñas, 2008). The complication brought about by distance is significant. On the one hand, they provide for their families and on the other, they strive to maintain emotional bonds. Although they assume an additional role of breadwinner, the provision of emotional support to children remains their responsibility, a space where the man has very little involvement (Ichou, 2006; Macleod, 2001; Parreñas, 2008).

Mothering from afar presents a number of paradoxes as shown by Contreras & Griffith (2012) in their study of Mexican women working in the crab factories in the United States. These women not only reshape and reaffirm traditional gender roles, but also challenge them by being providers and caregivers simultaneously. Their wish to improve the quality of their children's lives forces them to leave, and stay far from them for long periods of time. In their quest to become better mothers, the amount of face-to-face interaction is affected and in the fulfilment of two very competing demands - the maintenance of a close relationship with their children, and providing for them, places these women in invidious positions as they are often demonised for neglecting their children, blamed if they misbehave, and seen as lacking in their mothering skills (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Frizelle & Kell, 2010; Macleod, 2001; Parreñas, 2008). The dominant view that women belong in their homes with their children, is often used against women when there are problems at home. It is easy to vilify those who mother differently, as in the case of mothering from a distance, despite their income benefiting the family and community. While their economic contribution is welcome, their "threat" to family solidarity is not (Parreñas, 2008, p. 330).

Despite spatial distance, women still aspire to recreate a complete family arrangement as present, active and involved primary caregivers. In order to keep in touch with their children, various strategies are used, depending on the resources at their disposal, for instance through

technology, by use of the telephone, email, text messages, Whatsapp, Facebook and Skype (Boccagni, 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997; Illianes, 2010; Parreñas, 2008). Even in transnational motherhood, they often call their children numerous times a week (Contreras & Griffith, 2012) to enquire about their well-being and health.

Buying expensive toys, gifts and gadgets is common, although this is problematic as it commodifies the parent-child relationship and overcompensates for parental absence, this is what Stewart (1999) referred to as Disneyland mothers. In the age of late neoliberal capitalist expansion, human relations seem to be reduced to economic exchanges. People's lives have become part of the market which is no longer about people buying what they need, but also experiencing their own lives being turned into commodities. Spending time with family is calculated in terms of hours and income, making face-to-face interaction expensive. The cost of seeing one another and taking time off may mean missing a working season, loss of income for a certain period, which in turn often has to be made up by an extended, subsequent working periods, and hence increased absence from home. Notwithstanding their material needs being met, family time becomes expensive, rare and commodified.

5.8.2   Intensive mothering through others – domestic nannies as shadow mothers

In urban areas, where families often live far from one another, the practice of *othermothering* continues mainly through women-centred networks (Collins, 2000). *Othermothers* care for all children as if they are their own in community-based childcare systems comprising family members, neighbours, friends or paid caregivers. While it is common practice for upper and middle class, White women to employ nannies and day care mothers to look after their children, working class, often African women tend to rely on family and kin for childcare (Collins, 2000; Smart, 1996). Although working class and more affluent middle class women depend on others for childcare, both are othered in varying degrees. As nannies, their mothering experience is unique in that they leave their own children to care for other people's children. They occupy an unenviable position of parallel mothering. Their employment as nannies comes with the provision of emotional labour for their employers' children, while striving to maintain emotional connections with their own children. Emotional labour in caregiving is fraught with challenges (Hochschild, 1983). Constantly guarding against intense attachment to their employers' children tends to be emotionally draining leading to "detached attachment", where caregivers attempt to maintain emotional distance from the children they care for in order to protect themselves, they hold back emotionally to avoid complete attachment (Nelson, 1990, p. 598). The daily recreation of this detached attachment is difficult to maintain, and a cause of

burnout for caregivers. Providing warmth and love to their employers' children and concurrently maintaining emotional distance is part of the unspoken "feeling rules" which structure emotional labour in childcare and have to be strictly observed (Macdonald, 2010, p. 114).

They become *othermothers*, women who care for others' children, although in this case they sell their labour. They, in turn, depend on female kin in their extended families or community-based childcare support from neighbours, friends or paid caregivers (Collins, 2000). Nannies mother their children by proxy (Macdonald, 2010), and occupy a middle and in-between position where they do not have parental authority over the children they care for, and also relinquish control of their own children. They also make it possible for other women to participate in paid employment and pursue other activities outside the home (Maqubela, 2016) without compromising childcare. Their employers define the parameters along which nannies may parent their children, including discipline, routine, and affection. This highlights the intersection of 'race' and social class between women. The independence and autonomy they so much desire, eludes them as employers establish boundaries along which they can mother. What the employers fail to grasp is that by making nannies extensions of themselves, they maintain the status quo of patriarchy, by putting in structures which do not challenge the peripheral role of men in parenting. In their relationship with domestic workers, their role is similar to that of the father, where the domestic worker replaces the mother. There is always a threat that they will replace mothers as substitute parents, which exacerbates their limited authority and role.

5.9   Conclusion

Working as domestic workers positions nannies in between and betwixt motherhood and workers. They find themselves in a difficult position, often fraught with inconsistencies where on the one hand they enable others to mother their children intensively, and on the other, they parent from a distance. Although community childcare networks may buffer the impact of separation caused by distance, they are unable to replace the mother's emotional attachment. The intersection of 'race' and social class impacts the nannies' experiences of mothering. Their marginal position seems to render them invisible extensions of their employers in childcare, and in their performance of emotional labour that is intricately linked to childcare, a constant recreation and maintenance of detached attachment is an unspoken, yet important feeling rule. They have to find a balance in the provision of emotional labour in small enough doses not to create the perception of taking over as independent third parents of the children in their care.

The independence and autonomy they so much desire, eludes them as employers establish boundaries along which they can mother. By employing nannies who they turn into extensions of themselves, these women conform to the intensive mothering ideal. These women buy themselves out of intensive mothering while at the same time, conforming to this ideal. The position of nannies also remains invisible as they make it possible to maintain the status quo.

While intensive mothering which is pronounced in White, heterosexual, married, middle class women is far out of reach for nannies who are often Black women of colour who depend on traditional women-centred, community-child care systems and extended families for child care – does not mean that they do not wish to also mother their children intensively. As working mothers, they face accusations of child neglect and abandonment by working and living far from their families (Babcock, 1997; Parreñas, 2001). As African women they have the added pressure of mothering their children along hegemonic constructions of 'good' motherhood, which are often defined along racial and social class norms far out of their reach.

Yet, they form systems and practices that facilitate distance mothering and recreate some sense of intimacy, as they perform mothering, often within socio-culturally approved customs. In the African community, social and cultural practices such as the payment of *inhlawulo* or damages may qualify who can be a caregiver, which is not based entirely on their physical or emotional ability to take care of children, but their position in the family network in relation to the child. These *othermothers* may be related or unrelated to the child, but their skills and experiences in childrearing are valued and recognised, and because women, and not the village raise the child in many African communities, their role is significant in childcare.

As with children from White, middle-class families, Black children also deserve the best possible care (Solinger, 1994), and need to be mothered intensely. The mothers want to be there for their children even when this seems impossible. Population group should not, as is currently the case, be a marker of difference in parenting.

CHAPTER 6: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

6.1   Introduction

When I started this study, I wanted to know how women and men parent their children. My view of a good mother was along the intensive mother ideal, where women stay with their children and develop close relationships. I have always been fascinated by the ability to leave one's child at home with aging parents, thus 'burdening' them with childcare and in a way abdicating one's responsibilities. For me, attachment and being a hands-on parent were important. I understood that domestic workers were not able to live with their children, but my assumption was that they would try as much as possible to breastfeed, establish routines and then separate from their children after reasonable period. These assumptions were based on the numerous child-rearing manuals that I read and my own research on the internet. It was only in the data collection phase that I realised how much of the dominant discourse I had internalised, and how much support I have always had. I have always had supportive family, and a full-time domestic worker.

Because my children were born in wedlock, I have never felt that my children were rejected or side-lined by my relatives or their paternal family members. All the relevant *Imbeleko*[4] were completed. My pregnancies were planned and my children's births were celebrated by both family and community. When I got divorced and became a single parent, note that I don't use "lone mother" (Standing, 1998, p. 186), I still had the support of family and access to full time childcare, transport to and from school and general access to support. But I found the experiences of the participants very different from the dominant mothering script that I seem to have internalised, and it made me realise how much I had taken for granted the support available to me as a young, Black mother. I was also able to understand the extent to which I have been sheltered by my class position from having to carry the heavy responsibility of childcare. I had a full-time domestic worker when my children were young, and lived 15 minutes away from my mother's place. I could afford to buy time away from home and pursue a career, while my domestic worker took care of my children. I was also able to pursue a career only because she was able to step in and take care of my children.

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[4] A ceremony that is conducted on the 10th day after the baby is born, or later symbolising cutting of the umbilical connection from the mother. It introduces the child to the ancestors and in some cases a goat or sheep is slaughtered as a sign of sacrifice to the ancestors.

For the first time when I undertook this study, I realised just how much my domestic worker was sacrificing, both for me and for her children. In a book chapter I have written titled "Between and betwixt – positioning nannies as mothers: perspectives from Durban, South Africa" (Seepamore, 2018), I highlighted that women are really caught between a rock and a hard place when they become nannies. On the one hand, they are employed to take care of other people's children, but on the other, their children are in the care of others. Yet, they still find a way to manage both the work they do and their emotions. Because care work is intricately linked with emotional labour, I argue in chapter 4 that nannies constantly have to manage their emotions (Hochschild, 1983), and carry out what Nelson (1990) referred to as 'detached attachment' when they care for their employers' children.

My nanny loved her children and had nick-names for them, but she equally missed her children and called them all the time on her phone. They lived in Lesotho and she was in South Africa for a good part of the year, but she still managed to parent them. She knew who had difficulty with which subject at school, supervised homework and even scolded them over the phone. She had no intention of living with them in South Africa, because she felt that this arrangement was enough for them, plus she would have to find accommodation for five people, and look for schools – something she did not have the energy or resources for. Although her support system was her sister-in-law who helped to supervise the children while she was at work, it was not the same as being with her children. Like me, she wanted to be a hands-on mother, but sacrificed so much for us and her family. Her own needs were not a priority, only that her children get educated.

This qualitative study, which endorses the subject positioning of the researcher as reflexive practice, was designed to understand how - those who by nature of their employment do not usually co-reside with their children – undertake parenting. The study aimed to find out how parents negotiate and enact their roles within the wider societal constructs of 'good parenting' in a context where it is expected that children will live in heterosexual, nuclear families with clear gender roles and division of labour in the household. Within a gendered space, parenting seems to be the primary responsibility of women. Even when both parents do not stay with their children, hegemonic practices of men as providers and women as caregivers still apply. The participants lived in stretched households where, sometimes, the children, mother and father lived separately from one another, and did not see meet for long periods of time. Although men still fulfilled their expectations as providers and the mothers provided care through a proxy parent, they still espoused dominant constructions of mothering and fathering.

In order to fully understand the experiences of participants, I conducted 22 in-depth interviews and four focus group discussions, two with males and another two with female domestic workers. Most of the individual interviews took place at the local park where the participants liked to meet on weekends when they are off, or at specific corners before or after work. I opted to use areas where they were comfortable to conduct the interviews, although sometimes environmental factors such as noise or the heat required that we move to a more comfortable spot. I interviewed some of the respondents more than once in order to clarify something or to follow up. The duration of the interviews ranged from one hour to two and a half hours, with either telephone or face-to-face follow-up interviews, where necessary. Some of them asked for these follow-up contacts even when it was not related to the study, for instance to ask about their rights as workers or seek certain services in the community.

6.2   Research design

This qualitative study was informed by critical theory, particularly intersectionality, which "enables us to examine the social divisions and power relations that affect people's lives" (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 118). It was designed to understand the experiences of domestic workers who parent from a distance, and the meanings they attached to parenting. The flexibility of qualitative research allowed me to adapt and make changes to the study as and when necessary, within the parameters approved by the University's Higher Degrees and Ethics Committees. Because it is concerned with the lived experiences and closed worlds of participants, a qualitative study helps the researcher to understand phenomena from the point of view of informants (Henning, 2004). It is also open to multiple methods of data collection and analysis, but qualitative research is still a "marginalised methodological discourse" (Edwards & Ribbens, 1998, p. 3) which is often positioned against more 'proper' quantitative research which enjoys more dominance. It is argued that proper research must show validity, reliability and representativeness. Adopting the lens of intersectionality I was interested in domestic workers' gender, class and 'race' positions in relation to parenting.

This interpretivist study sought to understand the meanings attached to parenting and how the participants saw their parenting, their experiences of parenting from a distance when the dominant view is an intensive type of parenting. Interpretivist studies do not seek to isolate and measure causes of phenomena, rather they want to understand individuals' everyday experiences and the meanings and feelings attached to these experiences, that is "how people feel inside, seeking to interpret individuals' everyday experiences, deeper meanings and feelings, and idiosyncratic reasons for their behaviour" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011, p. 50). Delving

into the topic of motherhood as a mother myself, was somewhat dicey. I had my own experiences and expectations of 'good' mothering, but was curious to find out how domestic workers raise their children to be responsible and successful members of society. When I grew up, there were children whose parents were always working in "the kitchens", returning home on weekends and in some instances, especially the workers from Lesotho, would go home quarterly. I also had a full-time, live-in domestic worker who only went home quarterly. When she started working for me, her youngest child was 10 years old and I used to wonder how they were so well-behaved and responsible when they were raised in the absence of their mother. She was taking care of my children, yet she had left hers in Lesotho. Through this study, it was my intention to understand the experiences of the participants from their own point of view and to report the findings without drowning out their voices.

Throughout this study of parenting, especially mothering, I often asked myself if I had been 'duped' into enjoying raising my children, or as Rich (1977) argued being socialised into domesticity, and thus exploitation and detention into the private domain. Ribbens (1998) disputed the notion that women blindly follow what 'experts' say about childrearing, without purposefully seeking the information they needed, thereby rejecting simplistic notions of false consciousness. Both men and women were working to support their children, but the women were more involved in parenting and they formed networks of support with their caregivers and *abomkhaya*, those who come from the same village or town, sometimes referred to as homegirls or homeboys. They raised their children while living and working in parallel universes, trapped between dominant constructions of ideal motherhood which validate intensive mothering on the one hand, and living in the reality of *othermothering*.

6.3   Sampling

I used non-probability incidental, purposive and snowball sampling to find participants who met the criteria for inclusion in the study. Purposive sampling is employed when the researcher selects the sample on the basis of her knowledge of the population and its elements based on the nature of the aims and objectives of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Non-probability sampling relies heavily on the discretion of the researcher (De Vos, Strydon, Fouché & Delport, 2011), but it enabled me to "select members of a difficult-to-reach, specialized population" or for in-depth understanding of issues (Neuman, 2003, p. 198). This technique was appropriate for the study because the participants were not easily accessible despite their conspicuousness.

Most of them were not trusting and did not understand why someone would be interested in their working conditions if they were not government officials, of be interested in their parenting challenges. When I explained that I was from social work, they relaxed and began to talk about their experiences more freely. I relied mainly on incidental sampling, or convenience sampling which is used frequently in social work (Rubin & Babbie, 2011) to reach participants. The danger with this strategy is that it reflects the views of only those who were reached by the researcher at a specific time and location, but the advantage is that it usually feasible and less expensive than other sampling methods (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). I usually approached those wearing a domestic worker's uniform, or groups of women sitting in a corner around 6pm during the week.

The first group I approached did not respond positively to the invitation. The ladies were suspicious of me because I looked like a 'madam' and drove a car. There are different power relations between researchers and those who are researched (Standing, 1998). I represented a potential employer and also someone outside their in-crowd. When I approached them, only one person answered on behalf of the group and she seemed to be the leader. I explained my study and what I wanted to ask them, but she was not convinced. Because I was not looking to employ someone, she declined. The others also followed suite when they realised that they were not going to be employed by me or another 'madam' looking for an employee. In this instance 'group think' occurred, this is:

> A mode of thinking that people engage in when they are deeply involved in a cohesive in-group, when the members' strivings for unanimity override their motivation to realistically appraise alternative courses of action. It occurs only when cohesiveness is high. It requires that members share a strong 'we-feeling' of solidarity and desire to maintain relationships within the group at all costs. When colleagues operate in a groupthink mode, they automatically apply the 'preserve group harmony' test to every decision they face (Janis, 1991, p. 237).

The group seemed to follow the decision of the 'leader' and declined participation. Going forward I then approached participants who were walking alone or in pairs. I usually went to the local primary schools and crèches in the afternoon to look for participants. I then asked them to invite others to the study. I approached those who were visible as domestic workers and those who agreed to take part were included. This incidental, non-probability sampling method allowed me

To identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources. This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest, and in addition to knowledge and experience, the availability and willingness to participate, communicate experiences and opinions in an articulate, expressive, and reflective manner (Etikan, Nomusa & Alkassimare, 2016, p. 2).

The participants were domestic workers, and the most important criterion was that they were not living with their children. Most of them did not, due to the nature of domestic work, where employees normally live on the property of the employer who usually do not allow children. Others lived in informal settlements and rented accommodation without their children.

Snowball sampling was useful because those in the study invited others who in turn, and this expanded the sample. Although this removed researcher bias (Standing, 1998), the disadvantage of snowball sampling is that it is "impossible to determine the possible sampling error and make generalizations (i.e. statistical inferences) from the sample to the population. As such, snowball samples should not be considered to be representative of the population being studied" (Sharma, 2017, p. 752). But the real interest in qualitative data is analysing data in context, not in the generalisation of the data. The participants invited others in their networks to the study, and they linked me with others, and so the sample grew until data saturation. One female participant, Msebenzi had a son who had a Human Resources diploma and she understood what research meant, her manager was also a deputy vice chancellor in one of the local institutions of higher learning, and she had a good idea of what research meant although she had never been in a study before this one; she was happy to participate in one 'for the first time'.

6.3.1 Defining distance in parenting

In a study about distance parenting, it was not easy to define 'distance' and in this case it referred to spatial distance, or how physically far the participants stayed from their children. This was not emotional distance, but I wanted to understand how distance affected their parenting, and how they managed parenting when they lived far from their children.

Most of the participants were from KwaZulu-Natal and their families were in the rural areas. Although some were relatively near their homes, yet it was far, with the participants self-defining as distance parents. All of the participants used taxis to travel and their journeys were not less than an hour away. The frustration for those living relatively close to home, such as

participants from KwaZulu-Natal was that home seemed to be close, yet it was not due to expensive public transport or not getting time off. If there was no direct taxi to their village, it meant that they had to take a connecting taxi somewhere along the way, and this was expensive and time-consuming. Those whose homes were in KwaZulu-Natal such as Nomusa whose home was in uMzinto, about 68 km from Durban, and for Sibani from eMpangeni, it was 174 km away, or 1 hour and 45 minutes, but by taxi this journey took much longer. Although some of the participants had weekends off, or a Sunday off, they felt that it would be a waste of money to go home if they only slept for one night. The weekend was too short, for instance Puseletso, who lived in Matatiele, a village in the Eastern Cape, explained that going home for the weekend was not worth the money because she felt like it was just saying 'hello' and then having to go back to work.

Like other participants who had to travel far, she spent a lot of money only to spend one full day at home before having to go back to work. Instead of visiting every month most local participants visited every other month or quarterly to save costs. The preferred option was to send money and gifts with others going home, in that way they did not have to spend money on transport. Thus, 'distance' parenting in this study, was not defined by the number of kilometres that the participants were from their homes, but the lengths of time being away from their children. The participants who came from outside the province of KwaZulu-Natal, and others from neighbouring SADC countries such as Lesotho were distant both geographically and in terms of the length of time that they spent away from their children.

6.3.2   Gatekeepers

Two gatekeepers helped me to recruit participants. Horowitz, Ladden, and Moriarty (2002) suggested that one identify 'gatekeepers' to invite participants to the study, this helps to establish rapport (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). One of my gatekeepers, Maria, did not meet the inclusion criteria of the study, but she helped to find potential participants for me. She was a popular person in the domestic worker groups, and she introduced me to a group of potential participants at the corner where they sat to wait for each other and chat before or after work. I explained the purpose of the study to the participants (Rubin & Babbie, 2011) prior to the interviews and asked for permission to tape record the interviews when I met with them individually. Many were comfortable to be recorded, and they all preferred to meet at the park or their workplaces when their employers had left. With other participants I used my office, and this was usually on the weekend or after office hours when they retired for the night. The other gatekeeper was Lerato from Lesotho, she recruited participants from her home town and

asked that they invite others interested in the study. She was initially interviewed individually, and then participated in a focus group discussion.

6.4   Data collection

The study was undertaken in the eThekwini Metro and data collection was done in a language comfortable to the participants. I am fluent in both isiZulu and South Sotho. The participants from Lesotho and Matatiele were most comfortable with seSotho. I used their language of choice to interview them so that they could express themselves well. It was very helpful for me that I am fluent in isiZulu and SeSotho, therefore I could understand what was discussed and some of the meanings behind certain words. Just by interviewing them, I had to understand not only the words they were using, but also the accompanying innuendos, and understand the meaning behind their stories. I paid attention to the use of words and terminology. Research is for a specific audience which has its own language.

Standing (1998, p. 194) argued that language is political, it does not only help us to communicate, but it is an "expression of shared understandings and assumptions to transmit certain values to those who use it". It can be used to exclude others and by its complicated, abstract nature, it reproduces the dominant "intellectual, White, male, middle-class hierarchy where the only work seen to be theoretical is highly abstract, difficult to read and containing obscure references" (Standing, 1998, p. 194 citing hooks, 1994). This is similar to the adult-centric focus of research on the voices of adults, against those of children (Alldred, 1996). These arguments may also be used to analyse how those with power, and in the inner circle, such as professionals, research women, Blacks and the poor or working class. The language used to define participants can be problematic, as pointed out by Standing (1998) who argued against using the negative term of lone mothers, against single parent. The implications being that these women are lonely, and that single parenting implied women.

With regards to male participants, it was difficult to identify them because they did not wear a 'maids' uniform, but most were approached if they were walking dogs or sweeping the yard outside a domestic residence. I was aware that my position as a social worker may have scared some of the male participants from the study, especially if they presumed that my role was regulatory or punitive. Others suspected that I was sent by the mothers of the children or worked for the South African Social Security Agency (SASSA) – an agency that disburses means-tested grants. They were initially not comfortable with speaking to a social worker even when it was for research. But those who agreed to participate started by asking me a lot of

questions such as the aim of the study and who would be privy to the results, why they were approached and what they could gain from participation in a research study. Once they were satisfied, they also invited others. It is possible that those who chose to might have been more supportive of with their families and were not afraid of being judged. By providing for their families, the participants were operating within the dominant discourse of fathers as providers, albeit from a distance, and this may have motivated their participation in the study.

The male participants did not see themselves as domestic workers. As explained in Chapter 9, they introduced themselves by occupation as gardeners, or drivers but not as domestic workers. I had to be very careful how I explained my study. Most of the men who declined participation did not understand why I wanted to involve them in 'women's issues' like parenting. It was seen as the exclusive domain of women, not men. The refusal of men to participate in the study, although a limitation in representing the voices of men, was itself telling, but this was not unusual. Sewpaul (1995) for instance, found it equally challenging, despite concerted efforts, to recruit men into a study typically thought of as dealing with 'women's issues' such as infertility.

6.4.1   In-depth interviews

I used in-depth interviews to gather data. Two males and 22 females were individually interviewed. A qualitative interview is different from a conversation, the interviewer has a general plan of inquiry and specific questions that must be asked (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Taking time to know the participants well had positive outcomes (Krefting, 1991) as it allowed me access to sensitive information that participants would not have volunteered at the beginning of the research project or if contact had been minimal. Establishing rapport meant that I interacted with the participants even when I was not undertaking interviews. Sometimes I bumped into participants at the shops, or on their way from work. Because in-depth interviews are time consuming (Neuman, 2003), the data collection period was also longer. I had to ensure that participants were comfortable with my presence and understood the reason for the study, therefore it became necessary to prolong my engagement in the field (De Vos *et al*., 2011).

In-depth interviews are time consuming, and time was a limitation in that some interviews took place before work, they tended to start around 06h15 and had to be over by 07h00 for the participants to be at work on time. Other interviews took place after 7pm because this was the only time the participants could get time off on a weekday. None of the participants had tea-time or took a lunch break therefore this was not an option. Only two participants allowed me

to interview them at their workplaces, but this was only when there was no other person at home. One participant had the permission of her employer to be interviewed, but did not want me to tell her that we had actually met.

Some of the interviews were interrupted, we would start it in the morning, break so that the participants could go to work, and continue in the afternoon. Other interviews were completed over the phone or after a few weeks. There were interviews which took place in my car, which was sometimes too hot or too cold which might have affected the conversations. The lived reality of participants is different from the orderly world of research, which take place in controlled environments. In this study some of the participants had competing demands and could not control some aspects of their lives and appointments were sometimes forgotten, rescheduled or simply not kept. The participants would sometimes have to terminate the interviews earlier, sometimes they did not get the time to see me due to work, family and other commitments. This was also sometimes seen as simply 'chatting' therefore it was not a priority for the participants. I had to work around their schedules and maximise the time we had.

6.4.2 Focus group discussions

Focus group discussions were used to gather data and were suitable because they allowed me to ask several participants questions systematically and simultaneously (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). The advantages of focus groups are that they are "often inexpensive, generate speedy results and offer flexibility for probing" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011, p. 469). Groups require proper planning and preparation of participants that they will be responding to questions in a group, not individually. Although this may work for those who want to express their views, it may also be threatening to quieter people.

Four focus groups discussions took place, two were with males and another two were with female participants. These discussions took place in my office at the university and I provided refreshments for the participants. The duration of the interviews ranged from one hour to two and a half hours, with either telephone or face-to-face follow-up interviews, when necessary. In one focus group discussion with the females, there were four participants and in another one, they were seven. Lerato was initially interviewed alone, then we had a follow-up telephonic discussion after which she volunteered to invite more participants from Lesotho. She was also part of the focus group discussion with seven participants who were available on the same day. They were from the same village in Lesotho and most knew one another well. None of them

were in the interviewed individually, and in this group the discussion was carried out in seSotho.

The second focus group had four participants, it was organised by Maria, and the participants were also familiar with one another, therefore conversation flowed and they were relaxed. They were also a very lively group who expressed their views well. In this group some of the participants had been involved in individual interviews, and the interview was in both isiZulu and seSotho. In both groups, most of the participants knew one another, so they were able to speak freely and sometimes simultaneously. This was both an advantage and a disadvantage because they were spontaneous in their answers, but they all spoke at the same time when some issues were raised. There was laughter, and tears and such openness that I had not seen in individual interviews. Some of the participants argued with one another, and made their points clear, but this was in such positive spirit that it did not affect the group dynamics negatively. I had to ask them to listen to each other, so that I could hear what was being said.

One participant MaLesedi was quite domineering throughout the session. A disadvantage of focus groups is that it can sideline the views of those who are quiet or shy, and through 'groupthink' participants can be pressured to say what is not a true reflection of their experiences or views (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). Groupthink is the excessive tendency to seek concurrence among group members which emerges when the need for agreement takes priority over the motivation to obtain accurate information and make appropriate decisions (Toseland & Rivas, 2016). The focus group discussions with the female participants were very lively and it helped that some of the members such as MaLesedi took a lead for others to open up and tell their stories.

The focus groups with male participants were not very lively, although they later relaxed. They were cautious at the beginning and presented themselves almost as perfect fathers. One group was carried out in seSotho and another one in isiZulu, this was the main reason for conducting two focus group discussions instead of one. Individual behaviours of participants may be altered when they know that they are being studied, this phenomenon is usually referred to as the halo effect (Landsberger, 1956). The champion in one group was Peace, whose wife MaDineo had recruited him and others living in Mayville, they were from the same rural area in Lesotho. They had all agreed to being tape recorded and I left the recorder to run even when we took a break. The focus groups were over 2 hours long as some needed to answer their phones or take a bathroom or smoke break.

I was also aware that my position as a woman and a social worker could have made the male participants want to present an ideal version of their experiences, so I established rapport with them prior to data gathering and took great care in preparing the room to be inviting. In all the groups we had tea, coffee and muffins, and they were given a token of R150.00 ($9.08) for their time on completion of the groups. I also gave participants mugs as tokens of appreciation at the conclusion of the interviews, or focus group discussions. They exclaimed that this made them like important guests at a function. After the focus group with the ladies from Lesotho, we all took a group picture. They also formed a Whatsapp group, where we usually exchange jokes and motivational messages.

6.5. Thematic and critical discourse analysis (CDA) to analyse the data

Thematic analysis was complemented with CDA, which sees language as a social practice, where discourse is understood as socially constitutive and socially conditioned. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) analyses written texts and spoken words to unveil sources of power, dominance, resistance and inequality, and how these are maintained within socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts. It accepts the central premise that language is not neutral; language does not only reflect the world but actively constructs the world that we live in, and it speaks to the complex relationship between structure and agency (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Gilbert and Sewpaul (2015, p. 85) pointed out that while "while textual analysis is important, it is only a part of the discourse analysis." The emphasis is on how the language action is framed within a broader social order (Fairclough, 2009), as language is both an activity and a social practice that reflects, constructs and reproduces socio-political and cultural realities (Wodak & Meyer, 2009). An oral utterance is embedded in a discourse and regarded as "a manifestation of social action which again is widely determined by social structure" (Wodak & Meyer, 2009, p. 6). I used critical discourse analysis to understand how the use of language in social contexts transmits, creates and changes meaning (Humphries, 2008).

CDA is fundamentally interested in not only analysing structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control, as manifested in language but aims to investigate critically, social inequality as it is expressed, constituted and legitimized by language use. Most critical discourse analysts would thus endorse Habermas's claim that "language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimize relations of organized power. Insofar as the legitimizations of power relations ... are not articulated .... language is also ideological" (Habermas 1967, p. 259).

Fairclough (1993, p.135) defined CDA as

> Discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony.

The intersection of language, power and gender show how the participants in this study understood and practiced parenting. The definitions of the terms discourse, critical, ideology and power are multiple. As a social practice, discourse "implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s) which frame it: the discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them" (Meyer, 2001, p. 15).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997) explain that discursive practices can shape the identities, knowledge and social relations between people, and either sustain the status quo or transform it. In this study I aimed to find out how the participants made sense of their parenting practices, and what dominant ideologies they had internalized and used in their parenting of children. I also wanted to understand the extent to which they felt that they were able to parent their children within the dominant practices and beliefs around parenting. Their beliefs influenced their parenting, and their aspirations towards intensive parenting. Because CDA understands that language alone is not enough to deconstruct the dominant ideologies, it also seeks to conscientise those who are oppressed or powerless about the way ideology keeps them in disadvantaged positions, which cohere with the core premises and aims of critical theory.

In this study, informed by CDA, I analysed the voices of the participants in relation to dominant discourses on motherhood and fatherhood, and the influence of these on their self-conceptualisation as parents. I critically interrogate the discourses on intensive mothering and *othermothering*, and I call for the discourse to shift to intensive parenting, so as to reflect the roles of both men and women in parenting, and to challenge the dichotomous representation of men as providers and women as nurturers. I also interrogate the structural factors that contributed to their domestic worker status, the power relations between themselves and their

employers, and how participants negotiated structural constraints to parent from a distance.

Data processing involved the coding of data and categorisation of data into themes or patterns, bearing in mind the research question. This process begins in the field (Creswell, 2012), and because of the fluidity of qualitative data, the distinction between data collection and analysis may be difficult to identify (Patton, 2002). Data from the interviews were audio-recorded then transcribed and translated into English. The recordings and interview notes were analysed through critical discourse and the data were organised thematically. Information from the focus group discussions was voluminous and less organised that from the individual interviews (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). In order to familiarise myself with the data, Terre Blanche, Durrhein and Painter (2006) suggest complete immersion into the data where it is imperative that the researcher uses all the data collected including field notes, interview transcriptions (Kvale, 1996) and any other observations. Following transcription, I began the coding process (Braun & Clarke, 2006) by putting the data into relevant themes (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). This is a back and forth process of combining different codes to form themes. Coding helps to categorize, analyse and select themes (Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012). I coded verbal and non-verbal information from the tape recorder, my notes and observations, and from this themes began to emerge (King & Horrocks, 2010).

In addition to recordings, field notes are an invaluable source of information (Patton, 1990). Although the tape recorder may assist with data collection, it does not capture the non-verbal cues, and other social interactions, therefore notes and researcher observations area important (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). From here I elaborated by capturing the finer nuances of meaning not captured by the original coding system (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). My interviews were in seSotho and isiZulu, which I then transcribed and translated into English. I also ensured that there were thick descriptions, which not only refer to the description of phenomena, but also immersing one in the study so that one can get deeper meaning. Further, a process of code-recode (Krefting, 1991) was used, where I analysed a segment of the data, then returned to re-analyse the same data periodically. This also meant that I prolonged my contact with the research participants.

6.6   Rigour

Although qualitative research should not be seen in binary opposition to quantitative research, it should be able to show rigour in term of its credibility, transferability, confirmability and

dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1999; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002). Rigour refers to the trustworthiness of the data and I show how I ensured rigour in this study.

6.6.1 Credibility

Credibility refers to the extent to which the researcher's interpretation is endorsed by those whom the research was conducted (King & Horrocks, 2010). One of the ways in which the truth value and credibility of a study is enhanced, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is a prolonged and varied field experience. I spent much time with the participants so that they were accustomed to my presence. The period of data collection began in October 2015 until January 2018.

I intended to triangulate data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1999) in order to increase the credibility of the data. It was my plan to interview the participants and their partners and compare the findings, this would have helped me to confirm and cross-check the responses of couples and minimise distortions which may have been provided by a single participant. But I was unable to find couples; the domestic workers I interviewed were mainly single, divorced or widowed. Except for Peace and MaDineo, all other participants did not have partners, or the partners lived too far.

6.6.2   Dependability

The alternative of this is reliability in quantitative research, and it shows how the researcher "attempts to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study, as well as changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting" (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2002, p. 352). Because reality is constantly constructed, it is not possible for a qualitative study to be replicated to produce the same results. I attempted to ensure that the study is as auditable as possible so that the reader may discern it's dependability. I used the same interview guides for the in-depth interviews and the focus group discussions (Appendix A) to ensure consistency in data collection by keeping track of the types of questions I asked, and to help me re-focus when there was a need. The interview guide, according to Kvale (1996, p. 129) "indicates the topics and their sequence in the interview." It outlines the topics and issues to be discussed and allows the interviewer some leeway in terms of the order and sequence of asking questions (Rubin & Babbie, 2011). The advantage of using an interview

guide is that it helps others to cover the same material and keep focused on the topic under discussion.

6.6.3 Confirmability

The confirmability of a study captures issues related to objectivity. It was enhanced by an auditor (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Morse *et al*., 2002), this was my supervisor who checked my work including raw data, had access to my field notes and audio recordings, and guided me from the preparation stage until the study was concluded. As a researcher I was constantly aware of my own interpretation of the data and how my own background, perceptions and interests affected the research process. Denzin (2009) cautions about undermining the credibility and warrantability of the study by a non-introspective researcher. Alldred (1996, p. 162) also pointed to the authoritative voice of the researcher whose power is seen through the "hegemonic cultural perspectives contained within the language" we use in research….through the subject positions we take up and are positioned within (including our deliberate claims to researcher positions)…and our particular individual relationships with participants and to our field of enquiry." It was important to keep reflecting on how my subject location impacted on the way I analysed the findings, and interpreted the data. Wodak and Meyer (2008, p. 32) argued that objectivity cannot be fully claimed in discourse analysis as research is "itself examined as potentially embedding the beliefs and ideologies of the analysis and therefore prejudging the analysis towards the analysts' preconceptions."

As Standing (1998) explained that in presenting the data for a professional, academic audience we tend to follow the dominant script, which has the potential to reinforce unequal power relations and hierarchies of knowledge and power. By tidying up the data, we make the experiences of the participants conform to the dominant script. I personally recorded, transcribed and translated the data, and in so doing I read and understood the data according to my own background and culture. In order to record my daily schedule/logistics, and to reflect my thoughts, feelings, ideas, to keep my biases and preconceived assumptions in check, I kept a field journal as suggested by Krefting (1991) and Morse *et al*., (2002).

My journal was updated daily when I started data collection, then weekly and at some point there were no entries for weeks. I was able to reflect on the process, how I felt about certain issues, such as participants who cried for their children during the interviews. Some of them presented a brave front but their voices would shake or their eyes would water. I was also careful not to be too intrusive, and let them decide to what extent they wanted to share their

experiences. At other times they shared good news by Whatsapp or by calling me, for instance when the children had passed their exams, or when a social grant was approved after numerous efforts. I was also aware of their frustrations; many of the participants had no airtime, so I had to respond to all those sending a 'please call me' short message system (SMS). I was asked to intervene in unfair labour practices, or link participants with jobs. This was difficult because I could not help the participants with labour issues. I did, however, manage to find the domestic worker union representative for the greater Durban area, and I referred many of the issues to her.

6.6.4 Transferability

This is the extent to which the findings may be generalizable. The researcher demonstrates the applicability of one set of findings to another contexts. Generalisability in qualitative research may be affected by the personal nature of interpretation of the results. Due to the interpretivist nature of this qualitative study, it is possible that another researcher could come to a different conclusion. The findings become a "source of insight than proof of truth" (Rubin & Babbie, 2011, p. 450). This qualitative study sought to understand the experiences of men and women who parent from a distance by hearing their views, their frustrations and light moments. The interviews allowed for a deeper discussion on the meanings they attached to their own lived experiences. While the data may not be generalised, there can be transferability within the same kind of population sample.

6.7 Ethical considerations

I received clearance to conduct the study by the UKZN ethics committee (see Appendix D), and the participants information sheet clearly stated the aim and objectives of the study, what I was asking from the participants and also emphasised that they could opt out of the study at any time (see appendix A). I explained the purpose and objectives of the study in a language of their choice and they had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify what they wanted to understand further. I offered the participants a copy of the information sheet home, but only a few took it home, most participants chose to leave it. I used pseudonyms to ensure the anonymity of the participants, although their places of origin have not been changed, this does not make them identifiable.

Interviews were conducted in isiZulu or seSotho and were tape-recorded with permission from the participants. I listened to the audio tapes, transcribed, and translated them into English. Prior to each interview, I revisited the issue of consent and made sure that they could read the

objectives of the study in isiZulu (Appendix C). This study focused on the experiences of domestic workers who did not stay with their children, I had no control over the emotions that emerged. The nature of the study was sensitive in that all the participants wanted to be with their children and could not do so. It was uncomfortable when some of them broke down. Tears were shed and sometimes we just sat in silence to digest what they shared.

Some had regrets about leaving their children at home such as Lerato whose daughter was raped, or Noluthando whose daughters had children while in high school. They disclosed their fears and other vulnerabilities, others had childcare arrangements which they knew were inadequate, but no alternative options, and this was difficult to hear and not be able to do anything about. Two participants had children with disabilities who needed constant supervision and care, and they left them in the care of relatives. I did my best to develop a relationship based on trust and made sure that I made it comfortable for them to share information and their emotions with me. I was not judgmental and was supportive from the first day, and for many, we still maintain contact. From my professional assessment, many of the participants used the interviews as a time to disclose their frustrations, and ventilate, and I ensured that the participants had the opportunity to reach closure with the issues that they raised. As with the study of Sewpaul (1995), whose participants expressed the views that they found the research interviews to be therapeutic, so did the participants in this study. When people such as Winnie said *"Oh, you see, I am now getting a lot of healing. I have been wanting to talk about this for a long time. I have had this thing inside me"*, it showed the cathartic value of the discussion. Others discussed common frustrations, and spoke about ways of handling challenges in the focus group discussions. Similar to Morgan (1993), I was aware that for many, being in a focus group was a new experience, and also that in groups, some people are concerned about their anonymity, and confidentiality and that they may over disclose. The participants shared some painful, frustrating and sometimes funny moments.

Prior to participants' involvement in the focus group discussions, we spoke about limits to confidentiality and anonymity in a group (Humphries, 2008), and they understood the limits. Two reasons made the participants more comfortable about being in a focus group discussion, the first was that the topic itself, some wanted to actually show how they were managing with parenting from a distance, the second was that they were familiar with one another. The gatekeepers recruited people they knew well and this was both an advantage and a disadvantage. In a focus group with people that one is familiar with, there may be conformity to the group to make the relationship with others more intimate (Goffman, 1959), or to avoid

topics which may lead to conflict and compromise the credibility of the data. On the other hand, it may be an advantage in that they trust one another and can speak openly about issues, but this requires a skilled moderator (Morgan, 1993) who understands group dynamics. My experiences as a social worker and my prior experience with group facilitation proved to be invaluable. The groups were made up of those who knew one another and a few unknown members who came with them. The atmosphere was comfortable and they were very open from the beginning. In addition to discussing parenting, they also formed new friendships. In order to protect their identities, I have used pseudonyms in this report.

The group members were given a token R150.00 ($9.08) for their time. One way of recruiting and retaining participants was by way of a small token (Horowitz *et al.,* 2002). This was appropriate because some of the interviews were over an hour long, and others were focus group discussions which were not only long, but took place on a weekend when the participants could be resting. The participants also received some refreshments for being a part of the study by way of thanking them for their time. In my information sheet (see Appendix B) I had indicated that participation was voluntary and that there would be no compensation for participants. This may have discouraged some from participating in the study.

6.8   Limitations

It is important for the researcher to think carefully about the identification and formation of criteria for the selection of participants (Strydom & Delport, 2005). The sample was made up of men and women who worked or lived in the suburbs, none of them worked in the local townships, therefore the views of participants in this study reflect those employed by people living in the suburbs, but all had children who were living apart from them.

6.8.1   Researcher bias

I am a mother. I was studying how other Black women mother their children and by so doing I am aware that I may have also identified with the participants, thus "neutralising" the data (Standing, 1998, p. 191). I heard the women's voices and their pain, and as with Demmer (2005), my role was not to provide therapy to the participants, but there were times when we needed to just talk, and at other times to reflect and sit in the silence. The participants discussed their positions as working mothers who were unable to meet the needs of their children. It was not easy to speak to the participants without empathising with them, but there were also light moments where we shared jokes and they spoke about the achievements of their children and what made them proud. I am aware that one can never be completely neutral when undertaking

qualitative data, and where there is a need to immerse oneself in the subject matter, therefore I reflected on some of the findings with a colleague and my supervisor. I also gained much insight from the reflections of other mothers who researched the subject of motherhood (Ribbens, 1998; Robinson, 2014; Standing, 1998). Researcher bias can be kept in check through reflexivity and critical self-awareness. Sedikides, Campbell, Reeder & Elliot (1998) highlighted the role of institutional structures in how the self is shaped and constrained, therefore I had to keep reflecting on the content, the process and my interpretations of the data.

6.8.2   Generalisability

This study had a relatively small sample and cannot be generalised to domestic workers in eThekwini or KwaZulu-Natal, or even within the sample itself because each person has a unique life experience (De Vos *et al.*, 2011), therefore the findings are not generalizable due to the non-representative nature of the sample. Views of other domestic workers who did not reside with their children were not heard simply because they were not identified or could not be reached through the sampling method I used. It is possible that with a larger sample, other potential participants could have given responses which may have affected the findings of the study such as domestic workers in rural areas, who may live closer to their children or earn far less than those in this study. The disadvantages of a small sample was offset by the focus in detail, meaning, and the lived experiences of participants.

6.8.3   The loss of meaning

Another issue that Standing (1998, p. 191) made me aware of is the presentation of a "safe version" of the findings. Because researchers write for a specific professional audience, by following a predetermined, dominant way of presenting the data, researchers often write such that their reports are in line with these formats. I have already made the point above about the dominant ways of writing, and that they suppress the voices of the less powerful (Standing, 1998). I too, by trying to tidy up the data, have to some extent made the participants' voices conform to the dominant script. By translating the interviews into English, I may have toned down some of the language which was used by the participants in one way or another. Winnie's language was sometimes very abrasive, for instance when she referred to her aunt never taking 'shit' from anyone. To hear Msebenzi say, "I tell you, he does *fokol* (for the children)", *fokol* (fuck all) meaning nothing for the children. This was a shock to me, but this is language that is used in the township to mean 'nothing'. This was uncomfortable to listen to, but it was how the participants communicated. Tidying up the data compromised some of the voices, and

translation into English also diminished the impact of some of the statements that are best understood in isiZulu or seSotho.

6.8.4   Lack of male involvement

Inclusion of male participants in the study proved harder than anticipated, it was through Lehakoe that I gained access to five male participants. She initially claimed that her husband would participate in the study, but this was false; she had recruited her brother. He did not meet the inclusion criteria of the study because he was not a domestic worker, but invited others who agreed to participate in the study. Males were reluctant to be involved in a study they perceived to be about 'women's issues' and because they did not see themselves as domestic workers, many declined participation.

6.8.5   Lack of involvement of children and caregivers

The aim of this study was to understand distance parenting and how it affects not only the participants as parents, but also children, and caregivers taking care of the children. In this study only the views of one group are reflected. There was no direct involvement of children or caregivers to understand their views of parental absence. The triangulating of data sources (Lincoln & Guba, 1999), namely the views of children and caregivers would have enhanced the data. Contreras & Griffith (2012) and Pantea (2011) enhanced their studies of distance parenting by interviewing both parents and children, which gave them a holistic understanding of how migration affected children, their parents and caregivers. Further studies on distance parenting may be enhanced by integrating the views of children and their caregivers. Feasibility is an important consideration in research. In view of time and funding constraints, this study was restricted to domestic workers.

6.9   Benefits

6.9.1 Catharsis through research participation

This study was undertaken with a group of usually marginalised people and by participating in the study, their views could be heard. Many of them had never been exposed to research and were very eager to share their stories as parents, employees and the oppressed. Participation in this study had a cathartic effect in that most expressed their joy at being able to share their experiences for the first time, in a safe and supportive environment. Another participant openly expressed her ability to offload and ventilate. The groups were so accommodating that a whatsapp group was formed for continuous support and ongoing communication.

6.9.2 Monetary compensation for time

Although the participants were not rewarded, they were compensated for their time. This was underplayed at recruitment and many were pleasantly surprised to be offered monetary compensation for their time (R150 each or $9.08). The provision of refreshments was seen as adequate and for many it was very strange to be "paid just for talking." Although the emphasis was that it was for their time off, and not as payment, they were nevertheless appreciative.

6.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I discussed the design of the study, how the participants were recruited and how data were collected and analysed. In the next chapter I give a detailed description of the female participants, and in chapter 9, I discuss the views of the male participants. They were separated by gender in order to allow me to fully delve into the unique issues faced by men and women in parenting. For the participants it was a novel experience to have someone wanting to hear their experiences about their work as domestic workers and as parents, and they were keen to share their stories with me.

CHAPTER 7: DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF FEMALE PARTICIPANTS

7.1   Background of the participants

I conducted in-depth interviews with 22 participants, and four focus group discussion which were separated by gender, two of whom were with males and two with female participants. The sample of 40 participants was made up of 33 females and 7 males who lived or worked in the central eThekwini (Durban) area. The inclusion criteria for the study were that the participants be domestic workers, living or working in eThekwini and have at least one child they were not residing with, and had to be working for a minimum period of one year as domestic workers. None of the participants worked for employment agencies. I present the demographic profiles of participants by gender starting with the females. There were 25 local (75%) and 8 (24%) transnational workers whose homes were in Lesotho.

Of the local participants, a majority (19) were from KwaZulu-Natal, five from the Eastern Cape, and one from Limpopo province. Circular migration to places of work is endemic in South Africa (Posel, 2010) and many people have a home in the rural areas where they go to periodically. eThekwini is a metropolitan city attracting people, mainly from the rural areas of South Africa, and from across the border. The other eight participants were from Lesotho, a neighbouring country landlocked by South Africa. The predominant language in eThekwini is isiZulu, and it was interesting to see Basotho domestic workers. When I enquired about this, the usual answer was "there are many of us here, we are a huge community." Over 7 million people speak IsiZulu as their first language in KwaZulu-Natal, under 100 000 speak seSotho. The Eastern Cape has a high number of seSotho-speaking people who often seek work in KwaZulu-Natal. The foreign domestic workers who are Basotho nationals, and one local participant from Matatiele in the Eastern Cape spoke seSotho and felt well-integrated into the community. One of the ways in which foreign domestic workers integrate themselves is by seeking work in communities where they share similar cultures, religion, language or dress.

The participants' ages were between 24 and 55 years, with a mean age of 41 and a median age of 39 years. The mode age was 39 years, made up of five participants. The total number of children for all 33 participants, was 93, a majority of whom were between 4 and 19 years, and 15 of each were aged were between 25-29 years, and from 30-34 years. The participants had an average of 2.8 children each. Although in a few instances, the "children" were over 18 years of age, and thus did not fit the legal definition, these participants were included, as they left home and parented their children from a distance, when the children were young. A majority

of the participants (9) had two children each, eight had one child and two had seven children, 9 had three children each, and the rest (5) had five children each.

Their marital status showed that a majority (12) were single (36%), 11 (33%) married, one being in a polygynous marriage, one was engaged and another cohabited with a boyfriend. Two of each were widowed and divorced while four were separated from their partners. Although some of the participants were married, it was not an indication that they were married to the fathers of their children. This is in line with the assertion by Hall and Budlender (2016) that it is common for the partner of the mother not to be the father of the child due to low marriage rates. Eight participants indicated desertion by their partners following pregnancy, and no acknowledgement of the pregnancy, which was usually through the payment of damages to their families. Although only a few of the participants had ever resided with their partners prior to or after falling pregnant, their children did not automatically use the father's surname even though they could, under section 21 of the Children's Act 38 (1995), claim paternal rights and responsibilities. It was not in the best interest of the children to be unacknowledged because this had implications for child maintenance and complicated caregiving responsibilities.

Of the married participants, one was in a polygynous marriage, whose husband was living with the first wife in uMzimkhulu, about 161 km from eThekwini. Her three younger children were cared for by her eldest daughter, but their father was available in case of emergencies. The high number of grandparents taking care of the children in their parents' absence is common in South Africa; in this study 15 grandparents were the primary caregivers. Hall and Sambu (2017) noted the high number of children who do not live with either of their parents in South Africa, with maternal grandmothers usually being the primary caregivers. Older children also tended to care for the younger ones in the absence of their mothers. Only one couple was interviewed, separately from each other, this was Peace and MaDineo, both Basotho who were working in eThekwini although they did not co-reside as MaDineo was a live-in domestic worker.

The majority of the female participants (20) were 'sleep-in' workers, living on the property of their employers, and 13 were 'sleep-out.' Those who lived out did not necessarily stay at home, rather in other accommodation near their places of employment. Of the 13 sleep-out workers, three worked part time, or 'days' for different employers on different days of the week, the rest worked for the same employer, but were looking to fill the other days of the week so that they could work five days per week. A full-time domestic worker is considered formally employed

if they work for 27 hours or more per week for the same employer (Matjeke *et al.*, 2012) under SD7. Those working for less than 27 hours per week are regarded as part-time employees. Thembeka, was a part time worker and mother of two boys, aged 14 and 6 years, had left them in the care of their father. Another part-time worker, Sphilile did not have job security in that she, like Thembeka, were periodically asked to work 'short time', that is for a reduced number of hours per week, or normal hours depending on how often their employers needed them. Sphilile had been working for two families for six years, and only worked for three days per week. They were all live-out employees who seemed to be trapped in domestic work. Although they can be referred to as 'free agents'; domestic workers who seek their own employment, negotiate their own contracts, and are free to work for any employer, they were unable to do so. Their work hours were sporadic, they were told when they would be needed and in order to be available, they were unable to contract with other employers just in case their current employers needed them on a different day or occasion.

Domestic worker employers usually seek unencumbered, available and flexible workers (Boccagni, 2012). Thembeka was frustrated, *"I have to make sure that I am available for her because she is the only one who calls me often, but if she doesn't call me, then I have no food. I can't even go to work for anyone else because most of them are one day jobs and they want me to come only when they need me."* Constantly waiting to hear when they would be asked to come and work was frustrating, it also meant that she had to be careful about the 'agreements' she committed herself to. The frustration of irregular employment meant that she could not go home to see the children, just in case someone wanted her to come in and work. It was also painful that she sometimes went home 'barehanded' instead of bringing food and gifts for the children. The following table shows the demographic details of the participants.

Table 7.1 : Demographic details of female participants

	Name	Gender (age)	Education	Marital status	Live in/out	No. of years employed	No of years with current employer	Remuneration	Children (ages)	Caregiver /residence
1.	Lethu	Female (37)	None	Separated	Live-out full time	10 years	10 years	R 1700 pm Not registered	Boy (14)	Father KZN
									Boy (10) CSG	Lives with this son
2.	Monica	Female (39)	Gr 4	Divorced	Live-out full time	5 years	5 years	R 1800 pm Not registered	Girl (25) Boy (23) Boy (21) Girl (19)	Lives with these children

									Girl (16) CSG Boy (15) CSG Boy (7) CSG	Maternal aunt/uncle in GP
3.	Mimi	Female (38)	Gr 11	Separated	Live-in full time	8 years	8 years	R 2500 pm Registered Had contract	Boy (8) CSG Boy (9) CSG	Paid caregiver KZN
4.	Puseletso	Female (29)	Gr 10	Single	Live-in Full time	9 years	1 year	R 1200 pm Not registered	Boy (10) CSG Girl (7) CGS Boy (4)CGS	Maternal granny EC
5.	Sebenzile	Female (31)	Gr 11	Engaged	Live-in full time	10 years	10 years	R 2500 pm Registered	Boy (12) CGS Boy (8) CSG	Paternal granny KZN

6.	Nomandla	Female (52)	Gr 7	Married	Live-in full time	18 years	16 years	R 4000 pm Payslip Job description Pension Registered	Girl (27) Girl (25) Boy (21) DG Boy (17) CSG	Father and Eldest daughter EC
7.	Noluthando	Female (52)	Gr 11	Single	Live-in full time (since 2002)	16 years	16 years	R 4000 pm Payslip Job description Pension Registered	Boy (34) Boy (31) Boy (29) Boy (28) Girl (27) Girl (18) CSG Girl (10) CSG	Eldest daughter took over from Maternal Granny EC
8.	Sinazo	Female (42)	Gr 7	Single	Live-in Full time	17 years	8 years	R 1000 pm Not registered	Girl (30) Girl (28) Boy (17) CSG	Maternal granny KZN
9.	Msebenzi	Female (51)	Gr 7	Separated	Live-in full time	24 years	17 years	R 3000 pm Registered	Girl (32) Girl (29)	Maternal granny

										Boy (27)	Eldest
										Boy (25)	daughter
										Girl (18)	KZN
										CSG	
10	Lerato	Female (35)	Gr 11	Married	Live-in Full time	7 years	4 years	R3 7000 pm Not registered	Girl (18) Boy (11)	Neighbours Qashasnek Lesotho
11	Sphilile	Female (33)	Gr 11	Separated	Live-out casual two employers	10 years	6 years	R 2000 pm (R100 per day) Not registered	Girl (13) Boy (7) CSG	Maternal great aunt KZN
12	Thandaza	Female (48)	Gr 4	Single	Live-in Full time	11 years	1 year	R 900 pm Not registered	Girl (19)	Maternal granny KZN
13	Winnie	Female (39)	Gr 4	Married	Live-out casual (3x per week)	18 years	18 years	R 100 per day R 2000 pm Registered	Girl (20) **CSG for 2 grandkids**	Maternal granny KZN

14	Magdeline	Female (50)	Gr 10	Cohabiting boyfriend	Live-out Full time	15 years	15 years	R 2000 pm Registered	Boy (21)	Maternal granny Limpopo
15	Okuhle	Female (55)	Gr 9	Widow	Live-out Full time	20 years	20 years	R 600 pw/ R 2400 pm Not registered	Boy (27) Girl (18) Girl (14) CSG	Eldest daughter 3 nieces 1 grand child KZN
16	Thembeka	Female (45)	Gr 7	Married	Live-out casual (3x per week)	3 years	3 years	R 1 200 Not registered (short time)	Boy (14) CSG Boy (6) CSG	Father KZN
17	Rorisang	Female (47)	Gr 6	Divorced	Live-in Full time	9 years	7 years	R 2000 pm Not registered	Girl (16) Girl (12) Girl (10) Girl (8)	Maternal aunt Lesotho CSG R700 pm for all kids

18	Lulu	Female (39)	Gr 10	Single	Live-in Full time	8 years	2 years	R 2000 pm Not registered	Girl (9) CSG	Maternal aunt KZN
19	Sibani	Female (30)	Gr 10	Single (co-resided with dad)	Live-in Full time	10 years	7 years	R 2000 pm Not registered	Girl (12) no CSG (no time to go)	Maternal aunt KZN
20	Ingrid	Female (24)	Grade 9	Single	Live-in Full time	8 years	2 years	R 1500 pm Not registered	Boy (9) CSG Girl (7) CSG	Maternal great granny KZN
21	Siphokazi	Female (44)	Grade 6	Single	Live-out casual	15 years	8 years	R 900 per month Not registered	Girl (11) CSG Girl (9) CSG Boy (5) CSG	Maternal granny KZN
22	Nomfundo	Female (37)	Gr 10	Single (at first interview	Live-out full time	14 years	7 years	(R 600 per week) R 2 400 Not registered	Boy (19) DG Boy (12) CSG	Maternal granny KZN

	Name									
					she was engaged)				Boy (6) CSG	
23	Neliswa	Female (52)	None	Married (polygynous)	Live-in Full time	20 years	2 years	R 1600 pm Not registered	Girl (25) Boy (19) Girl (14) CSG Boy (8) CSG	Father and Eldest daughter KZN (4 grand children on CSG)
24	Zoleka	Female (39)	Gr 12	Single	Live out Full time	11 years	8 years	R 3000 pm Registered	Girl (11) CSG	Maternal granny KZN
25	Siya	Female (33)	Gr 10	Single	Live-in Full time	12 years	5 years	R 2000 pm Not registered	Boy (13) CSG	Maternal granny KZN
26	Zandile	Female (49)	Diploma (Secretary)	**widow**	Live-out Full time	20 years	15 years	R 1700 pm Not registered	Boy (30) Girl (14) CSG	Sister (maternal aunt) KZN

27	Nomusa	Female (35)	Gr 4	Single	Live-in Full time	10 years	4 years	R 2000 pm Not registered	Girl (9) Social grant fraud	KZN Maternal grand parents
28	Lehakoe	Female (36)	Gr 9	Married	Live-out	13 years	12 years	R 1800 pm Not registered	Girl 18 Boy 15 Girl 5	Maternal relatives Lesotho
29	MaMosa	female (43)	Gr 9	Married	Live-in	18 years	3 years	R 2000 pm Not registered	Boy 27 Boy 25 Boy 23 Girl 19 Boy 17	Maternal granny Lesotho
30	MaThabang	female (43)	Gr 9	Married	Live-in gran	13 years	10 years	R 2500 pm Not registered	Girl 24 Girl 21 Boy 15 Girl 12 Boy 6	Maternal granny lesotho
31	MaDineo Partner: Peace	Female (35)	Gr 10	Married	Live-in	11 years	8 years	R 1 500 pm Not registered	Girl 17 Girl 15 Boy 9	Maternal granny Lesotho

32	MaLesedi	Female (45)	Gr 9	Married	Live-out	10 years	10 years	R 2400 pm Not registered	Girl 26 Boy 24	Eldest daughter Lesotho
33	MaSechaba	Female (39)	Grade 5	Married	Live-in	16 years	5 years	Not registered	Girl 20 Boy 16 Girl 14 Girl 10 Girl 4	Father Lesotho

7.2 Entry into domestic employment, registration and remuneration

Many factors precipitate labour migration, including poverty and a chance for a better life. The movement of women for domestic work across borders is historical (Harzig, 2006). It is thus not surprising that 80% of the world's migrant workers travel to high-income countries such as the Arab states, North America and Western Europe (Gallotti, 2015). In Southern Africa, workers from poorer SADC countries such as Lesotho and Zimbabwe migrating to South Africa dates back to the discovery of diamonds and gold in the 19th century when men were recruited to work in the mines as cheap labour. With limited skills and levels of education, cross-border migrants work in hazardous, unsafe and exploitative employment, which for women include street trading, sex work, hawking, and informal factory work (Ojong, 2012). This has continued in the new dispensation as South Africa continues to enjoy political stability, social and economic growth in contrast to other southern African countries, hence an influx of economic migrants into the country.

Kiwanuka *et al*. (2015) distinguished between personal and structural reasons for migration. From their study of domestic workers in Mpumalanga, the study indicated that foreign domestic workers migrated to South Africa for as a result of structural reasons, as opposed to local migrants whose reasons tended to be personal. Structural reasons were economic and also infrastructural in nature. Life was much easier in South Africa than in their home countries. Local migrants cited personal reasons for labour migration: death of a close family member, divorce, or business failure. Three of the younger participants, Puseletso (29), Siya (33) and Ingrid (24) entered domestic work immediately out of school, after falling pregnant. Siya's entry into work was further precipitated by her father's death, but she went straight into a job which was facilitated by a neighbour. Although Kiwanuka *et al*. (2015) differentiated between structural and personal factors, in reality it is difficult to separate the two; personal determinants are rooted in structural factors.

Poverty, underemployment, increased consumption needs such as the rising cost of living, the division of labour, and the wage gap (Isaksen *et al.,* 2008; Isike & Isike, 2012; Pantea, 2008;), and the 'lack of relevant skills' give impetus to migration and entry into this sector. In her study of low wage workers, Ehrenreich (2002, p. 193) argued that no job, no matter how lowly, is truly "unskilled." Each requires concentration, and the mastery of new terms and skills which are necessary for that job. She drew this from her research which led to her working in different low income sectors in the US. Domestic work is usually the point of entry for those lacking skills to work in formal employment and this is usually performed by women. The number of

international migrants worldwide reached 258 million in 2017, about half of whom are women (International Migration Report, 2017). Despite increased feminisation of migrant labour (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Dinat & Peberdy, 2007; Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Madziva & Zontini, 2012; Pantea, 2011), these women continue to work in menial jobs which are exploitative (Young, 1990).

Migration to eThekwini for local participants, and to South Africa for migrant participants was motivated by higher chances of getting employed in domestic work than any other occupation, and earning higher wages. Even though the majority of the participants (58%) had high school education, they were willing to take domestic employment. One participant had a tertiary one year diploma in secretarial work (Zandile), and the other two participants, Neliswa and Lethu did not have any formal education. All the transnational workers from Lesotho had higher levels of education, between grade 6-9. This is in line with Parreñas' (2001) and Bartolomei's (2010) findings that transnational domestic workers did not always have low levels of education, some of them were professionally trained, but opted for domestic employment as it offered better pay, albeit still low.

7.2.1   Higher remuneration as motivation for migration

Bartolomei (2010) and Parreñas (2001) found the opportunity to earn more as a motivating factor, for others it was marriage and childbearing (Bigombe & Khadiagala, 2003).Earning an income contributes considerably to becoming empowered. It also meant that some of their participants could leave abusive spouses (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002). Rorisang, who was from Lesotho, and her four children could leave an emotionally, physically and financially abusive spouse after she found employment, in South Africa. Although domestic work was initially seen as entry into the labour market, some people ended up working in his sector for years. The shortage of suitable alternative employment, and the ease with which they are able to find domestic work in relation to other jobs, forced many to stay in domestic service. Statistics South Africa (2018) reported that by the end of the second quarter, the official unemployment rate increased to 27.2% compared to the first quarter of 2018. The increase in the unemployment rate is a result of a decline of 90 000 in the number of people in employment. About 2.9 million people were discouraged work-seekers. The expanded unemployment rate increased to 37.2% to about 9.8 million people.

Better pay was emphasized more by the participants from Lesotho, for instance MaLesedi said: *"you understand how little this money is, but in Lesotho a person does not mind to pay you*

R500 per month". Recruitment into domestic work was mainly through informal networks (Cock, 1989; Kiwanuka *et al.*, 2015) where friends or family acted as conduits into this sector by facilitating and pairing workers with employers. It was common practice for one family of domestic workers to work for another for generations. Thembeka was related to Okuhle and they all worked for the same employer, although Thembeka was part-time and Okuhle worked full-time as a seamstress and cleaner. Winnie and Magdeline worked where their relatives had been employed before, they inherited jobs from their relatives who had worked for the same families before. Chain migration and chain employment is rife in this sector, this is what Kiwanuka *et al.* (2015) referred to as one family member following another to a place of residence or work, they are also followed by others who facilitate this migration or entry into a specific sector. Domestic work also tends to be kept within the same family, passing skills and employment from one person to another. Winnie explained *"This is a family that my mother worked for and then one day they said that I must come and work. I started working two days in the week, and then it increased to three days and I am still working three days."* Similarly, employers also relied on word-of-mouth when they employed workers, other participants were recruited by employers' friends or family.

Transnational workers from Lesotho earned almost four times their usual wages in South Africa doing the same job. The Lesotho Labour Code Wage Amendment Notice (2014) set the minimum wage for domestic workers at Lesotho Loti (Maluti in plural) M454 ($31.90) per month, or M119 ($8.36) per week and M28 ($1.97) per day (or M3.62/ $0.25 per hour) for those working for less than 12 months for the same employer. It was slightly more for those who had worked for the same employer for over a year as illustrated by Table 6.2 below. In the same year the minimum wage for full-time domestic workers in South Africa was about four times higher.

Table 7.2 Domestic worker rates of pay: Lesotho and SA (in USD) 2014

Currency	Lesotho			South Africa			Currency
wages	Hourly	weekly	Monthly	Hourly	weekly	Monthly	wages
Lesotho Loti (LSL)	3.62	119	454	9,63	433,35	1877,70	SA Rand (ZAR)
USD	$0.25	$8.36	$31.90	$ 0.68	$ 30.45	$ 131.95	USD

Minimum wage is reviewed annually in South Africa, and under SD 7, the current wages earned by those working in Area A (metropolitan areas and cities), the minimum wage is higher than those working in Area B (district municipalities and rural areas) as shown in Table 6.3 below. The working conditions of part-time and full-time workers are different, and so are their wages. In 2018, there was a 5% wage increase from 2016 in this sector despite inflation increasing by 5.19% (Statistics South Africa, 2018) in the same year.

Table 7.3 South African domestic worker rates: 1 December 2017 – 30 November 2018

Area A	Employed for 27 hours or more per week			Employed for 27 hours or less per week			Area B
Wages	Hourly	weekly	Monthly	Hourly	weekly	Monthly	Wages
SA Rand (ZAR)	R 13.05	R587.40	R2545.22	R 15.28	R 412.60	R 1787.80	SA Rand (ZAR)
USD	$ 0.86	$ 38.80	$ 168.12	$ 1.01	$ 27.27	$ 116.85	USD

The eight transnational workers in this study agreed that wages were much better for domestic workers in South Africa than in Lesotho, even though they still earned below the legislated minimum wage of R2 545.22 ($ 168.12) per month. Only three participants earned slightly above the minimum, MaLesedi, Lerato and MaThabang at R2400 ($158.62) – R2500 ($ 165.23). The rest earned between R1500 ($99.14) and R2000 ($ 132.18) per month, regardless of their experiences or number of years they had been working for the same employer. Their children were in Lesotho and depended on the remittances they sent home monthly. The participants supported not only themselves, but their children and caregivers too. By working in South Africa, they were able to earn slightly more, but were not better off, and still lived below the poverty line which was calculated at R441 ($29.13) per person per month (Statistics South Africa, 2017b). Bartolomei (2010) found that Keralite men working in Italy as caregivers earned ten times more than they earned as professionals in their home country and therefore worked overseas where income was much better.

Minimum wage is a hotly debated issue in South Africa, and this affects the income of domestic workers. In May 2018, the South African cabinet approved the national Minimum Wage Bill which proposes that all workers be paid minimum wage of R20 ($1.32) per hour, or R3500 ($

231.19) per month for a 40-hour week, or R 3900 ($ 257.61) for a 45-hour week. But this Bill excluded the vulnerable workers such as domestic and agricultural or farm workers. The Bill proposed that the minimum wage for farm workers be 90% of R20 per hour (R18 or $ 1.19 per hour), and 75% of R20 per hour (R15 or$ 0.99) for domestic workers and who will earn slightly more than workers on the government expanded public works programme (EPWP) at R11 ($ 0.73) per hour. This further highlights the vulnerability of domestic workers and their exploitation in society. Minimum wage does not consider the employee's level of experience, the size of the household she works for or the type of work that she does, and available appliances which could make her work easier or more difficult.

Currently, the legislated minimum wage for domestic workers is R2 545.22 ($ 168.12) for full time workers, and in this study only nine participants earned the minimum or slightly above. Msebenzi who had five children and Zoleka with one child earned R3000 ($ 198.16) per month. The highest earners in the sample were Noluthando and Nomandla who earned R4000 ($ 264.22) per month. They were an exception in that they were the only participants who received a payslip indicating their hourly rate of pay, deductions made and the age of retirement. They also received paid leave and a 13th cheque while living on the property of the employer, who also bought them food and toiletries on a monthly basis. They were part of a large domestic staff which worked different shifts, but they often worked on Sundays and public holidays, sometimes without overtime pay.

The rest of the participants earned below minimum wage, between R900 ($ 59.45) and R2400 (or $158.43) per month, although a majority (8) of the participants earned R2000 ($ 132.11) per month. One of the questions I asked participants how much they thought would be a fair wage to pay full time domestic workers. Their responses were both shocking and revealing, they ranged between R1500 ($ 99.08) – R 2500 ($ 165.13) per month. Sinazo said *"I think R1 500 would be fine",* while Puseletso said *"at least to make it R2000 per month. It's better than nothing."* Sinazo's children were employed and her youngest child was in matric. She had been working for over 17 years but was still earning R1000 per month, although she was employed in an urban area. The wages are so low in this sector, the women seem to have normalised it and didn't expect higher wages. Those who earned more felt 'lucky' to be earning this much, although it was still not enough. Nomandla's simple answer showed how resigned she was *"what can we say?"* It is perhaps the "money taboo" (Ehrenreich, 2002, p. 206) that keeps wages low. Employers discourage workers from discussing and comparing wages, or even raise the issue of an increase. Coupled with the indignities imposed on low wage workers

such as constant surveillance, and cleaning after other people, the feeling of being unworthy may also contribute to the acceptance of low wages, in other words, being paid what one is worth. The participants in this study were paid so little that they all qualified for the state social grant. All the local female participants received a child support grant, except transnational workers. Rorisang was the only participant who received a state social grant from Lesotho of about R700 ($ 46.24) per month for her four children living in Lesotho. Monica's brother allowed her to keep the social grant money, but she sent 'something' for their upkeep monthly. The Department of Social Development (DSD) has set the income threshold at R48000 ($ 3170.59) per annum for single persons, or R96 000 ($ 6 341.18) for married people who wish to apply for the state child support grant of R410 ($ 27.08) per month, payable to the person residing with the child.

Beside the social grant, there was usually no other form of income, but some of the participants were enterprising. Rorisang sold *atchaar* (pickle) to other domestic workers during the day, with her employers permission, and on weekends when she was off. She was the sole breadwinner for her four children in Lesotho, whose father was living with another woman. Even when she was married, her husband did not support her financially, which precipitated her decision to seek work in South Africa. Despite their marital status, women tended to be breadwinners in their families. The presence of a male in the family, even as breadwinner, does not necessarily imply that his income would be "equitably available and distributed to all members" (Bozalek, 2002, p. 154), as shown by the unequal "interfamily division of food, healthcare and other provisions" (Sen, 1999, p. 193). Those with working husbands also reported having to shoulder a rather disproportionately high financial responsibility for their children and in almost all cases, they were responsible for buying food and the payment of other necessities such as rent, school uniforms, and transport for their children and caregivers.

MaDineo was married to Peace and both were working in eThekwini although they did not co-reside. They had been married for about 9 years and had three children. The eldest was Dineo's child with another partner, prior to meeting Peace. Together they had two children, and the last child was born after they married. All the children stayed in Lesotho with MaDineo's mother and both participants sent money to her for the children's maintenance. They were interviewed separately, and when Peace said that he had two children and MaDineo said three, it gave the impression that he did not consider her his child. Upon marriage, it was agreed that MaDineo would leave her eldest child with her mother, and Peace did not offer to pay *ilobolo* for this child when he married MaDineo. It is not unusual for men who want to marry a woman that

already has a child, to offer to 'marry' that child too. In western terms, this would be considered adoption, but in this case Peace did not adopt this child. I discuss sociocultural constructions of fatherhood in chapter 9 and how this affects parenting. Peace did not consider himself a father figure to MaDineo's first child and therefore was not very involved in her parenting.

Peace and MaDineo were the only couple in the study, their views were compared and responses were different. Both claimed to be primarily responsible for the children, despite MaDineo (35) spending a large portion of her income on food and school fees. In her words *"I can't expect him to give me money every month, he is like an unemployed person*." Although Peace maintained his children, his contribution was irregular because he was a day labourer who found work when he could. He initially claimed to be the only person responsible for the children, but later conceded that his wife carried a larger financial burden in relation to the children who lived with her mother in Lesotho.

Women were simultaneously both providers and caregivers of their children, a phenomenon which Maqubela (2016) argued is not peculiar in the Black community. With apartheid laws and colonialism, African women have been historically separated from their children, but continued to earn a living to provide for them even where their partners were employed. Even when Nomandla's husband was employed, he did not support her and their children: *"he got a job at Albany (bakery) once but then our husbands…. they go to Joburg for a long time and forget that they have children. They (children) were raised by their granny and he was not involved. His mother was involved and when he came back he had no money."* The inability to bear the burden of being caregivers, prompted by the lack of capacity to provide for their families, often leads to non-involvement and desertion by fathers (Ramphele, 1996). Women often carry the cost of raising their children even when they are in low-income employment or married.

7.2.2   The 'servant's quarters' as an incentive to work as a domestic worker

Another reason for entering domestic work was to deal with the accommodation problem. The participants were from rural areas, others from neighbouring countries. Although most of them were made aware of employment by *abomkhaya*, friends or relatives, they often needed a place to stay (Dinat & Peberdy, 2007; Deacon, Olivier & Beremauro, 2015). The cost of accommodation is very expensive in the city. In her study of low wage workers, Ehrenreich (2002) found housing to be expensive. She observed that "when the rich and the poor compete for housing on the open market, the poor don't stand a chance" (p. 199). The participants in

this study also explained that housing is problematic, expensive and of poor quality. Some of them stayed in shacks, lived with partners or relatives. Rental was not less than R1000 per month for one room in a house, and in some cases some participants paid R700 per month to rent a shack in Mayville – a low cost housing settlement in Durban. None of the participants could afford to rent a house because of the exorbitant deposits and high rents.

Those who had their own accommodation such as Sphilile, Zoleka and Lethu lived in sub-standard housing, for instance Lethu's house was made of mud and almost always crumbled when it rained. Sphilile and Zoleka had shacks in the informal settlements in the city, and in her words, Zoleka explained that the area she lived in *" is not a place where one can raise children"* or Sphilile said that *"no, it's not fine in a shack and you can't stay with children there, but there are people who stay with their children in that place, it's just that I don't like it. I don't think it's safe for children. I mean I have my own home, which is really okay for my children."* Her children lived in the rural areas in her family home. She said *"during the school holidays I usually bring them over this side ...they visit me during the long holidays. I usually bring them over this side...all of them, mine and my brother's children. They visit Durban and they stay with me...in my shack."* Although they loved visiting her and being in Durban for the holidays, it did not mean that they were comfortable in the shack. The joy of being in the city and spending time with her was what they enjoyed.

Much has been written about the domestic worker backyard room or servants' quarters which for some has been isolating, and for others - a refuge (Cock, 1980; Ginsburg, 2000). Some workers have historically used the backroom to accommodate relatives, lovers or even run boarding houses despite the strict rules not to allow visitors or unknown persons (Ginsburg, 2000) into the employers' property. The position of domestic workers in the community was somewhat improved by having their own accommodation. Bosch and McLeod (2015) explained that the servants' quarters has been a dominant feature of urban, middle-class architecture, but new housing developments do not have separate living facilities for domestic workers. According to housecheck.co.za, South African houses are getting smaller from 1000 square meters for houses built from 1970-74 to 500 square meters for houses built after 2010 and there has been a marked falloff in new houses with servant's quarters and swimming pools, from half of new houses built in 1955-59 to only 11 per cent of new houses built from 2010 in South Africa.

Sectoral determination 7 makes it mandatory for employers to provide adequate accommodation for their workers, but in this study some of the live-in participants did not have their own rooms, but shared a bed or room with others or slept in a spare bedroom, often with the baby or ill person. Yet, this is different from other studies such as Mantouvalou (2015) whose participants lived in slave-like conditions with some sleeping on the bathroom floor or employer's storage room. The advantage of being a live-in worker is that one does not have to seek accommodation, but it also means that the worker is at the disposal of the employer 24 hours a day, and often works overtime without pay. The participants in this study explained that domestic work offered this advantage, hence they entered this sector even when some of them had worked as shop assistants, factory workers, or in specialised fields such as bakery, hair-dressing and sewing, and could have sought alternative employment.

7.2.3   "I send him money for food every month" – the importance of remittances

One of the ways in which mothers showed responsibility and care was through sending remittances home. Instrumental support where there is financial and practical assistance which can take the form of gifts, money and buying clothes or meals (McNeely & Barber, 2010) has been shown to be valuable in parenting. Both as a sign of showing responsibility and support, the participants regularly sent remittances home. These remittances were a lifeline for many of the families, they formed a large part of the unspoken relationship between parents and their children's caregivers, and seemed to concretise the relationship with children and at times seemed to override other aspects of the parent-child relationship.

Remittances benefit families and in some instances, entire communities (Ehrenreich & Hochschild, 2002). Labour migration is historical in South Africa, since the mid 19th century Black women have been supporting themselves and their families through domestic work (Dinkelman & Ranchhod, 2012). In other countries large scale labour migration is sanctioned by government (Parreñas, 2001), but other issues such as poverty and societal norms facilitate it. Anyanwu and Erhijakpor (2010) estimated that about US$240 billion of the world's US$318 billion was money sent in remittances to developing countries, and that a high proportion of this went to people living in Africa. They also reported that between 2000 and 2007, remittances to the African continent "increased by more than 141 percent, from US$11.2 billion to nearly US$27 billion" (p. 51).

Sending money home is a priority for migrant women, and the ease with which money could be transferred to recipients facilitated its payment. The participants supported their own

families and extended family members on their meagre salaries. As with the participants in Parreñas' (2005) study, the participants sent money home through bank deposits, wire transfers, and via ATM. For most locals, money could be sent through the bank and services such as 'e-wallets' - a system that does not require a recipient to have a bank card, only a cell phone is sufficient. Other commercial money sending mechanisms were put in place by supermarkets such as *Checkers* and *PicknPay,* here customers can transfer money to others who have valid identity documents (IDs) or passports. This option was also open to Lesotho nationals, the next best option was to send money informally through friends (*abomkhaya*) and relatives, or long distance taxi and bus drivers.

Alternatively, they could transport their goods and money themselves when they went home to visit. Monica sent money to her brother who was staying with her four younger children in Johannesburg. This was also how Magdeline sent money to her child in Limpopo. Although those with younger children sent money to their caregivers, many of them sent it directly to their older daughters, such as Noluthando: *"Even when I send the money, I send it to Zimkhitha* (daughter)*. She has two children…she doesn't go to school and I send the money to her. I send it through Checkers and then she goes to withdraw it from town and she knows all the things that have to be bought. She cooks for my mother. Mom is too old now and Zimkhitha is the responsible one. She makes sure that there is everything they need in the house …this young girl."* Further on in the interview she said, *"there is Samuel* (her son)*. I send him money for food every month …yes, he stays there …at the house I bought in Lusikisiki."*

Noluthando supported her children, her grandchildren and her mother. Her third son did not co-reside with them, therefore she sent money to him too, meaning that she maintained two homes on her salary of R4000 ($ 264.37) per month. Money was sent to meet the needs of the family and to maintain some intimate relations across distance. Participants planned expenditure of the remittances with their children, in order to control what the money was spent on and to keep contact. By "maintaining their control over the family purse strings" (Parreñas, 2005, p. 325), these women were not only keeping in touch with their families, but also redefined mothering to include breadwinning. The micromanagement of family finances from a distance required regular communication between mothers and their children, particularly daughters. In this study, the participants also sent money to their daughters, whom they trusted to manage the family finances well.

It is noted that similar to Filipina migrant mothers, the married participants in this study did not send money to their husbands (Gamburd, 2002; Parreñas, 2005), rather opting to send it to their eldest daughter or female relative. This had both pros and cons. While on the one hand children receiving and managing the remittances sent by their mothers, they were able to use the money as intended and for the benefit of the family, and avoid misuse of the funds by their husbands (Gamburd, 2002) or other extended family members. The disadvantage of mother to daughter money transfer was that the management and distribution of family finances "increased the responsibilities and workload of daughters" (Parreñas, 2005), possibly affecting their free time, and school performance as they took on an added responsibility. Daughters managing family finances helped participants such as MaLesedi who avoided fighting with relatives who had been misusing her children's money and items that she had bought.

Sphilile, like most other participants ensured that she sent remittances home every month, even when this involved compromising their own well-being. It is a perception among those left behind that those employed in eThekwini were living large, and lacked for nothing. This was far from the truth, some went to bed hungry, they sent their money home and were left with very little for themselves. This was also found to be the case in Ecuadorian domestic workers in Italy (Boccagni, 2012). Okuhle took care of her own three children, three nephews and her eldest daughter's child. Although four of the children in her household received a child support grant, they still depended on her salary of R2400 ($158.62) per month to live. She said: *"I can't even buy clothes for myself, my shoes have been repaired so many times, I can't take them there (shoemaker) again."* She did not spend money on herself, and on this income she had to prioritise food and transport. She was unable to reward herself for working hard, or to treat herself after having worked all month. There was always a greater need and so she was proud of earning a living, but did not derive much personal gain from it.

For some, earning their own income was affirming, as participants had access to money which opened up opportunities for them to save or form part of a savings club. Noluthando was very proud of herself. She had seven grown up children living in the Eastern Cape, *"yes, I had a little bit of money left so I bought myself a house."* Through her income, and from the insurance money left after the death of her father, she was able to build a brick house in her rural village. Also because she earned a salary, and lived on the property of her employer, she was approved for credit at a local bank, and was able to save some money which was eventually used up after one emergency or another. Similarly, employment enabled Siya and Zoleka to access credit and open savings accounts at the local banks. Although a loan is a liability, access to small

loans have been shown to improve the lives of the poor (Buijs, 1998). The ability to open a bank account was an achievement as they also had access to loans from formal banking services, and most of them appreciated that they could save their money in a private account, and not in a *stokvel* where there was a risk of people disappearing with their money. Having saved for the year, they were able to send more money and gifts home.

Sebenzile was the only participant who had a private savings policy and life insurance, others had funeral policies with the local funeral parlours, although Noluthando and Nomandla had employer-sponsored pension funds including funeral policies. Preparing for the future was seen as reasonable parenting in that their children would be taken care of in the event that they passed on. This was one of the pre-emptive and palliative ways of showing parental responsibility by reducing shock occurrence in the medium to long- term to prevent vulnerability (Chitonge, 2012). Further, palliative cushion from shock in the short-term was putting safety nets in place, in the event that there were emergencies. This was not only emotional support but also instrumental in that these participants were already anticipating the future needs of their children.

Carling *et al*. (2012) and Schmalzbauer (2008) found that earning one's own income enhanced the standards of their participants' lives, where they were able to acquire assets or pay off debts. The participants in this study were concerned with meeting the basic needs of their families. They were unable to buy expensive gifts such as iPads and tablets, or furniture and other household items as Parreñas (2005) and Illanes (2010) found in their respective studies of transnational Filipina and Peruvian domestic workers. For the participants in this study, their income was used for the upkeep of the family, food, school-related expenses. In only two cases were the participants able to investing in capital projects such as building their own homes, and this was done at great personal sacrifice.

There is a shortage of housing in South Africa, and with rapid urbanisation, many people live in informal housing which includes shacks, backyard structures and traditional dwellings. There are also huge backlogs for government provided low-cost housing, usually referred to as RDP housing (named after the Reconstruction and Development Programme). Goebel (2007, p. 295) explained that in KwaZulu-Natal "the percentage of households occupying informal dwellings has increased from 186,000 to 226,000 as the numbers of households in the province has grown from 1.7 million to 2.1 million." Those who cannot access RDP housing often build their own structures. Lethu lived in an informal settlement and was saving part of her income

in a savings scheme to build a house: *"I also used this money to build. I tried my best, I built a mud two-room house…it is such a nuisance that one. When it rains, it crumbles…and as it is, I have bought sand, I am trying to build blocks … I have to do it myself. I don't have money to hire someone to do it for me…but now I don't have cement…I have to get a least some bags of cement you see…"* Her persistent determination to provide shelter for her children was astounding. On her meagre salary of R 1700 per month, she spent almost 20% (R300 or $19.82) of her income on the building project. Lethu's life was somewhat improved by the ability to earn her own income and build a home for her children, but this was done at great sacrifice as she had to save every penny for her to complete this project, which was already in its 5th year. Shelter is a basic human need, and home ownership brings security and belonging. Lethu was relentless in her quest to provide a home and security for her children despite this draining her meagre income, being physically exhausting, and being of a sub-standard structure which crumbled when it rained.

Sacrifices made by those earning low wages are often invisible. Lethu, like many other participants in this study had to support herself and her family while attempting a large project such as building a home for her children. She, like the participants in the Canadian study by Grandea and Kerr (1998), they often made sacrifices but got so little in return. They worked very hard, only to be paid very little and thus have little to show for their hard labour.

7.3   To comply or not to comply with labour laws- the position of domestic workers

In Africa, South Africa and Mauritius are the only countries,which have ratified ILO Convention 189 for domestic workers, in 2013 and 2012 respectively. Minimum wage and the improvement of working conditions of domestic workers, has since 2002 - through SD7 - been included in the Labour Relations Act (1997). However, other countries have only recently put laws in place such as Namibia (2007) and Tanzania (Regulation of Wages and Terms of Employment Order, 2010), Lesotho (Labour Code Wage Amendment Notice, 2014) and Zambia through Statutory Instrument No. 3 of 2011 (7 January 2011).

Domestic employment is largely feminised, and there is a need to recognise Black women, and ensure that their labour as employees is on par with other sectors. Even in attempts to transform the labour force through the Minimum Wage Bill, domestic work continuously finds its place at the bottom of the wage hierarchy. ILO convention 189 covers four broad areas, namely: decent working conditions including minimum hours of work, freedom of association, safety in the workplace, social security and minimum wage for domestic workers (Visel, 2013).

Domestic workers occupy a stigmatised position as Blacks, women, and as the working class, therefore it can also be argued that the intersection of 'race', gender and social class, puts them in a most unenviable position. The history of domestic work in South Africa shows how this occupation has moved from informal work to formalisation of this sector through the Labour Relations Act (1997), specifically Sector Determination 7 (2002) that deals exclusively with domestic workers. Bosch and McLeod (2015) studied the relationships between domestic workers and their employers. The study indicates cultural differences between African domestic workers and their White, middle class employers who are usually women.

This sector is inherently exploitative, with a majority of the workers not formally registered as employees with the Department of Labour (DoL) as stipulated by sectional determination 7 (SD7) of the Labour Relations Act (1997). As such, they are unable to claim employee benefits that other formally employed workers have access to, such the unemployment insurance fund (UIF), paid leave, overtime and minimum wage. In South Africa only 20% of domestic employees were registered with the Department of Labour in 2011. As in other countries such as Brazil, the registration of domestic workers in South Africa is very low, and employer non-compliance with labour laws to register their employees with the Department of Labour is widespread. Du Toit (2013) stated that in contrast to a government 20% registration target in Brazil, only 1% of domestic workers were formally registered by their employers. The formalisation of domestic work, together with the requirement for formal registration of workers seems to have discouraged the full-time employment of domestic workers.

In this study, some of the workers were often put on 'short time' as employers arbitrarily changed working agreements, and tried to cut costs by paying them less. The repercussions of raising the minimum wage is that some workers may lose their jobs. Following government reforms in Zimbabwe "a large number of employers simply sacked their workers rather than pay them the minimum wage" (Pape, 1993, p. 392). Although domestic employment kept many of the participants out of destitution, all of them lived from hand to mouth. Both Hertz (2005) and Blaauw and Bothma (2010) asserted that there was an increase in the registration of domestic workers with the DoL since the promulgation of SD7, but there was also an increase in the number of 'dailies' or domestics working for a number of employers per week. Only three participants had a written contract, but eight participants reported that they were registered. Only three had a copy of the contract and the other two assumed that they were registered because their employers had asked for copies of their IDs, Zoleka, said: *"a few weeks after I started working, she made copies of my ID, so I think I am registered."*

The other participants confirmed that they had not been registered. Further, some participants knew that it was a legal requirement to be registered with the Department of Labour, but had never tried to find out if they had indeed been registered. Consequently, only those who were registered could claim UIF benefits in the event of job loss, maternity or incapacitation of any kind. Social insurance is often a lifeline for many people who lose their jobs or get injured at work, but even this basic support is not made available to employees if they are not registered. This implies that their families would most likely be destitute should they fall ill or get injured. A common reason for making copies of identity documents is to control workers. In order to prevent theft, escape from the employer or as a means to control the movements of the worker, employers either confiscate the passport on arrival (Mantouvalou, 2015) or IDs of the workers and make copies. This means that should the domestic worker want to leave, her movements were curtailed by the employer, or in the case of theft or suspected theft, the domestic worker could be traced.

The South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU) is the only union for domestic workers in South Africa, but the participants either did not know about it, or were unable to use it. In my efforts to gather as much information as I could, the only union representative I could get hold of in eThekwini was a lady who was very suspicious of my call when one of my participants needed some information. All the participants in the study did not know that there was a union for domestic workers, and Nomandla said *"oh he told us that whoever wants a union can go there and work for the union, he will not allow it in his house."* This was not a surprise as most employers either knew that the union was a toothless watchdog or were confident that their workers were too scared to approach one, lest they lost their jobs. None of the participants subscribed to SADSAWU or any other union, thus had "little or no recourse to address complaints" (Tronto, 2002).

7.4 "I don't even have a lunch hour, I eat standing up"

The hours of work was a contentious issues; all the participants worked for longer than eight hours a day. Although live-out domestic workers tended to have clearer working hours, they still worked longer and employers were strict about getting to work on time especially in the morning, The law gives some leeway for workers and employees to negotiate overtime or standby duties (Ginsburg, 2000; Magwaza, 2008), but this was not always the case because of the unequal working relationship. Almost all of the participants worked over eight hours per day with no overtime pay. Siya said, *"...the whole day on my feet. I don't even have a lunch hour. I eat standing up."* Because none of the participants had clear break times, they ate 'on-

the-go' in order to finish their daily duties on time, although this was not taken into consideration by employers.

Hours of work affected parenting. For most of the participants, the most reliable way of accessing families, and communicating with their children was by phone, therefore they needed time to make a call or speak to their children during the day. The extent to which they could reach their children during the day was affected by the amount of work to do, and the permission of their employers to use their own cell phones at work, during the day. As with Hoschild's (2002) study, some of the employers did not allow the use of cell phones by workers during working hours and this meant that the participants either did not speak to their children at all during the day, or did this surreptitiously. Power geometry (Massey, 1994) in the form of unidirectional communication reflected not only the micro level dynamics of access to resources, but also what Parreñas (2005) argued, reflects the inequality between developed and developing countries. Communication was from the direction of mothers to their children, with mothers having the means to call their children, and not the other way round. This implies that because the cost of making calls or sending messages was borne by the mothers, they were able to control the frequency and duration of phone calls although this was also affected by the employer allowing calls to be made or received during working hours.

For live-in participants, working hours affected communication with their children. Their working hours were not defined and they tended to work much longer hours than their live-out counterparts, and male domestic workers in general. They worked well over the hours stipulated by law, some such as Lulu who had been employed for two years at the time of the interview, worked 16 hours per day. On weekdays, she woke up at 04h30 in order to have the children ready for their transport to pick them up at 06h00, and seldom went to bed before 22h00. On weekends she was tasked with babysitting duties and only went to bed when the rest of the family had retired. Because she did not get any day off, even on Sundays, it meant that she worked over 112 hours a week, and could not visit her daughter. In the past 12 months, she explained that she went home for a week each during the December and Easter holidays, and took another week off when her mother was sick. In-between she had asked for days off to attend to family emergencies, but in each case she was granted a weekend off, and not any more time which meant that she had seen her daughter for approximately four weeks in 12 months.

Although the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 allows all formally employed persons up to 21 consecutive days of annual leave, but this was not the case with the participants. They could either take non-consecutive days leave such as being off on certain days of the week, such as a Thursday, or take time off as required by their employer. Sometimes participants wanted to go home, but leaving on a Friday meant spending only one full day at home therefore some of them negotiated that they leave on Thursday afternoon to return on Monday afternoon, this meant that they had taken two days off. For Puseletso, *"You see even now, when I am off or its month end. I get there on Friday afternoon, I stay on Saturday and by Sunday I have to be back. There is no time to be with my children…. I don't spend any time with them. So I am there just to say hello and then I have to go back…they will think that I don't have any love (for them) because I have just gotten home and now I have to go back."* For Magdeline whose son lived in Limpopo province, about 933 km away, transport costs prohibited her from travelling home as often as she would have liked. For some participants, each time they went home during the year, their pay was deducted for those days. Nomusa was upset about having to work long hours and having little leave time. She explained: *"once I went home as usual on the 24th (December), and came back on the 5th (January)as agreed, but she deducted money for four days saying that I was not here, so she could not pay me for being away for that long, but she was the one who said it was okay."* Negotiating time off was difficult for local participants, but for the transnational workers, it was compound by other factors.

Transnational domestic workers seldom took time off to go home, and many of them visited home after long periods due to the cost of transport, and the time it took to travel home, and because of visa restrictions. This is similar to the studies of by Ambrosini (2015), Mantouvalou (2015) and Kiwanuka, *et al.* (2015) whose cross-border participants were restricted by visa laws from visiting their homes as often as they would have liked, some going home only twice a year. South Africa has seen an increase in transnational workers from other SADC countries such as Lesotho, Zimbabwe and Mozambique (Makoro, 2015). In this study, the participants also indicated that they visited after three, six or even 9 months, but all of them saw their children at least once a year, especially at Christmas and Easter.

The distances they travelled varied but for this sample, the average distance from home was about 300 kms, this could be about over 4 hours or longer by taxi. The distance from Durban to Maseru (Lesotho) is 554 km, and about 400 km to Qacha's Nek (Lesotho). Those who could travel home quarterly, did so because they had very young children and could negotiate with

their employers for more time off, such as long weekends often leaving Thursday night to return Monday night, but many could not go home due to the cost of transport. These participants went to great lengths to ensure that they visited their homes, sometimes there were competing demands and at other times they were simply too exhausted to have to negotiate leave, visas and travel for hours.

With local participants, travelling was relatively expensive, and they tried to minimise costs by not travelling home, rather sending *abomkhaya*, (homegirls) who were going home with money or groceries. Nomusa, for instance had been working for four years in eThekwini, and explained that she was allowed to go home to uMzinto, about 68 km from Durban on Sundays. She could not afford to do so, she opted rather, to send the money to her 9 year-old daughter through a local taxi driver who would deliver it safely to her family. Puseletso worked round the clock every day, except one weekend at the end of the month. She did not go home when she was off because it was too far: *"so I came here, it's about 4 hours on the bus from Matatiele (Eastern Cape province, about 325 km away)… if I go home, it means that I must leave here Friday evening, and maybe get home in the early hours of the morning, then stay with them Saturday, by Sunday morning I have to leave them so that I can be back at work on time."* Although she missed her three young children, it was too expensive to go home, and having to see them for only one full day seemed to be *"a waste of money."*

In her study of transnational Peruvian women in the UK, Anderson (2001) found that these transnational domestic workers seldom visited home, or only visited home after many years. This was following many years of campaigning in the UK where "1800 previously undocumented migrant domestic workers succeeded in obtaining visas" (Anderson 2001, p. 29) through the intervention of Kalayaan, a UK-based domestic workers' support organisation. This support was not available to the participants in this study. None of them belonged to a union or employee organisation, and the only available unaffiliated union in eThekwini, called the South African Domestic and Allied General Workers Union (SADAGWU) (Ally, 2008), seems to step in as a referral to the CCMA for labour-related issues.

One cannot preclude the possibility of a close and emotionally reciprocal relationship between employers and employees. It might, however, be reflective of what King (2007) called pseudo-maternalistic, with Bakan and Stasius (1997) referring to this as a paternalistic relationship which is feminized because it is between women employees and female employers.

Bosch and McLeod (2015, p. 145) emphasised reinforcement of "a power structure that has implications not only for the workplace hierarchy but also for the socially perceived 'race' and class hierarchy." Offers of money and advice to their workers, are only from employer to employee and not the other way round, meaning that the position of the employer is solidified and her maternal actions continue to treat the employee as a minor, whose employer attains a mother-like status. Such a maternalistic relationship is apparent in many 'maid and madam' relationships, in some cases it is presented with good intentions and is done in such a way that the employee is expected to appreciate the goodwill of the employer. At other times, it is openly hostile and exploitative such as when employees are reminded of *"all the good things I have done for you"* as in the reflections of Sibani.

The subjugation of Black, working-class women by usually White middle-class women who employ them is degrading and shows the power difference between them, and the degree to which the 'race' and class divide them. Even as madams, Nyamnjoh (2006) argued that White women also feed into patriarchy. They seem to move up the social ladder only through the subjection of fellow women, who are Black and poorer than they are. The argument by Anthias (2000) that both madams and maids are subjects of patriarchal domination, but madams are able to free themselves from domestication only by the debasement and dehumanisation of another. They also internalise and are co-opted into the public sphere, only because they are able to domesticate others, usually Black women. This calls for debates around "the nanny question" which Tronto (2002, p. 35) advances. She argued that the ability of wealthier women to pursue professionalism and intensive motherhood simultaneously, comes at a price for poorer women who replace them in the domestic sphere. One group of women uses another to meet their own needs. This does not challenge patriarchy, but rather keeps it firmly in place. The position of domestic workers as labour machines or mules of the earth (Collins, 2000) who are seemingly ultra-exploited should not be taken at face value. Domestic workers are aware of the unequal relationship between them and their employers, and within this unequal relationship they also exercise options available to them. There is personal agency and they use various skills to cope and negotiate power within the limited choices that they have.

7.5   Negotiating power – muted rituals of rebellion

On the surface, the relationship between domestic workers and their employers may seem to affirm the employer's superiority and maintain the exploitation and demeaning status quo of employees (King, 2007; Jacobs, *et al*., 2013). By assuming a position of subservience, participants also exercised some power in this relationship. The use of deference as a means of

coping, adaptation, rebellion or protection of one's integrity and self-respect in the face of oppression (Cock, 1989; Romero, 1992) is crucial. Deferential workers may appear to have accepted their position in the social order or seen to aspire to reach the superior status of their employers (Lockwood, 1966). Although there is an inherent imbalance of power between employers and employees, there is also some agency on the part of the domestic workers.

In their study of south-south migration for domestic work, Deshingkar and Zeitlyn (2015) found that domestic workers often renegotiated boundaries and the balance of power with their employers. This relationship is not as powerless as is usually believed. In his study of domestic workers in Botswana and South Africa, Nyamnjoh (2005, p. 183) highlighted the negotiated power between maids and madams, and he argued that at face value employers may appear all powerful, but the reality is "often more nuanced and prone to constant negotiation with and concession to maids." By taking unscheduled days off, indiscriminately using facilities and disregarding employers' social values (Deshingkar & Zeitlyn, 2015) workers also contested power, although covertly.

Lehakoe, who was a live-out worker, explained that *"sometimes I would arrive late, just so that she could also be late for work. She had a small baby so if I was not there, then she had no choice but to wait for me.*" This was a way of getting back at her employer who was very strict. Similarly, MaLesedi would consume pork on the employers' property, knowing full well that the employer's religion forbade the consumption of pork or pork products. Despite their vulnerable status, workers managed to control certain aspects of their work or improve conditions of employment, and protect their own integrity as passive rebellion (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Domestic workers are not altogether powerless, but hold power individually and as a collective.

Other forms of "muted rituals of rebellion" (Nyamnjoh, 2005, p. 183) are what Cock (1980) referred to as cheerful incompetence, silence, deference, and a non-committal attitude. This is in addition to "foot-dragging, going slow, pilfering, sulking and non-responsiveness" (Nyamnjoh, 2005. P. 184). Magdeline, for instance, had learnt to pull her face when asked to perform certain tasks which she found offensive. MaThabang's employer believed that she was deaf in one ear because she pretended not to hear her half the time, and this also enabled her to not perform certain tasks. None of the participants confessed to pilfering or theft, but reported that they knew someone else who did this.

As much as domestic workers needed their jobs, employers also needed them. In their study of the experiences of domestic worker employers in the western cape, Galvaan, Peters, Smith, Brittain, Menegaldo, Rautenbach, Wilson-Poe (2015) found that the freedom to enter into any employment sector was facilitated by the round the clock availability of live-in domestic workers, even if this meant that these women had left their children at home. They also had the freedom to socialise knowing that their children were safe in the care of domestic workers. But the drawbacks of having live-in workers included having to share their living space with another person who was always working on their nerves, they were also 'caught in a conundrum' as they realised how much they needed their domestic workers, but also resented their presence.

Reluctance in accepting that this was a mutually beneficial relationship requiring both to sacrifice. Galvaan *et al*. (2015) also found that employers felt forced to be benevolent. Some felt that the needs of their employees put them in a difficult space where they had no choice but to be compassionate, especially when boundaries between them were blurred by workers. Some wanted to be mothered by their employers, or expecting them to solve their financial and other problems. In this study, the employer as parent meant that they stepped in even when it was not their role to do so. For instance, when Nkosi's child was accidentally burned, the employer took the child to a private hospital at his own expense. When Msebenzi needed her children to get into tertiary institutions, her employer assisted with the application process and negotiating a bursary, and when Sinazo's daughters completed high school, her employer sought employment for them on her behalf.

The participants also knew when to be employees and when to be 'family'. Some referred to their employers as *'my sister'* or *'my mother'* when all was going well, but when they were upset with their employers, they were *mlungu* (or White person, also used to denote one with more authority), regardless of employer 'race' group. By positioning themselves as victims or infantilising their position, they were able to gain financially or emotionally from their employers. Regardless of their 'race' group, the employers were mainly of a higher social class than their workers and their lifestyle was also enhanced by the presence of a domestic worker, whose presence freed them from domestic chores and responsibilities, including parenting. The fear of being outdone by their domestic worker made them aware of the dependence on them for the wellbeing of their families, and led to what Galvaan *et al*. (2015) referred to as micro-aggressions and micro-invalidations or "cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the

psychological thoughts, feelings or experiential realities" (Sue, 2010, p. 37) of marginalised groups such as domestic workers. Nyamnjoh (2006) also referred to the deliberate exploitation and debasement of maids to the fullest, which then further reinforces their low status in society.

7.6 Creating own social protection – strategies and resilience

The participants created their own informal social insurance by joining different rotating and savings and credit associations (ROSCAs) (Mupedziswa & Ntseane, 2013; Patel *et al*., 2012; Biggart, 2001) comprising family/kin, friends and abomkhaya. These are commonly referred to as *stokvels*, *gooi gooi* or *diswaeti, umgalelo, umjikelezo, metshelo* (Ngwenya 2003; Smets & Wels, 1999) where membership is based on periodic weekly or monthly contributions. Having originated from burial societies, funeral association or benefit associations (Mupedziswa & Ntseane 2013; Patel *et al.* 2012), these *stokvels* are an existing type of indigenous peer lending arrangement (Biggart 2001; Buijs 1998) very different from microcredit, but they operate along similar lines. Interest-free and collateral-free credit are available to people who do not usually qualify in formal financial institutions and the contributions are usually reasonable therefore affordable to most domestic worker, thus forming a safety net for those in informal and low income employment.

Ngwenya (2003) showed that *diswaeti* may be based on work, ethnicity or cut across social and physical lines. Membership may also vary from a few people to thousands of members. Biggart (2001) explained that generally, the organiser may be a trusted person with good social standing and credentials in the community. This person may also invite membership to trusted people so that others may be comfortable and assured of payment when their turn comes. Most of the participants belonged to *stokvels* organised by *abomkhaya* who joined regardless of gender, for instance the participants from Lesotho belonged to the same stokvel, and so did Nkosi and his wife. Others used their money to join burial societies, for instance Zandile emphasised the importance of saving for burial *"… with burial societies. If you can have a death without any cover, it would be a disaster, it would be a disaster…and sometimes people feel like "hey you know with this R100….with this R100 I could do this and that"…and they forget to look into the future, that when it has happened…this R100 could have covered this funeral."*

Not only were the *stokvels* and burial societies a form of financial support, they were an important source of social support as they also provided advice and emotional support. For those attempting projects like building a house, the only way they could gather enough money and physical support was through *stokvels*. For participants like Lethu, who had been trying to

build a home for her children, being part of a *stokvel* meant that she could put some money away for the materials and labour to finally finish this project. The R300 (20% of her wages) she put away every month was a huge sacrifice, considering that she still needed to buy food, have enough money for transport and other needs that could not be postponed.

7.7   Conclusion

From the above discussion it is clear that domestic work is exploitative, despite its status as formal employment, this did not always mean that employers complied with labour laws, as a majority had not registered their employees with the Department of Labour as required by law. The working conditions varied, and those who had some degree of autonomy stayed longer in their jobs. The personal nature of domestic work maintained rather than dissolved unequal power relations between employees and employers. Nyamnjoh's (2005) perception of the relationship between domestic workers and their employers as 'zombification' captures the extent to which their relationship is a site of struggle, where the power and control are negotiated and assumed in this seemingly overtly biased relationship between women from two different social classes and 'race' groups. Everyday experiences and behaviours play themselves out to reinforce the power imbalance between employers and employees. What both fail to see is the patriarchal oppression of both. Men occupy a public space while women are relegated to the domestic, yet social class often tends to privilege employers, who further debase, trivialise and domesticate other women (Mama, 2002). But there is also personal agency on the part of domestic workers, using various means from frustrating or embarrassing their employers, withholding information, petty theft and ensuring that they become better home managers than their madams.

Entry into domestic employment was precipitated by a number of factors, chiefly poverty and lack of employment opportunities in the participants' communities of origin, and the need to support their families. Although employment increased the financial position of some of the participants, this was not a significant change especially when other needs are considered such as housing, food, transport and school uniforms. Employment does not automatically mean getting out of poverty (Ehrenreich, 2002), rather these workers shoulder an even greater financial burden as they support not only their families but also other extended family members. The extent to which caregivers for the children were available, facilitated labour migration of these women who continued to work long hours, receiving little pay with limited time off to see their families. While domestic work was not ideal employment, and for some being a stepping stone into another job, it was a way of providing for the needs of their families,

particularly children. The results of the study challenge the binaries and dominant constructions of men as providers and women as nurturers only. Despite their low incomes, the majority of the women were sole providers for their children. The working conditions of the women in relation to income, leave, hours of work and flexibility were factors that influenced the frequency of visits to their children, the material provisions made, and the kinds of contact that they had with their children.

CHAPTER 8: THE SOCIOCULTURAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF MOTHERHOOD

8.1 Introduction

In this chapter I focus on the dominant constructions of motherhood. In addition to being a social identity, motherhood involves the work of mothering, which itself, is a multi-layered practice (Walker, 1995). Ideas about what constitutes good mothering have sociocultural and historical roots, yet mothering continues to be regarded as naturally-occurring in women and the same in all communities. It is taken for granted that women find ultimate fulfilment in mothering, and the normalisation of intensive mothering, ultimately marginalises other forms of mothering, where women-centred networks enable alternative mothering as in the case of distance mothers, shadow mothers, and *othermothers*, who not only raise children in different contexts, but do so within the constraints of racial and class conditions. In this chapter, I delve into the experiences of the participants who navigate mothering as Black, low-income women who are mothering their children from a distance. In addition to questioning the continued exploitation of women's unpaid and unacknowledged labour, I highlight the irony of domestic workers who are often paid to mother other people's children while their own children are left behind.

8.2 "What they don't tell you is how hard it is to raise a baby"

The age at which women should become mothers is contested as both young motherhood and later mothers are problematized (Macleod, 2001; Phoenix, 1991). Institutionalised motherhood also defines who is fit to mother (Wane, 2000) and at what age (Phoenix, 1991). As a marker of femininity (Malacrida, 2009), motherhood is also a channel through which women attain adulthood, maturity and recognition (Macleod, 2001; Phoenix, 1996). Of the 33 female participants in this study, over half (17) had their first child by 19 years of age, 10 were mothers in their 20s and the rest (6) had their first child when they were between 30 and 37 years of age. Sinazo (42) had three children, and she was from a community where teenage motherhood was rife and could not explain the reason for falling pregnant, in her words: *"I loved him and he loved me, I just didn't think about it. I felt it was the next step in our relationship to have a baby."* Young motherhood was so normalised in her peer group that she followed suit, although her mother was disappointed. Both her girls also had children by the time they were 21 years old. Ingrid (24) had her first born at 15 years when she was in grade 10 along with other classmates from her school. Her second child was born two years later: *"a lot of girls fall pregnant, even though it disappoints our parents, but …."* Like Sinazo, pregnancy at high

school seemed to have been quite pervasive. By the time Monica (39) turned 20 years, she already had three children. She eventually got married to the man who impregnated her and had four more children afterwards. The age at which women bear children, and conditions under which it is acceptable to bear a child have long been areas of research and debate (Gilbert & Sewpaul, 2015; Kline, 1995; Macleod, 2001; Phoenix, Wollett & Lloyd, 1991; Richter, 2008). The morality of unmarried Black mothers has also been questioned, with various myths around the correlation between

Malacrida (2009) and Macleod (2001) argued that motherhood is a marker of femininity, gaining respect and recognition, even though it came at great personal cost. Sinazo (42) felt recognised that she was *"a woman"* through motherhood, but for Noluthando, having children at a young age made her *"a laughing stock"* in the community. After the birth of her fist born when she was 14 years old, she had a baby every two years and by the age of 25 years she already had five children. Although she was ashamed of being a young mother, she still did not prevent pregnancy. She said: *"when I tell a boy that I am pregnant, he would run away. I would breastfeed and then be pretty. I would look good and then fall pregnant again…oh my goodness, I was always pregnant or breastfeeding."* Young motherhood placed enormous emotional and financial burden on her mother, who in turn, was seen as irresponsible for not guiding her daughter properly to prevent repeated pregnancies while still in high school.

Mother-blaming is prevalent when children behave in ways which are at odds with societal expectations, and in this case, repeated pregnancies at a young age, of an unmarried teenager. Studies by Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1989) and Ichou (2006) conducted in Soweto and Durban respectively, found that a majority of young women who had children out of wedlock did not feel stigmatised. However, Zondo's (2006) study of young mothers in Inanda township found intensified alienation and stigmatisation of young mothers by fellow learners and teachers, causing teenage mothers to feel excluded from society. For Noluthando having children at a young age was stigmatising, and she explained that even her peers would not play with her because their parents disapproved of her *"shameful"* behaviour.

For Ingrid (24) who had two children while in high school, having a baby was stressful: *"it was never the same…it was hard and I thought I would cope, but what they don't tell you is how hard it is to raise a baby."* She was also ashamed of the disappointment that young motherhood brought to her and her maternal grandmother, but she seemed to blame her grandmother for this. Because her mother was deceased, she felt that the family neglected her

and that her own maternal grandmother did not give her as much attention as she did her aunts and uncles. Ntini and Sewpaul (2017) found that teen pregnancy brings about financial strain, interruption of schooling and increased dependence on the family for emotional and financial support. One of their major findings was school interruption for girls, not boys. Burger, Coetzee and Van Der Watt (2013, p.17) also found "no evidence of positive education outcomes for the household members of domestic workers." The propensity for girls to return to school following pregnancy is very low (Grant & Hallman, 2008), which in turn compromises their future economic stability and keeps them in a cycle of poverty (McDevitt, Adlakha, Fowler & Harris-Bourne, 1996).

Young motherhood plays a significant role in precluding entry into better paying jobs, therefore limiting the employment opportunities of these women to low-income jobs such as domestic employment, an occupation that requires little or no formal education or skills. Domestic employment was not the first choice of work for many of the participants, for instance they said: *"It was my situation of being poor and things were not going well. I saw that when I was at home, things were just not working out for me…there was nothing to do…and I saw this job as a way to help me"* as reflected by Puseletso. Nomfundo also explained: *"You see the situation at home was bad. There was nobody employed and we were hungry, it was just a bad situation and that is when I spoke to mom and decided to come and work here. My mother is old and then I found this job. It's not ideal, but it's much better than nothing."*

Burger, Coetzee and Van Der Watt (2013) also found that women were forced into domestic employment, which has low status, is unacknowledged and low-paying. Besides these factors, it was not unusual for domestic employment to be intergenerational. Some of the participants such as Winnie and Siya's mothers had themselves been domestic workers. Jayaweera, Malsiri and Leelangi (2002) found that children of domestic workers in Sri Lanka, were also likely to drop out of school to work, and seek employment in the domestic work sector. All of the participants did not want their children to work in this sector, or "follow in their footsteps and become servants in turn" (Bartolomei, 2010, p. 95). Monica for instance, said: *"..you wonder how it would have been if you were educated. It would not be like this like me, if I had had an education because I don't want my children to be like me. I don't want it."*

For Winnie, early motherhood was encouraged by her mother who believed that a woman is defined by her childbearing capability. Her mother married her off at a young age and by 19 years she gave birth to her daughter: *"I think from her beliefs and what works for her…how*

can I put it? I can say that the way she looks at life and what works for her is that a woman has to have a man…it's something that works for her in life, to have a man." She was married to a much older man, and was unhappy in her marriage until she ran away. But when she had her daughter, whom she left in the care of her mother, her daughter too was 'married off' as soon as she turned 15 years of age. Her mother encouraged her granddaughter to live with a man without being married at 15 years of age. Winnie was therefore a grandmother at 39 years and resented the way her mother encouraged early motherhood.

At the time of the interview, Winnie was in her second marriage and just wanted her daughter to aspire towards greater things and return to school, but her daughter was not interested. The belief that women had to be mothers was also expressed by a majority of the participants, and for Nomfundo, who at the initial interview was cohabiting with her boyfriend: *"Yes, I also want a child, you know they (men) won't be involved in these (children), and he will want his own child, so I am going to have a child with him after we get married. I think by December we will be married.*" Nomfundo had three children, the first-born had severe epilepsy and required full time care. Although her mother cared for all three children, Nomfundo was still prepared to have another child with the man she cohabited with. Marriage, and even cohabitation, seemed to be another compelling reason for pregnancy and motherhood. In our subsequent interview, seven months later Nomfundo was living again in her own shack, and no longer willing to discuss marriage or her ex-boyfriend. However, she indicated that she still wanted another child if she met the right person.

In nearly all the cases of young motherhood, families openly expressed their disappointment. For Noluthando (52), who fell pregnant at 14 years, her pregnancy hurt her mother. She went to live with her boyfriend until after the delivery of the baby, thereafter the family seemed to accept her back home. Although damages were eventually paid by the father of her first two children, she felt rejected by the family at her *"most difficult time."* Young motherhood is frowned upon and teenage pregnancy often brings shame to the family (Chigona & Chetty, 2008), but, all the families welcomed the baby despite the material, financial and physical strain it brought to the young mother and her family. While the pregnancy is rejected, the baby is usually accepted.

Sebenzile's life was centred around mothering others, she mothered her two siblings, and after giving birth to her first born at 19 years and her second child three years later, she continued with mothering all of them. Sebenzile (31) was forced to mother while she was a teenager. Her

involuntary mothering happened after her mother simply abandoned her children to live elsewhere while Sebenzile was still in high school. There was role reversal in their relationship, this is where "a … dynamic between mothers and daughters happens when the mother comes to depend on her daughter for emotional attunement and response, and the mother's selfobject needs predominate" (Kabat, 1996, p. 255). She also entered into domestic employment where she was a nanny to two children. It seems that she was not only forced into mothering her siblings and then her own children. There may be an argument that Sebenzile was complicit in her exploitation, but she seemed to have limited choices. She was a domestic worker with grade 11 education, and a breadwinner for herself, her siblings and her children.

It is important to understand the structural determinants of early motherhood which continue to impinge on young women. The intersection of social class and gender, continue to place women at a disadvantage. Both sexual coercion, age of sexual debut and link to women's socio-economic status has been extensively studied (Eaton, Flisher & Aaro, 2003; Hallman, 2004, 2005; Mchunu, Peltzer, Tutshana & Seutlwadi, 2012; Panday, Makiwane, Ranchhod & Letsoalo, 2009). The findings point to early engagement in sexual activity as a result of poverty and the need for women to support themselves, their children and families. The lack of skills for women to engage in sustainable livelihoods further disadvantages them. In their study of mothering in Limpopo province, South Africa (Spjeldnæs, Moland, Harris & Sam, 2014) found women in poor communities having poor negotiation power which was shown by limited sexual agency where they devalued their bodies. They did not believe that their sexuality was worth protecting (Townsend, 2008). Mothers entered into relationship with men for money and gifts with implicit consent of their children, especially the boys. In order to offer a holistic service, Ntini and Sewpaul (2017) advocate not only for income generation skills, but also life skills so that both girls and boys may delay age of sexual debut and prevent pregnancy at a young age.

A range of socio-economic factors may lead to early teenage pregnancy including the inability of young women to negotiate safer sex and poverty (Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017). Panday *et al*. (2009) explained that the socio-economic status of communities, including social cohesion and role-modelling by adults may have a bearing on the sexual behaviour of adolescents. They further argue that living in households with low socio-economic status and low levels of education may limit the achievements of young people, who then face prospect of life with limited choices and financial resources. It is often reported that a way of responding to poverty, may be entering into relationships with older men, where sex is traded for gifts and money. It

is therefore not easy to negotiate safer sex and the use of contraceptives in these unequal relationships (Hallman, 2004).

The education of young women is negatively affected by pregnancy, and the positive link between educational attainment and the length of school attendance, shows that life outcomes for those who stay longer in school are more positive than those who drop out earlier (Kaufman, de Wet & Stradler, 2001). Further, there is also a correlation between higher levels of education and lower fertility rates (Bongaarts, Frank & Lesthaeghe, 1984), therefore there is a need to for young women to stay longer in school and delay parenthood. For those who become young mothers, Ntini and Sewpaul (2017) suggest increased investment in their income generation skills training and more opportunities for developing sustainable livelihoods. These young mothers may then be empowered to support themselves and their children.

If early motherhood is problematized, so is later motherhood (Phoenix, 1991) which is often associated with increased physical risks to the mother and baby, such as Down's syndrome (Nortman, 1974) or maternal ill health including hypertension and perinatal complications (Mansfield, 1988), but there are some positives to childbearing at an older age. Berryman (1991) argued that older mothers are more patient, and more likely to have planned pregnancies than younger mothers. Women who give birth in their 40s tend to be stigmatised more. In South Africa, 81% of mothers who gave birth in 2016 were within the 20−39 year age group of whom the majority was between the ages of 20-29, 13,9% were very young mothers aged between 10 and 19 years old, and the rest (about 5,1%) were in the 40−54 years age group (Statistics South Africa, 2017a).

In this study six of the participants had children in their late 30s although these were not their first pregnancies. For Noluthando, who had her first child at age 14 and her last one at 40 years, she felt the shame of young and old motherhood: *"It was shameful, especially because I was still not married when I fell pregnant with my last born."* But for Neliswa who was in a polygynous marriage, there was pressure to have children: *" ...in my situation the more children you have, the more secure you are."* She was not embarrassed by falling pregnant at an advanced age as she was securing her position in the marriage, despite the financial burden of raising the children falling disproportionately on her. The best way to assert her position was to have more babies, especially since *"the other wife is educated."* Neliswa had no education and her husband's other wife had matric, and two children and she was much younger than

Neliswa. Although it worked against her in some ways, particularly from an economic point of view, she reasoned that having more children was her way of gaining respect.

Despite the financial burden of motherhood none of the participants had ever considered termination of their pregnancies or adoption. Families seemed to routinely accept and raise the babies. A disproportionate number of caregivers were maternal relatives, and very few were from the paternal side, even when the pregnancy had been acknowledged. Raising children becomes the responsibility of women, if not the mothers then their own maternal relatives, grandmothers and aunts.

8.3 Constructing motherhood: "I am MaSechaba, mother of a lovely boy called Sechaba"

All the participants mothered their children from a distance, all were Black and all were domestic workers. The intersection of 'race' and social class in this group showed the presence of both entrenched and alternative discourses in the ideology and practice of mothering. One form of childcare, and by implication, mothering, is dominant in the world today. Intensive motherhood, also referred to as essential motherhood (DiQuinzio, 1999), is the ideal type of mothering which requires a selfless, ever present and available mother (Bassin, Honey & Kaplan, 1994; Lupton, 2000) who puts the needs of her children above her own (Hays, 1996), has become so universalised that few challenge it (Alldred, 1996; Phoenix, Woollett & Lloyd, 1991). Institutionalised mothering assumes that that good mothering involves attachment to a single caregiver, who co-resides and makes sacrifices for her children.

While this view has been criticised as "racist, colonialist, masculinist" (Alldred, 1996, p. 127), and leaning heavily towards White, middle class, nuclear, able-bodied families, it is a widely held belief towards which women from all 'races' and social classes aspire, and rightly so. Despite these normative constructions of motherhood centralising only one form of mothering, and marginalising others such as distance mothering or shared mothering within women-centred networks (Collins, 1994), it is still the dominant view of mothering throughout the world irrespective of social class or 'race'. Marginalised mothers whose practices fall outside the norm, such as domestic workers, fall outside the centre because they do not conform to the dominant discourse. Many working mothers, often poor, do not have the luxury of exclusively looking after their children while a partner provides for them. They automatically become subjects of deviancy discourses by leaving their children in the care of others. In this study, the participants were not able to stay with their children although they wanted to stay with them.

Poverty necessitates the separation of mothers from their children and so they mother from a distance. The participants seem to have internalised the prevailing 'norm' of intensive mothering, on the one hand, while the reality is that they parent their children from a distance, on the other hand. The constant oscillation between the ideal and the practical created some inconsistency as they idealised the normative practice of intensive mothering, but were actually faced with the reality of mothering from a distance. The participants in this study were all Black, low-income parents living in extended families and who wanted to be good mothers within their constrained environments. The participants' introductions clearly showed that motherhood as an identity was important.

The participants from Lesotho, in particular, introduced themselves as *"mother of …"*, for instance MaSechaba introduced herself this way: *"I am MaSechaba, mother of a lovely boy called Sechaba"* and another participant said, *"they call me MaThabang"* (mother of Thabang) instead of her own birth name. The other participants also used their married names (not surnames) to introduce themselves such as MaLesedi, and MaMosa and so on. For their children to gain legitimacy, customary law (Recognition of Customary Marriages Act (120 of 1998) requires that damages (*inhlawulo*) be paid in instances where men impregnate women out of wedlock. This implied that all of them were married because the naming ceremony, especially in Basotho groups, is only performed in marriage.

Those who are not married would not have these naming ceremonies, and their children born out of wedlock would be named by their maternal families. A majority of the participants were from KZN, and this is not a usual ritual for newly-wed women, therefore they did not have teknonymous names. Participants, who were not married, were usually called by their own given names. Ashton (1967 cited in Guma, 2001, p. 272) explains that "among Basotho, marriage gives both men and women a new status in society with concomitant rights and privileges." A married name (or teknonymous name) not only prepares one for motherhood, but also puts pressure on women to reproduce. In this patrilineal society the majority of teknonymous are male and usually gender-specific, but feminine variations are given to accommodate girl children (Guma, 2001).

This implies that women must become mothers, and be married when they give birth for their children to gain legitimacy, and further makes women complicit in furthering their own oppression through a validation of patriarchal practices such as these naming rights. A majority of the participants were Zulu-speaking, and did not subscribe to the process of naming when

getting married, but they also had pressure to have children. The participants internalised the naming and also introduced themselves to the world through the names of their children, thus reducing their significance and centrality in the birth process. Men retained their birth names and identity, and were seldom referred to as father of so-and-so. The patriarchal ownership and annexation of the birth process (Rothman, 1994; Rich, 1986) seems to have completely taken over motherhood and marginalised the role of women in the reproductive process, in child nurturing and major life decisions such as use of surname, place of residence, or legitimate caregiver.

The women in this study often spoke of *"my children's people"*, referring to the paternal family. MaLesedi referred to her two children living at 'home' when it was the paternal family, but used the word 'house' to refer to her own place where the children later stayed under the care of her older daughter, thus validating the paternal family as rightful owners of the children. Although the Zulu-speaking participants did not have naming rights, the participants wished that their children knew "their family" and were acknowledged where damages had not been paid. The whole issue of damages also shows the patriarchal ownership of children regardless of age. On the one hand, damaging one's daughter was unacceptable, but through the payment of cash or cows, this exchange between men remedied the offence.

The participants were mostly young when they were impregnated, but for participants such as Thandaza (48) whose child was born when she was 29 years old, the family demanded that damages be paid by her partner who was much older than she was. He refused, and the paternal family was never allowed to see Thandaza's daughter, meaning that the maternal family bore all the financial responsibilities, and the child was not able to participate in any paternal family functions or rituals and ceremonies, such as *imbeleko*, which are important in the Zulu culture. *Imbeleko* is a ceremony which is performed by paternal relatives to introduce a child to paternal ancestors, it also confers legitimacy and claims to paternal ancestry (Nduna, 2014). By 'damaging' the girl, this offends the rightful owner of the child – the father- hence the payment of *inhlawulo*, to apologise and acknowledge the pregnancy, but the girl has no say in the matter. This patriarchal ownership of children not only commodifies children but also marginalises the important role of the mother. From naming rituals, *imbeleko* ceremonies, *ilobolo* and marriage, the role of women is backgrounded and reduced to the hard labour of raising children who, within patriarchal constructions and practices, belong to men.

Another argument which has been put forward by many feminists is that motherhood and childcare is the domain of women. While men may take over decision-making in the birth process, the day-to-day care of children remains an area where women are not altogether powerless, and motherhood was not always experienced as a burden, instead it was affirming. All the participants expressed love for their children and none regretted having them. What was difficult for them was maintaining these children, often without support from the partner. For instance Monica who had seven children and received support from her brother, raised their children without the support of her husband, their father. She was very emotional when she spoke about how difficult it was to raise them without his support: *"it is not (easy), sometimes I see the way I am carrying such a heavy burden…hey* (sighs)*, when I see that their father is so near…he stays in the area, but he does nothing. He is employed, he earns money, he also gets paid weekly but he does nothing, he stays with his girlfriend…so you see…*(sobs)."

Nomandla expressed her determination to raise her children *"when you are a mother you have to…only a mother knows the needs of children and you have to do that. When it's steep, you have to climb and really make sure that it works out …. You have to!"* and later she said, *"It is hard to work and be a mother, because when you are a mother, you have to take care of your children. You must have a home and you have to make sure that all goes well. It's up to you, even if a man is there, what can we say? …there's no other way."* The role of motherhood was seen as the purview of women and that it was up to them to take care of their families and maintain the cohesion in the family. Like others, she was determined to ensure that the children were cared for even when it was difficult. The legitimacy of motherhood and affirmation of their role as competent women, who undertake this complex role.

8.4 "Other mothers have gone to work, why are you here?"

While the majority of women held onto idealized notions of intensive mothering and felt guilty about not measuring up to this, they were also subject to an alternative, normalised discourse and practice – that of distance parenting. Normalising discourses have the power to silence the masses. The perception of something as normal tends to include some and exclude others. Sewpaul (2013) argued that the normalization of privilege or internalized domination and the normalization of oppression manifest in how people think of themselves and their positions in society. For instance, leaving their children to work far from home is normalised within many rural, African communities, and this "socio-structural arrangement is deemed to be natural" (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 122), therefore not challenged; rather it is accommodated and maintained.

Mothering from a distance has become so normalised in some communities that it has become a way of life.

In her community of Maphumulo, Zoleka a mother of an 11-year old, explained that living away from home is *"a very common thing, lots of people come here to work so it's not unusual."* She worked as a live-out worker, stayed in a rented shack in eThekwini and her circumstances did not allow her to have her child with her. South Africa, despite some social security provisions and post-apartheid transitions, is essentially a neoliberal state, which disproportionately disadvantages Black women. Sewpaul (2015) argued that, "neoliberalism has contributed to distorted development between the North and the South, to greater levels of inequality within nation-states, to the further marginalization of women and to a greater feminization of poverty, especially among Black women" (p. 466). Labour migration in the Black community is entrenched, and so is living in split families where one or both parents do not co-reside with the children. Among the participants in the study, it was usual to live away from children and other family members.

In this sample, the participants were Black, working class women who, in contrast to other more privileged population groups in South Africa, had normalised living apart from their families. In other more affluent and White, middle class families, if there are split families, this is often a temporary arrangement. There is pervasive absence of parents in over two thirds of Black children (Hall & Sambu, 2017) who normally stay with people other than their biological parents, and this study also indicated this. Of the 33 female participants, only five had left their children in the care of their biological fathers who engaged other females to help with the everyday care of the children. Of the male participants, most had left children in the care of their mothers, and the others with maternal or paternal grandmothers. Participants with older children had the eldest female sibling as caregiver of the younger ones, as in the case of MaLesedi who eventually removed her children from the care of their paternal relatives as soon as the eldest reached 18 years of age. Neliswa's children also lived on their own. Perhaps, as a way of saving face, she initially said that they were under their father's care. In a subsequent interview, it was disclosed that although he was living with his other wife, in the same village, the children slept in Neliswa's house and prepared their own meals.

Parental co-residence and class inequalities are closely related. Hall and Sambu (2016) showed that only 17% of children in the poorest households lived with their parents compared to 76% in the richest households. Participants in this study fell into the former category. Even where

the participants were married, the primary caregivers were not necessarily the children's fathers; they were other female caregivers who helped with the day-to-day care of the children. Societal factors such as "historic population control, labour migration, poverty, housing and educational opportunities, low marriage rates and cultural practice" (Hall & Sambu, 2016, p. 107) are often cited as reasons for non-co-residence. Zoleka, like many of the participants in the study, had normalised living far from home, as many people in her community left their homes for work. Even children in her community had normalized adults leaving home to work in distant places. When her niece asked, "*other mothers have gone to work, why are you here?*", it was clear that they expected her to be away from home and earn a living. Being away from home became a marker of responsibility, and in some cases status and upward mobility, but it is also worrying that this is normalised for the poor, but not for the more affluent, White and middle class members of society.

This highlights the importance of adopting the lens of intersectionality, which "enables us to examine the social divisions and power relations that affect people's lives" (Sewpaul, 2013, p. 118). Sewpaul further argued that, "while 'race' and gender have lost their scientific credibility, they have not lost their ontological power" (p. 121) as these social criteria play powerful roles in determining access to power, status and resources.

8.5   Communal child care: *mamkhulus, mamncanes, gogos* and other caregivers

One of the aims of this study was to understand the extent to which childcare is negotiated between the participants and caregivers. The convergence of 'race' and social class in the performance of motherhood is usually disregarded, and it is important to shift those marginal voices to the centre (Collins, 1994). Although other alternative mothering practices in the Global South, Mexico (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997), Peru (Illanes, 2010), Sri Lanka (Ukwatta, 2010), El Salvador (Merla, 2012), Zimbabwe, (Madziva & Zontini, 2012) and Ecuador (Boccagni, 2012) where communal, alternative mothering is entrenched and validated, and deserves acknowledgement and recognition – it should not be taken to be welcome by the *othermothers*. The large-scale movement of women from their homes to places of employment across borders has intensified the need for communal and shared mothering and childrearing. For those who cannot afford paid caregivers such as lower income families (Parreñas, 2005), kinship care is still the most practical and widespread form of support, in the form of food, shelter and care for a child or dependent adult (Daly*, et al.,* 2015).

With a history of migrant labour in South Africa, childrearing often falls within the responsibility of female kin, but McDonald and Armstrong (2001) caution against romanticising Black intergenerational support in families. Alternative caregiving arrangements such as women-centred networks, which Collins (1994) referred to as *othermothers* formed an important part of childcare, but they were exploitative. A third of the caregivers were maternal grandmothers who were not compensated for their time and labour. They either moved into the migrant mothers' homes or took care of the children in their own homes (Maqubela, 2016). Similar to the findings of Breckenridge, Black-Hughes, Rautenbach and McKinley (2017) whose study was undertaken in a small village in the Eastern Cape, grandmothers and aunts take on a disproportionately high childrearing responsibility, despite not being paid for this role.

Some participants were married, but not always to the fathers of their children and others had received paternal family support from the time their children were born, but this was an anomaly. Caregiving by relatives, who were mainly female, was taken for granted, and when asked how it was negotiated, many of the participants said that they did not have to ask and that it was a given that the female relatives would take over this role. Almost all of the participants depended on female kin or older siblings to take care of children.

Caregiving is disproportionately feminised such as *mamkhulus, mmangwanes* and *gogos*. Sebenzile's children lived with their paternal relatives, but she named the paternal grandmother, who received the children's social grant, as the primary caregiver. The children's father lived at the same residence but was not hands-on. His sisters, also lived in the same household with their children and helped with caregiving. Nomfundo was cohabiting with her partner, while her three children were in her mother's care, she said: *"they will stay with my mother and I will continue staying with him."* Her mother had not been consulted, was not paid for the care of her children and continued to raise them all including her eldest son who had severe epilepsy.

As in the rest of the country, grandmothers in this study took over unpaid childcare in the mother's absence (Breckenridge *et al.*, 2017). There was some resentment in having to assume childcare responsibilities. Similar to the relatives in Parreñas' (2005) study, relatives felt that on top of their own children, they were saddled with the added responsibility of being primary caregivers of 'other people's children.' Even when the fathers were present, they rejected caring responsibilities and were seldom an option. Although *mamkhulus, mmangwanes* and

gogos were physically present, they also had other personal responsibilities and felt weighed down by additional parenting responsibilities. Ingrid's children were under the care of their great grandmother, while Nomfundo's mother was burdened with looking after Nomfundo's young children and an older sibling with epilepsy. This was not a role that the extended kin should have been asked to carry, more so when they were advanced in age or had to care for children with special needs. Communal caregiving was not altogether seen as burdensome when childcare was shared (Parreñas, 2005; Tomlinson & Murray, 2005). The values of *Ubuntu* exist in many communities and KwaZulu-Natal, especially in the rural areas, neighbours and the wider community take responsibility for each other's well-being. But Seepamore and Sewpaul (forthcoming) cautioned against using *Ubuntu* to exploit women, especially in caregiving. Those who sought other alternative childcare arrangements did so in the absence of, or unwillingness of extended kin, and this was usually the last option. One participant ended up seeking a paid caregiver to look after her children. Mimi explained: "*oh she is the best. She really takes care of my children well and they also love her. They don't complain and I also taught them that because she is their caregiver they must not disrespect her. They must treat her like me and when she tells them to do something, they have to do it, and also that she has to discipline them.*" Mimi's children were young, their father was alive, but not involved in parenting his children, her mother was alive but said to be irresponsible, she had no siblings, and could not stay with them at her place of work, therefore she ended up looking for a paid caregiver.

The literature tends to rarefy the popular cultural adage of 'it takes a village to raise a child' - the importance of the collective in childrearing in African contexts, but villages and extended family networks in Africa are in crisis. Systems of care have been eroded as families struggle under the weight of HIV/AIDS, poverty and the onslaught of free-market, capitalist ideology. In their study of risks and vulnerabilities of children in Zambia, Moonga and Green (2015) concluded that with a weakened extended family system, social protection interventions by government and NGOs were critical in mitigating against childhood vulnerability and risk.

8.6 "I am their mother and their father and uncle and aunt, I am everything for my children"

The idea that the mother has to be ever-present was also seen as intricately linked to self-sacrificing. Most of the mothers in the study were motivated by a desire to provide for their children, and they wanted to show their affection for their children, often by making decisions that reflected selflessness. First, they sacrificed their own comfort by moving to unknown places to look for employment, second by entering the stigmatised sector of domestic work

which sacrificed their dignity and self-esteem, and lastly they made financial sacrifices for their children.

Leaving children behind enabled the migrants to earn an income, and provide for both their children and the extended family (Parreñas, 2008), often at great personal sacrifice. Maqubela (2016) explained that the role of women as both nurturers and providers is not unique in Africa, and that women have always run a side business while mothering so that they could meet the needs of their children. Men were expected to meet major costs such as providing for education, but the difference in this study is that most of the participants did not just meet some of the financial needs of their children, they met all of these needs. The fear of not being able to provide for their children was foremost in the participants' minds. For instance, MaLesedi (45) said: *"I am their mother and their father and uncle and aunt, I am everything for my children, there is no other person for them except me ... Your health is your children's future, you are the one who is here working for them, what would happen when you get sick? Who will take care of them?"*

It is easy to judge mothers for leaving their children behind (Parreñas, 2002), despite them having to choose between starvation and co-residence. 'Good' mothers are supposed to stay with their children and meet all their needs, and in trying to be 'good' mothers, the participants in this study reconstructed space and intimacy by defying spatial separation. These women were empowered by the ability to support their children. They were able to recreate a close relationship with their children despite the distance and were able to normalise this separation by rationalising it.

The idea that mothers make sacrifices for their children and ensure that their needs are met, was significant in all the narratives, as was found in studies by Illanes (2010) and Boccagni (2012). These mothers saw the provision of childcare and of material and emotional provision as their own responsibility. Some of them had partners, but childcare and related expenses seemed to be fall almost entirely on their shoulders. These women, as exemplified in the voice of Sinazo *"they had to understand that I am doing this for them"*; Sebenzile's *"to earn a living for them"*, and Puseletso's *"you have to make life work",* highlighted the importance of children understanding that they had to leave them behind. The reasons underscore the fact that they were 'good' mothers, making sacrifices for their children and that their absence did not mean lack of love or caring.

8.7   Mother-blaming and control

Mothering is continuously shaped by others – often males - who have come to be regarded as 'experts' in the practice of mothering (Phoenix & Wollett, 1991). An emphasis on mothers, as sole caregivers, whose mothering practices will manifest in psychologically healthy and well-rounded children tends to be reductionist, deterministic, linear and mother-blaming. These theories attribute much of adult mental problems to mothers, and they do not take into consideration intersecting structural influences, and different childrearing practices and beliefs. Mother-blaming in psychiatry reached its extreme with Fromm-Reichmann coining the concept 'schizophrenogenic mother' in 1948. This may warrant professional 'support' which often masks the control, instruction, and supervision of 'unfit' and 'incompetent' mothers, whose treatment is punitive and judgmental. The expectation that all women conform to intensive mothering justify the criticism, scrutiny and blaming of mothers. Apart from societal condemnation, the women themselves have internalised the dominant constructions of intensive mothering and they felt embarrassed, guilty and responsible for things that went wrong with their children. One of the participants, Nomandla (52), said: *"drinking, that's it ... I think that perhaps he (son) saw it as the right thing to do so he also did it, he started drinking very, very young. I mean if he is in high school now, then what does that say to you?"* Although her husband stayed with the children, she blamed herself for not being around to guide her children. She believed that her son would not have started drinking if she was present.

All the participants were worried about the physical safety of their children, regardless of age of children. For instance, Rorisang expressed this sentiment: *"you see I am far from home and when I get there and find them dirty it hurts me so much. I feel like if I was there ...then I would have seen that they are not clean and done something about it."* Similarly, Puseletso, whose three children were in her mother's care in her rural town of Matatiele, was worried: "*I don't know because I am not there, but then she is my mother so they should be okay.*" She had been in employment for about a year when we met, and she was already contemplating leaving her job, especially because her employer would not give her time off to go home. She kept worrying about her children who were aged, 10, 7 and 4 years of age: *"they are so young, and my mother is so old. I know that they are okay, but sometimes I wish I could see it for myself.*"

Other child- related issues could not be attended to, such as going to parent-teacher meetings or making social grant applications. For Sibani (30), the inability to go home meant that she could not apply for a child support grant for her 12-year old daughter who stayed with Sibani's

sister in eMpangeni and she only saw her four to five times a year, despite the distance being only two hours (174 km) from where she worked. The reason she could not go home, was mainly that her employer would not give her time off even on weekends. In the seven years she had worked there, she could only visit home once a month, at the end of the month, and sometimes she used the time off to attend to urgent family matters.

Although the participants had left young children with substitute caregivers, half of them had left them in the care of their own mothers and felt that they were adequately cared for, but the other half were not completely satisfied with the care that their children received, especially when the caregivers were aunts, or paternal relatives. Some called home multiple times, not only because they missed their children, but also as a way of monitoring the caregivers, for instance MaLesedi said: "*I call them, I want them (paternal relatives) to know that I am in touch with my children so that they don't touch their things (belongings)."* Since discovering that they misused the money and items that she had brought for her children, she was not comfortable with the paternal relatives' care of her children, but had no other alternative. As soon as her first born daughter turned 18, she decided to move both her children to her house where they stayed on their own, under the care of their relatives. It had been over eight years since this decision was taken and she felt that it was working out since *"nothing bad had happened."* She maintained emotional ties and stayed in touch with her children while at the same time ensuring that her paternal relatives felt her 'presence'.

Similarly, those with teenagers also worried about their children, and often feared that some harm would befall them, or they would fall into a bad crowd. Monica had seven children, four of whom stayed with her brother and his wife in Johannesburg. She said: "*You see not staying with them is not good because ... a lot of things that they do, you don't see them, you don't know. Even where they go, you don't know, and the life they live ... You will hold on to the way you knew them and how they lived when you were still living with them, how you raised them."* This communicated her worry about the safety of her children and how they would turn out. Because she had seven children, she did not want her daughters to have many children and constantly spoke to them - and not the boys - about the prevention of pregnancy. Her boys were also encouraged to complete their education, she was very proud of her son who was in his last year at college.

8.8 "In May I received a phone call…I was told that her husband raped my daughter"

The care of children is clearly outlined by the Children's Act, promulgated in 2005 in line with section 28 of the Constitution. It protects the rights of children from birth to 18 years and replaces the Child Care Act (No. 74 of 1983). The Children's Act outlines the rights and responsibilities of parents, caregivers and others who are involved in children's lives formally or informally. Chapter 3 of the Children's Act focuses on parental responsibilities and rights, while section 7 addresses the best interest of the child. Within the milieu of external factors impinging on the family, the Act safeguards children and ensures that their constitutional right to care and protection is achieved, and that they live in an environment that nurtures them holistically. Application of the criterion of the best interest of the child needs to consider all relevant factors, and it is acknowledged that 'best interest' may differ in each family or community. Factors such as the relationship between child and caregiver, attitudes of parents or caregivers, mitigation, poverty, and the capacity to raise children and meet their needs are essential to their welfare.

Othermothers, especially grandmothers, do play a critical role, and often offer their services as a labour of love in unpaid service. But there are other realities too, as reflected in the experiences of some of the women, who spoke about relatives prioritising their own children above theirs; harsh punishment being meted out to their children compared with those of the relatives' children. Some spoke of food, clothes, school uniforms and toiletries that they sent, intended for their children's use, being used by relatives. For instance, MaLesedi was aggrieved: *"if I had not gone back for that (something she had forgotten), then I would not have known. It was barely a few hours and already they had divided my children's things…that made me mad."* The propensity for abuse increases with children who are left in the care of multiple caregivers (Richter, 2008). Younger children were more prone than older ones to be abused. Some of the participants reported that their children were more likely to be fed less food than those of the caregiver's children, and that the caregivers took better care of their own children than those of the participants. This was highlighted by Sebenzile whose sons stayed with their paternal relatives: *"…because I am not there, sometimes I think that they treat my children in a certain way…you see I have to also intervene…once his aunt slapped him and I addressed that. I told her that my child cannot be treated that way, if you have a problem please talk to me, don't do it."*

It was also common for the caregivers to use the children's clothes, toiletries and uniforms for their own children. This was found to be the case where children were of the same age, and

caregivers were more distant relatives or from the paternal side. Living with relatives was not always the best option. In their study of Zimbabweans who were asylum seekers in the UK, Madziva and Zontini (2012) presented the experiences of mothers from the study entitled "A Living Death: Zimbabwean Migrants in the UK Who Are Forced Apart From Their Children", carried out from 2008-2010. They interviewed 14 mothers about their experiences as distance mothers. They present three aspects which facilitated distance parenting including factors leading to the decision to leave home, and the UK asylum policy context. Their findings point to the mass exodus of Zimbabweans from home to various Africa countries, and the UK, particularly from 2000. Coupled with poverty, a repressive government, political and economic violence, and the recognition of Zimbabwe as a visa country in the UK, this attracted many citizens to the UK. The long-term goal was for mothers to be reunited with their children in the UK, although this proved to be a lot more difficult than anticipated.

In relation to parenting, Madziva and Zontini (2012) found that half of their sample left home after making suitable childcare arrangements, while others were unable to do so as a result of being forced to flee from home prior to making any plans. Those who were able to make some childcare arrangements, left them with spouses or paid caregivers. They noted that competition for remittances contributed to relatives fighting for the children, and some of the participants were reluctant to leave their children with relatives, preferring paid caregivers to family members. Although they preferred family to paid caregivers, some of the participants such as Mimi opted for a paid caregiver because this was the best option for her two sons. Her mother was not available, and the paternal relatives clearly indicated their inability or "unwillingness" as Mimi believed, to care for her children: *"I decided to take the children back home to live with their grandmother, but their grandmother was really not caring and then I tried to find a place and a caregiver. I found a caregiver and she takes care of them. They love her."* For Lerato, following the rape of her daughter who was in the care of her *mmangwane* (maternal aunt), felt that her children would be safer in Lesotho on their own because the relationship with her sister (the child's aunt) had soured. This was part of her narrative : *"she knows we don't have a mother and I can now see that when children are involved, relationships between sisters can end too. I never believed it, but now I can see it for myself, our relationship is finished, dead, and I don't regret it at all."*

While the experiences of the women were, by no means, homogeneous they held a deeply held desire for intensive mothering, a privilege – actually more a right, that they were denied. In light of the eradication of support networks, especially because of HIV/AIDS in Southern

Africa, a high number of orphans and children are vulnerable (Breckenridge, *et al*., 2017). Modernity and its concomitant neoliberal capitalist values, together with the increasing cost of living, have also impacted communitarian values and informal systems of care. Not all of the participants could rely on relatives for support and some depended on other formalised care arrangements, even when they were expensive. Many women depend on Early Child Development Centres (ECD) and day-care mothers are an important source of childcare (Hall, 2016; Nelson, 1994), but this option was not open to the participants in this study. In some instances ECD facilities were used as boarding schools for infants. Some participants, such as Puseletso explained that in her first spell as a domestic worker, her son stayed at a crèche, and she fetched him during the holidays. ECD facilities are expensive, and for many women this option is not available, rather they opt to leave their children with relatives. Those who could afford private childcare, as in the case of Mimi, did so but she also had her uncle on standby in case the caregiver had an emergency. This was the only participant who had a paid caregiver caring for her children. Although Zandile's daughter stayed with her sister (daughter's aunt), the nanny was paid by Zandile's sister and this person took care of Zandile's child, and other children living in the household.

Mothers often felt responsible for things that went wrong with their children. Lerato had an extremely unfortunate experience. She had left her children in the care of her sister, and her daughter was raped by her sister's husband. Richter (2008) asserted that despite the protection intended by legislation and civic rights to safeguard children's rights, wrongs are perpetrated against a large number of South African children every day and families are complicit in the abuse of children. The South African Constitution and the Children's Act (2005) emphasise the need for a child to be brought up in a stable family environment or an environment resembling it as much as possible, which also prohibits deliberately putting children in harmful situations such as maltreatment, abuse, neglect, exploitation or degradation or exposing children to violence, exploitation or any other harm. Lerato would have preferred that a paid caregiver look after the children in her absence: *"you see, I left my kids with my sister who comes after me. She is younger by about three years and it's just that I left them last year in April, but then in May I received a phone call… (pause) ….I was told that her husband raped my daughter….so I had to go and remove them from there to their home … my husband's family."* Following the rape, she removed her children to go and stay in their home which belonged to her and her husband in her husband's village. They stayed on their own as the

paternal relatives were not very involved in the care of the children, and she was not keen to involve them. The neighbours were asked to ensure that they were supervised on a daily basis.

Frizelle and Kell's (2010) study of young, White mothers in Durban concluded that by "personifying the ideal against which marginalised mothers …. are defined…they become particularly vulnerable to self-regulatory mothering discourses and practices" (p.42). Similarly, in her study of motherhood by 'race' group' in South Africa, Robinson (2014) found that "for the large majority of White women the carer-provider conflict is very real… intensive mothering ideology strongly guides the mothering ethos in this subgroup." Although these women agreed that working mothers had an impact on the well-being of children, and that the intensive mothering was ideal, they also believed that the quality of the relationship between working mothers and their children was not compromised. But she conceded that there could be more tolerance for mothers of older children to work, than it is for those with younger children. The judgements against distance mothers are greater than those working mothers who remain with their children.

Children living in households with a migrant mother are more likely to experience abuse, compared with children living in households where the parent is present (Heymann *et al*., 2009). Parreñas (2001) and Millman (2013) emphasised the detrimental consequences of separating parents from their children for extended periods of time, including increased emotional distance between parents and their children, erosion of family relationships, exacerbation of discipline issues, and disruption of family roles and household routines. As children are cared for by a sequence of different caregivers in the extended family, this may result in insecurity and confusion on the part of children.

Nomfundo's narrated the following: "*my son, my baby would cry when I left, he was very young then and you see when I left I had to sneak out because he would cry so much. There was no way that I could just walk out. He would cry so much…it would really touch my heart …and once I did not leave and missed work (laughs)…he was very young then…but then if I didn't go to work, what would he eat? I had to leave him even if it meant sneaking out….I had to go, but now he is used to it, they are all used to it.*"

Puseletso was also downhearted*: "I don't spend any time with them. So I am there just to say hello and then I have to go back, they will think that I don't have any love (for them) because I have just gotten home and now I have to go back ….Kopano is older, he can see. He knows what is right or wrong, he can see. Palesa, is my girl …she needs her mother.*"

Children may have feelings of abandonment, anger and loss even in the rare instances that the decision to migrate was communicated or discussed with the children beforehand (Bennett, *et al*. 2014). Robinson (2014) also found that for poor African women, especially those living in informal urban areas, children were most at risk when mothers worked. They were mostly single parents with inadequate, child care and who strongly agreed that children needed two parents, and not one parent for their needs to be met. Although the participants in this study had developed ways of coping with raising children alone, many subscribed to the ideology of nuclear, two-parent families. They believed that children needed both parents, and wanted their partners to assist with childcare, for instance Puseletso said, *"these children do not have fathers and I am the sole breadwinner at home. Maybe if their fathers were there things would have been different, but now I am alone."* Winnie also believed in two-parent families, her husband was helping her to raise her grandchildren. But in almost all the interviews, the participants framed father involvement in monetary terms, Winnie and Nomandla seemed to need more emotional and practical support than involvement in exclusively financial terms.

Having to cope on their own may also lead to children asserting themselves, where family spaces become "sites for manifestation of power" (Pantea, 2011, p. 385), by challenging and undermining parental and caregiver authority. MaMosa's five children, for instance, learned to defend themselves through insolence and back chatting, she encouraged it because her sisters-in-law were abusive towards her children: *"I told them, fight for yourselves, don't let them do (anything) to you."* Although this was antithetical with proper behaviour towards adults, particularly within the African cultural paradigm, she felt that it was the only way that her children could cope with the abuse from their relatives.

Financial abuse was also evident, for instance, Lerato's children were left in the care of neighbours who continuously came to borrow money from them. She explained: *"how can adults come and borrow from a child, the entire village has a debt from an 18 year old, and they don't pay it back."* By taking care of her children, they seemed to take advantage of their vulnerable position by 'borrowing' money which they had no intention of returning. Teenagers have often not developed the capacity to make responsible decisions and may be taken advantage of when seeking warmth and support, particularly in the absence of their parents. Community safety nets are important in keeping children out of danger and protecting their best interest.

As indicated, a majority of the participants were themselves young mothers, and some like Winnie and Monica were already grandmothers at 39 years. The participants financially supported their children and grandchildren. Those with girls worried about teenage pregnancy, and those with boys also worried about their sons being involved in crime or drugs, in addition to impregnating girls. Monica had seven children and three grandchildren, and she was upset that her 19 year old who had just completed matric, was already pregnant. Nomandla's two girls also fell pregnant at high school. She said: *"they were okay children, even though they fell pregnant ....they are still okay."* Noluthando had seven children and the eldest daughter (27) had two children when she was in high school. *"Even when I send the money...I send it to Zimkhitha (daughter)... she has two children...she doesn't go to school and I send the money to her."*

A convergence of factors lead to early pregnancy, and they include curiosity, drug use, boredom, lack of adult supervision, peer pressure, suspicion towards contraceptives, among other reasons. It is difficult to parent teenagers, more so from a distance or through a proxy mother, therefore the participants were worried about their children. Mothers also tend to be blamed when their daughters fall pregnant and there was a concerted effort from the mothers of teenagers to ensure that they maintained parental support, closeness and warmth , which are believed to lower the risk of teenage pregnancy (Miller, 2002; Parreñas, 2008). Winnie was particularly clear *"I remember saying to Thandeka (daughter), he has gotten your cookie, now please don't fall pregnant. Yes he is using you in a way that he wants to use you but please my baby, do not fall pregnant."* This was in addition to Winnie going to fetch her daughter from her boyfriend's shack, together with her employer, having a heart-to-heart talk with Thandeka (who had two children), and also Winnie enrolling her daughter at a private institution to learn how to use the computer. This was with the hope that Thandeka would leave her boyfriend and get an education. Winnie had invested time and money in her daughter's future, but Thandeka was not interested. At the time of the interview, Thandeka was working as a cashier at a restaurant, another low-income job to support her two young children.

It is often girls who suffer the consequences of teenage pregnancy while boys are relatively untouched. The participants who had teenage girls were unable to speak as frankly as Winnie. They often asked their children to 'behave' or 'be good' without elaborating much. Others such as Sinazo said: *"well, I chat with them, a lot. We talk about anything and we have now become friends. My children can talk to me about anything at all…"*, except about sex. Her level of talking about sex with her girls ended at "you must behave." Although she was a young mother

herself, she did not wish for her girls to be young mothers. Being parents is one of the most challenging roles that one can have. It is not unusual for parents who live with their children, and are consistently available, to be concerned about the multitude of influences on their children's development and wellbeing. These challenges are compounded when parenting from a distance.

8.9   Parenting styles and parenting from a distance

The participants reported that they did their best to ensure that they were warm, loving and supportive. Baumrind (1967) identified four parenting styles, namely authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent or permissive and neglectful/uninvolved styles. The participants showed different parenting styles with some being more indulgent/permissive than others. It seems that for older children such as teenagers and young adults, the parents were slightly more authoritative and engaging than they were with younger children. Lethu and Msebenzi were particularly authoritative and preferred to consult their children, particularly the older ones, when decisions had to be made,. For those with girl children, the participants yearned to have more control and supervision, for instance Zandile wanted to know where her daughter was all the time. Monica, whose younger children were living in Johannesburg with her brother, called the children several times a day. But she also indicated that it was difficult to monitor children when you don't stay with them, *"You see not staying with them is not good because...a lot of things that they do, you don't see them.*"

Other parents were more permissive, for instance Lethu who tried her best to make up for her absence by being very indulgent. Her older son stayed with his father and she felt guilty for not always being available for him. She said*, "when you don't stay with your child, you have to try by all means to make sure that he feels your love, don't shout all the time and you have to try your best to make sure that you do everything in your power for them to feel that love, even when you don't stay with them. For me, I let him do everything that he can't do when he is with his father because he is too strict."* She explained that her son complained to her about not being able to play soccer, *"my child loves soccer ... he even said: "ma I can't play soccer anymore because when I get home…dad says that I am all over the place, I don't sit still."* She felt that a child had to get some time to play, and not work all the time. The father, on the other hand seemed to be rather authoritarian by demanding complete obedience, no negotiation with very rigid rules.

It could also be possible that Lethu was exaggerating as she wanted to portray herself as the better parent, and the father as a strict and unreasonable person. Sinazo described her relationship with her daughters as friendship, *"I chat with them, a lot. We talk about anything and we have now become friends. My children can talk to me about anything at all."* These were older children and she related well with them, but parents being friends with their children has the potential to blur boundaries. None of the participants seemed to be neglectful and they repeatedly said that they had *"come here to work for our children."* Although their levels of involvement were different, they all had the common desire to ensure that their children's lives improved as a result of their employment.

Parenting from a distance was a reality for the participants. Because many working mothers, often poor, do not have the luxury of exclusively looking after their children, they have to earn a living to support themselves and their children. In doing so, they automatically become subjects of deviancy discourses by leaving their children in the care of others. Poverty necessitates the separation of mothers from their children so they mother from a distance. The participants wanted to be intensive mothers, and see their children grow, and parenting from a distance was not out of choice, but an outcome of life circumstances. They constantly had to negotiate the tensions between the pull of idealized intensive mothering and the realities of distance parenting.

It was evident that participants were "double living" and "double belonging" as explained by Boccagni (2012, p. 266). For the participant's, face-to-face interactions implied 'being there.' They subscribed to intensive mothering, and for them co-residence showed good mothering. Although physically apart, their thoughts were always with their children. Sphilile said: *"I do (miss them), I do very much. I used to cry in the beginning when I was younger, but now we are all used to it ...I told you I bought a phone? I did. I bought a phone so that I could talk to them .... It helped but it was not the same."* Msebenzi was very emotional when she spoke about leaving her children when she first looked for work in 1993: *"oh I did miss them. A lot! I missed them to the point of tears, I would cry when I missed my children ...I couldn't eat, I mean take food for instance. Sometimes I felt like taking the food and flying it to them....or just thinking about how they slept and how it was for them to sleep without me being there....I will not lie to you, it's not nice to leave your children at home... it's not."* She was with her current employer for 17 years, but still missed being with her children.

Mimi fantasised about living with her children and had attempted to bring her children over to eThekwini to stay with them in her backroom. She said, *"Just imagine me in the morning, I prepare the children for school and go to work knowing that they are in school, and know that they will soon be back after school. Nje (just) life would be great, it would really be better for me…and also when we go home, we would all leave at the same time to go back home together."* It was her wish that her children stay with her even if it meant living on the employer's property with them. Puseletso initially brought her older child to stay with her in her first attempt to work as a domestic worker a few years ago, but this did not work because of the prohibitively high crèche fees, in addition to buying food and finding reasonable accommodation. It was much easier, cheaper and practical to leave children at home and send remittances. The participants made attempts to be actively involved in the day-to-day care of their children, even though it was by phone, and this was the case even when partners were left at home with the children. This is consistent with the findings of other studies where women working in transnational domestic work concerted efforts to maintain close emotional ties with their children despite spatial separation (Boccagni, 2012; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997).

The participants from across the border saw their children quarterly or bi-annually, as a result of costs, border restrictions and visa laws (Ambrosini, 2015; Kiwanuka, *et al.* 2015; Makoro, 2015; Mantouvalou, 2015). Some had thought of bringing them over to live with them in South Africa, but they found that this was an onerous, slow and frustrating process. It also presented the problems of having to hire a childminder or take him to crèche, and worrying about children being at home alone when they worked late. Other local migrants like Sphilile preferred to leave their children in the rural areas because *" …it's not fine in a shack and you can't stay with children there, but there are people who stay with their children in that place, it's just that I don't like it. I don't think it's safe for children."* Mimi had once broached the subject of residing with her children in her backroom, and her employer had agreed, but she could not afford local school fees, therefore she opted to leave them with a paid caregiver.

Despite the separation, women continue to be constrained by caregiving which is considered naturally-occurring while men still play a very marginal role in parenting. They usually undertook this role with the assistance of other women, especially female relatives (Contreras & Griffith, 2012). Of the 33 participants, five of the mothers had left the children in the care of their fathers, but even these women identified as being the primary caregivers of their children. For 21 of the women, maternal grandmothers were the primary caregivers, four were cared for

by the participants' eldest daughters, the rest by maternal aunts and uncles, neighbours or paid caregivers.

Nomandla's children were left in the care of her husband, but his role was marginal. She explained: *"oh but he* (husband) *has also been helpful, I mean he is the one taking care of them when I am here, so in a way he helps but I wish he could be more responsible and a lot more proa*ctive. *He waits for me to say something and then he does it…slowly…"* Women are often primarily responsible for the care of their children, while men 'help'. Rothman (1994) highlighted the division of labour in childrearing, and the mind-body dualism where women do the low status work, physical work of caring for children, while men tend to do the rational and higher-order thinking work in child-care by making decisions for women to implement. In Nomandla's case, the husband was 'assisting' her to raise their children. Both Nomandla and her husband considered her the primary caregiver, and the father an assistant in childcare. It was her role to care for the children, and for him, it was a way of helping his wife to raise their children. They did not see him as a parent who had an equal responsibility towards caring for his children. Nomandla's husband had a female relative to care for the children and often called her to ask how to handle some of the issues that he could not deal with. Her older son was mentally ill and she often had to step in when he fell sick. She explained: *"so sometimes, he* (son) *will be outside and after a few days you will find that he is very quiet…and then the father will call me and then I will advise them what to do. Sometimes he will go to the clinic or sometimes he will get medication for him and he will get better … other times, he will get bitten by dogs… yes, and then they will call me."* Despite being far from home, she had to take everyday decisions regarding the children, even when their father was living with them.

The participants wanted to remain close to their children, and the responsibility for the maintenance of co-presence fell on the mothers. Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila's (1997, p. 558) phrase "I'm here, but I'm there" captures the feeling of physical separation, yet emotional intimacy succinctly. A majority of the participants felt helpless and overwhelmed by the spatial distance between themselves and their children. Physical separation has the potential to affect the depth of emotional ties, and trust together with "reciprocal control inherent in proximate relationships" (Boccagni, 2012, p. 269). Lerato whose two daughters were in Lesotho, said: *"You see I never thought that I could get used to it. I never knew that one day I could stay far from my children and for a long time. It was very difficult in the first two months of my stay here, but then I managed to get used to it….and from then on I got used to the idea that I will*

see them when I can." 'Getting used to the idea' was a normalization strategy used by the women as a way of coping with the pain and trauma of separation.

In order to reduce the angst of spatial distance between themselves and their children and maintain co-presence across vast geographical distances, many of the mothers used technology to keep in touch with their children. Even in transnational motherhood, they often call their children numerous times a week (Contreras & Griffith, 2012) to enquire about their well-being, school, and health and even assist with homework. Unlike other studies where the mothers had an array of ways of keeping in touch such as the internet, email, mobile phones (Merla, 2012) and Skype (Barber, 2008), mothers in this study depended, almost entirely, on their mobile telephones. All of the participants and their children had mobile phones although some had better connectivity than others. In some communities, there is lack of proper infrastructure for cell phone connectivity, therefore it becomes difficult to communicate with their families (Parreñas, 2005). This was the case with some of rural areas, and some places in Lesotho where participants had to either call home at certain times, like when the children were likely to be in town, or to rely on sending sms messages or WhatsApp messages to one another, and read them when connectivity was established.

It was noted that their phones were not very expensive, and they had access to the latest applications (apps) which facilitated contact with their children. Although spatially separated, the participants attempted to maintain co-presence through different means of communication such as Whatsapp, the most favourite app because it was free to download, enabled audio messaging and video calling. Those who missed their children could speak to them, hear their voices and see their faces even when they were hundreds of kilometres away from one another. It was important for the participant's to hear their children's voices, MaItumeleng said *"just to hear my child's voice"*, meaning that it brought comfort to both of them and helped them to stay connected.

Parreñas (2008) found that communicating with children seemed to reduce spatial distance and feelings of abandonment. It helped them to maintain regular contact by calling home, sometimes multiple times per day. Lerato said:*"If not (visit) then I will have to continue speaking with them over the phone…and try to ensure that they remember why I am not able to stay with them…they have to understand the reasons for my absence."* Lerato was not the only participant who felt the need to explain the reason for her absence. It was important to her, as it was with the other women, that the children understood that they were good mothers;

that they indeed had to leave in order to show responsibility and convey that they were good mothers, their absence was not child abandonment. Many of them emphasised working for or doing it *for the children*. The adolescents in a Limpopo province study by Spjeldnæs, *et al.* (2014) actually felt that by being away from home, their mothers showed responsibility and reported predominantly positive experiences of being mothered, and they trusted their mothers.

In their study of Mexican women working in the crab factories in the United States, Contreras & Griffith (2012) postulate that working far from home presents a number of paradoxes for the mothers. In this study, the biggest irony was the need to leave their children in order to care for them. In their efforts to manage the spatial distance between themselves and their children, the participants found it meaningful to adapt to distance parenting. Adaptation does not that the participants liked living in split families, but that they reconfigured their parenting. Distance mothering did not change their definition of mothering, but rather how they reconceptualised its practice to fit their reality. Making sense of this paradox became a subjective coping strategy. The participants saw themselves as performing a necessary act, which portrayed not only affection for their children, but also a sense of responsibility by leaving in order to earn a living for their children. In her study of non-residential mothers as a result of divorce, Babcock (1997, p. 148) found that the mothers "alternated role behaviors associated with mothering to something that represents a better combination of the expectations of motherhood and their real-life experience including the constraints of geographic distance, lack of finances" and so on.

Similarly, the participants in this study did not feel that they had abandoned their children by seeking employment far from home. This is what Parreñas (2008) found with her study of transnational Filipino domestic workers, Illanes (2010), in her study of immigrant Peruvian women in Chile, and Madziva and Zontini (2012) whose study was with Zimbabwean mothers living in the UK. To maintain contact, all the participants called home often, Sphilile said: *"oTha* (her son*) have a phone* (laughs) *because they have to be called. A person has to ask others how they are and if they are okay…they have to be given some attention … like that …even at school you want to find out how they are doing."* The participants felt that they had not abandoned their children by leaving home. They called home frequently, and those with the means called their children several times a day/week as was also found by Contreras & Griffith (2012); Merla (2012) and Parreñas (2008), especially among transnational workers who went home after months away from home.

All the participants were able to do so by making use of local mobile cell phone concessions and specials, such as extra minutes for recharging, and special call rates at certain times of the day/night. Sometimes special bundles were purchased in order to speak to the children during break at school, to help with homework after school or to wish them goodnight or wake them up. Use of the telephone thus became an important parenting tool. Puseletso spoke to her children every night before she went to bed. This arrangement meant that her children and caregiver had to stay up until late so that they could speak to her. Because the only time she could speak to them was after retiring, she sometimes had to wait until 10 pm when she returned to her room in order to speak to her children. These attempts to make up for a lack of face-to-face interaction were often expensive and time-consuming, but they provided some semblance of normalcy and enabled daily contact, real-time decision making and support. They did not always make up for maternal absence, but the participants ensured active constant communication, even though it was inconvenient to the children and their caregivers in some instances. While the distance, in some ways, turned them into 'telephone mothers', the technology was a life-blood between them and their children.

Parreñas (2002) highlighted the crisis in caregiving as a majority of Filipino women were unable to care for their own children due to working far from home. "Migrant mothers who work as domestic workers often face the painful prospect of caring for other people's children while being unable to tend to their own" (Parreñas, 2002, p. 41). The depletion of community spirit and sense of togetherness from a reciprocal system of give and take – the commons (Isaksen *et al.*, 2008) – as a result of outmigration, often from rural communities, implies a loss of caregivers. The domestic, unpaid labour of women is lost when they migrate (Isaksen *et al.*, 2008) and substitute caregivers in the form of aunts, grandmothers and other female kin provided the care of children in the absence of their mothers. The international transfer of caregiving disadvantages women further down the care chain (Hochschild, 2000; Yeates, 2009).

This international division of reproductive labour "calls attention to the commodification of household work among women" where a migrant woman works for a privileged woman by performing her housework, in order to do so, she passes on her own household work to a woman left behind in her country of origin. This woman is also likely to pay another woman less privileged than herself to perform her housework, and so the cycle continues, and the "economic value of care work diminishes as it gets passed along" (Parreñas, 2012, p. 269). In South Africa, the care chain usually moves from the direction of White privileged women, who

then pass on the labour to women in poor, African communities, and they in turn pass on this labour to other women who are lower in socioeconomic status than they are. Similarly, in terms of childrearing, Ambrosini (2013) referred to the 'stratification of care' where children, are cared for by *othermothers*, who themselves are more disadvantaged than their mothers.

The migration of Black women from home is historical in South Africa, and since the mid to late 19th century (Miles, 1996a; Peberdy & Dinat, 2005), the commons in African communities has been slowly eroding and a further irony is that they leave their children behind, in order to care for the children of their employers. The normalisation of care as women's work, a labour of love, is exploitative. Women often undertake this unpaid role, without any acknowledgement or support (Breckenridge, *et al*., 2017). While men need to take an increased role in parenting their children, employers too must bear the cost of caregiving (Isaksen, *et al*. 2008). The participants conveyed the high cost of working far from home, which meant leaving their children behind, missing important milestones in the lives of their children, for insignificant returns. Their earning were low and the work backbreaking, working in South Africa as transnational workers, or for others migrating from their rural to urban areas was not as 'rosy' as the domestic workers in the Canadian study by Grandea and Kerr (1998) found.

Grandmothers and other female kin automatically stepped in when the mothers left, and this implied that their labour too, was exploited in the name of *Ubuntu*. Seepamore and Sewpaul (forthcoming) argue that while communal living and caring are espoused in many communities and are rarefied in the literature (Nkosi & Daniels, 2007; Sudarkasa, 2004), they are often sullied and misused in the political and cultural arena, as states abdicate their responsibilities, within neoliberal frameworks, by shifting the burden of care onto often, poor, Black women. These idealized notions of communal caring and respect for traditions can be used to harm and violate others, especially women and children. Mothering is hard work and the disproportional delegation of childcare to women, in the guise of showing affection and love, implies that women are constantly burdened with unpaid childcare.

The mothers' centrality in the children's lives was clear. Participants such as Sphilile found it difficult to stay far from their children despite her working in eThekwini for over 10 years. She usually returned to work when each of her two children turned one year old: *"It is very difficult, my heart bleeds. You know sometimes you will also see that it is so difficult. You also miss your children. You can't stay this long without seeing them. The whole month, the whole month!"* Sphilile's youngest child was 7 years old and the eldest was 14, and as a live-out domestic,

working two jobs, she did not have the time to see them more frequently. Similarly, MaSechaba (39), a transnational worker from Lesotho whose baby was 18 months old when she left her at home, said quite poignantly "*some of us…our children even forget who we are"* because they had been away for such a long time. She had five children, two of whom had not stayed with her for more than two years. She was a live-in worker who had been working for the current employer for five years.

Rather than forgo the identity of being mothers, these women reconceptualised the meaning associated with motherhood (Babcock, 1997) by making it fit their lived reality. Moral disciplining of migrant mothers, their vilification, blaming and accusations of child abandonment, pathologises their children (Parreñas, 2008). These women go to great lengths to maintain intimacy with their children and they are still committed mothers who have shifted the dominant discourse in order to find recognition as able and competent mothers.

The next section focuses on the unique role of domestic workers as *othermothers*. They enter paid labour, which in turn, facilitates the entry of other women into paid labour. I suggest that they not only become equal and respected *othermothers* in the lives of the children they care for, but mere extensions of their employers.

8.10   Domestic workers as shadow mothers

Domestic employment often involves childcare, and the irony of working in this sector was that participants had left their own children behind, only to look after other people's children. This emotional labour meant that they transferred their affection to children who were not their own. These women, witnessed on a daily basis other women, their 'madams' living with their children and also yearned to intensively mother their children. Intensive mothering is associated with "members of the middle and upper classes" (Hays, 1996, p. 163) that oppresses all women, but the participants desired to be with their children. They were Black women, struggling in low wage labour, but they loved their children, and to expect that they would want anything less than that deemed fit for women in middle and upper classes, would be to maintain double standards; and it is a violation of their dignity, and a negation of their humanity (Seepamore & Sewpaul, forthcoming).

Making domestic workers invisible extensions of their employers or shadow mothers (Macdonald, 2010) invalidated domestic workers' emotions, skills and experiences. This lack of autonomy in childcare further exacerbates their marginalisation. Although domestic workers

wished for some recognition as complete and independent 'third parents' of the children in their care (Macdonald, 2010), the fear that they would replace mothers as substitute parents, exacerbated their limited authority and role. Although all went well in her absence, Sinazo had to step back when the employer returned because the *"real mother was back"* and needed space to be with her children. Sinazo had stayed with her employers children for two year-long periods while the employer went to study overseas. She was with the children as the primary caregiver and made daily decisions for them, although the grandmother would come and visit occasionally. On the two occasions that the mother was away for a year at a time, she was the substitute mother who was responsible for their everyday needs, while the employer became a distant mother herself. Like other nannies, taking care of children, she developed some coping skills, one of which was to surpass the mother in her mothering skills. She felt that the children had become closer to her than their mother because she spent so much time with them and had *carte blanche* in their day-to-day interaction with the children. The fear that nannies would outdo their own mothering was real, and this Nyamnjoh (2005, p. 188) called being "maided"-fear of losing out to the maid in one way or another. This was shown especially in cases where the nannies bonded so much with the children that their attachment posed a threat to the mother-child relationship. When Sinazo explained that she had to step back because the *"real mother was back",* this was in an effort to give the mother her space and time to be with the children following a long absence.

Nannies also occupy the unique and difficult position of concurrently facilitating intensive mothering for their employers, while parenting their own children from a distance. As indicated in chapter 3, women tend to work in feminised workplaces which require their 'mothering skills' (Fraser, 1989), and working class women are over-represented in care work, particularly domestic work in South Africa. Feminine occupations require much emotion management and with nannies, their work involved the provision of emotional labour to the children they were paid to care for. It was also common for them to transfer the love which they were unable to express towards their children onto those they took care of. While nannies facilitate the relationship between children and their mothers, they must also ensure that they maintain emotional distance from the children. They continue to perform a valuable and important role in mothering, even if their employers need them only as invisible extensions of themselves whose role is the provision of intensive mothering for the children.

Emotional labour in caregiving is fraught with challenges (Hochschild, 1983), domestic workers sell their physical labour, but this involuntarily comes with the provision of emotional labour. Constantly guarding against intense attachment to their employers' children (Cheever, 2002) tends to be emotionally draining leading to "detached attachment", where domestic workers attempt to maintain emotional distance from the children they care for (Nelson, 1990, p. 598). Whether as an attempt to protect themselves, their employers or the children in their care, the daily recreation of this detached attachment is difficult to maintain, and a cause of burnout. Providing warmth and love to their employers' children and concurrently maintaining emotional distance is part of the unspoken 'feeling rules' which structure emotional labour in childcare and have to be strictly observed (Macdonald, 2010, p.114). Sinazo (42) who worked for her employer for over 17 years was unable to maintain the emotional distance between herself and the children: *"we are just so close, the children love me very much. They have promised me so many things, the other day he said "aunty, when I work I am going to take you on a plane"* (laughs) *he must know that I will not forget it."*

The maintenance of detachment was necessary for self-protection, as some of the employment relationships either ended in "blow-ups" or some form of "unhappy endings" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, p.55) such as telling white lies, seeking alibis or telling stories which would prevent ill feelings. It was important for the participants that they prevent attachment to the children in their care, although it was easier for some than others. Some employment relationships were so unpleasant for the workers that they planned their exit as soon as possible. Lulu simply felt that the three children in her care were *"spoilt, and the sooner I leave, the better."* She had been employed for only two years. Mimi was close to the child she cared for and felt that if she were to leave, then the child would be very upset: *"he comes to my room, even on weekends and I say "come" because he is used to me."* This is not unique to the participants in this study. Cheever (2002, p.35) found that domestic workers in her New York study were worried about the "attachment factor", and concerned about leaving the children in their care, especially when they were young as opposed to teenagers.

Employers laid down strict conditions along which to mother their children, many had rigid routines and expected the domestic workers to follow them without much leeway to manoeuvre. They also observed the degree to which the mothers, in turn, stuck to these rigid rules. Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila (1997) and Tronto (2002) found that their participants were often critical of their employers' mothering. Some employing parents saw domestic workers

as allies or competition for the children's affection. While some mothers were flexible and involved, others appeared neglectful. Sinazo explained: *"even when she left to go overseas, she left me with her children…. for about a year and I was the one looking after the gang. All was well and I made many decisions, she didn't have any complaints when she got back."* MaSechaba was rather critical, *"I don't know why she had this baby, maybe she gave birth to it for me. I mean what kind of a woman is always worried about her husband more than her baby?",* and Sibani : *"all the things she says I must not do, she lets the child do. The child will climb on the table and make a mess on the floor, and she will say nothing, but if I did that!"* Clearly she felt that the mother could not care for her child the way she demanded that Sibani do. The employers were seldom able to reach the standards they set for their nannies.

In order to cope, the participants were able to rationalise their absence from home. It was a 'choice' between starvation and co-residence with their children. Contrary to popular belief that labour migration is a choice, it is often not a choice. Put another way it is as much a choice as the "18th century European peasants 'choosing' to seek jobs in the margins of the expanding cities of the day" (Isaken *et al.*, 2008, p. 419). They cautioned against viewing migration as a personal decision. This narrow view does not take into consideration structural factors that push people into migrant labour. Although labour migration is endemic in South African communities, women leaving their children behind did not conform to the dominant socially constructed norms. These norms are constructed in binaries where women are expected to stay at home and care for their children while men go to work and support their children.

8.11   Conclusion

Domestic workers find themselves in a difficult position, where on the one hand they leave their children in the care of others, and on the other hand, care for other people's children. Even though they want to mother their children intensively, they are unable to do so due to the reality of their lives. Although community childcare networks may buffer the impact of separation caused by distance, they are unable to replace the mother. Distance mothers find themselves separated from home, yet their hearts and minds are with their children, and as they negotiate parenting from a distance, they also enact different forms of mothering which are adapted to their situation as distance mothers. They also have to deal with other environmental and social challenges such as automatically becoming subjects of deviancy discourses as working mothers, and as mothers working from far, often leaving their children in the care of others. Some may feelings of inadequacy as a result of leaving their children in the care of other. But

their reality is that if they do not work, then they will be unable to support themselves and their children especially in a South Africa where father absence seems to be prevalent.

CHAPTER 9: THE CONSTRUCTIONS OF FATHERHOOD

9.1   Introduction

An analysis into fatherhood and fathering shows its complexity, and the multiplicity of masculinities. The dominant construction of what it is to be a father, is contextualised to eThekwini, South Africa where colonisation, apartheid and capitalism have undermined Black fathers (Ratele, Sherer & Clowes 2012). Social, economic and political changes impinge on how fatherhood, which seems to have increasingly become synonymous with a provider, to the exclusion of other equally important aspects of fathering such as 'being there', showing affection, guidance and protection. In this chapter, I discuss how the male participants in my study experienced fatherhood which is largely defined within western, patriarchal, biological and nuclear family norms. I delve into hegemonic discourses around fatherhood, and the various normative expectations of fathering in general, while also contextualising this discussion to eThekwini, where the study was conducted. This is followed by an analysis of the data in relation to how the participants viewed parenting against the dominant construction of fatherhood, and lastly I focus on the consequences of distance fathering for the participants and their partners, children and caregivers.

9.2   Demographic details of participants

Seven males participated in the study. I conducted individual interviews with two participants, and the other five participants were seen in two groups, one was a pair and the other made up of three participants. As with the female participants, I used snowballing to recruit the males, and they invited their friends to the study. On recruitment the gatekeeper asked if they could be seen in a group for two reasons, one was that they only had weekends off and could not be interviewed during the week and the second being that they would be more comfortable to be in a group with people they were familiar with. Seeing that the participants spoke isiZulu and the others, Sesotho, they agreed to be interviewed with others of the same language. This was done for their comfort, to facilitate the discussion and allow them to express themselves well. There was general reluctance from men to participate in a study about parenting, either they claimed to have no children or to be co-residing with them, but those who initially agreed to participate invited others to the study and eventually made up the sample of seven male participants. The youngest participant, Sibusiso, was 26 years old, the other four participants were in their 30s, and two were in their early 50s. As shown in Table 5.1 below, most (4) were married, one separated and the other two were single. Although four of the males reported that

they were married, they did not live with their wives. Two participants had 'part time' girlfriends, who visited them often, and two had ladies that they often 'laughed with' indicating some romantic liaison. The participant who was separated was cohabiting with a long-term partner and her children, and the two single participants lived with girlfriends.

Migration, apartheid, poverty, HIV/AIDS, patriarchal and cultural practices including low marriage rates may account for the high rates of father absence in African families. Almost half of children in South Africa lived with their biological mother only, and only 3% with their biological father only. Of the seven participants, four were from KwaZulu-Natal and the other three from neighbouring Lesotho. They had 17 children among them with 8 boys and 7 girls, aged between 18 months (rounded off to 2 years) and 30 years, whose mean age was 12.3 years. Luyanda (35) had one child, and Thomas resided with his two youngest children, his eldest son lived in Estcourt with his previous girlfriend. The other participants did not reside with any of their children, and the primary caregivers tended to be the mothers of the children or grandmothers. Thomas and Luyanda had not paid damages to the mothers of their children mainly because they could not afford it, but Luyanda's mother had been to see the baby living in the Western Cape province, while she was from Ecala in the Eastern Cape. Despite the chances of children living with their fathers increasing with children's age (Hall & Sambu, 2017), this was not clear in this study. Mothers or maternal relatives tended to be the primary caregivers of the children regardless of age. Thomas's 13-year old son did not stay with him, and all of Shadrack' children stayed with their mother. All except Sibusiso were over 21 years when they became fathers, his daughter was born when he was 18 years of age. Thapelo, Nkosi and Shadrack were in their 20s, and both Luyanda and Thomas were in their 30s when they became fathers. Generally the male participants were older when their children were born and they also tended to have fewer children than the females.

Table 9.1 Demographic details of male participants

	Name	Gender/age	Education	Marital status	Live in/out	No of years employed	Full-time/part-time	Remuneration	Children (ages) social grant	Caregiver /residence
1.	Luyanda	Male (35)	Gr 11	Single	Live-out	5 years	Casual	R1 000 per bi-weekly Registered	Girl (18m) CSG	Mother Cape Town (Western Cape)
2.	Thomas	Male (35)	Gr 12	Single (cohabiting)	Live-out	18 years	Casual	R 1300 bi-weekly Registered	Boy (13) CSG	Mother KwaZulu-Natal
									Boy (7) CSG Boy (3) CSG	Co-resides with him and girlfriend

3.	Peace Partner: MaDineo	Male (39)	Gr 4	Married	Live-out	13 years	Day labourer	R100-R120 per day Estimated to about R2000-R2400 per month Not registered	Girl (15) Boy (9)	Lesotho Maternal granny
4.	Sibusiso	Male (26)	None	Married	Live-out	5 years	Casual	R100-R120 per day Estimated to about R2000-R2400 per month Not registered	Boy (8) Girl (4)	Lesotho Paternal granny
5.	Shadrack	Male (54)	Gr 7	Separated	Live-out	9 years	Casual gardener	R3 000 pm Various employers Registered	Girl (26) Girl (23) Boy (17)	KwaZulu-Natal Mother

6.	Nkosi	Male (53)	Gr 8	Married	Live-out	13 years	part time (3 x afternoons) Driver 1 year	(R 700 per week/R 2 800 pm) Not registered driver	Girl (30) Boy (22) Boy (18) Girl (9) CSG	KwaZulu-Natal Mother
7.	Thapelo	Male (30)	none	married	Live-out	1 year	Casual worker	R100-R120 per day Estimated to about R2000-R2400 per month Not registered	Girl (9) Boy (4)	Lesotho Paternal granny

9.2.1 Employment and working conditions: *" I am a garden and cleaning service"*

The participants worked mainly as live-out domestic workers, two were gardeners, one was a driver and the rest were general workers who performed various odd jobs as directed by their employers, such as painting, minor household repairs, walking the dogs, washing employers' cars, and cleaning the pool or the yard. Peace (39), who was married to MaDineo (35) worked as a day labourer for different contractors in the building industry. All the participants except Peace and Sibusiso had some high school education with only Thomas having completed matric. They were all live-out workers and their years of experience ranged from one year to 19 years. Both Nkosi and Thapelo had been employed for one year with their current employers Peace worked for various employers since he left school and was frequently in and out of jobs, at the time of the study he was working as a day labourer, and usually found work through personal networks such as friends, family and wife.

These networks are an important part of job-seeking and support (Anderson, 2000; Nyamnjoh, 2005) and *abomkhaya* are usually able to link job seekers with potential employers. They can also assist with accommodation and inform each other of "job opportunities at the earliest, and earn a reasonable amount of money before their stay expires or before they fall prey to one of the routine 'clean up' campaigns organised by the police" (Nyamnjoh, 2005, p. 190). Transnational domestic workers relied heavily on each other and they also ensured that they linked each other with potential employers. This survival strategy meant that they had to keep in touch with one another. I benefited from this network in data gathering for my study because the participants informed one another of this study through their group Whatsapp and linked me with others. I was declared 'safe' by one participant, and the others felt free to talk to me afterwards.

Both Peace and Thapelo had regular employment about two to three times a week, and were able to earn a better wage because they did odd jobs for different employers on different days. Only three participants were registered, Luyanda, Thomas and Shadrack although they were not full-time workers. The males generally earned a higher wage than the women and all except Luyanda earned above the minimum, that is, from R2600 ($171.73) upwards. Luyanda earned about R 1000 ($66.05) per fortnight, and Thomas earned about R1300($85.86) per fortnight, making his wages R2600 ($171.73) per month. The three highest earners were Sibusiso, Thapelo and Peace, earning roughly R3600 ($ 237.78) per month. These were estimates depending on the work they were able to find in addition to their regular jobs. Sibusiso did odd jobs earning about R100 ($6.6) – R200 ($13.21) per day, his regular employment was

gardening which he did on weekends. He formed part of the large workforce of men who can often be found by the side of the road with boards indicating their skills such as 'carpenter', 'plumber' or 'painter.' His board indicated that he was a "handyman." He often worked with Peace, who found work as a day labourer in various building sites in eThekwini. His work can best the described as a "daka boy", sometimes spelt "dagha" from the Zulu word *udaka* meaning mud, therefore a daka boy is a derogatory name used to refer to a man in construction who mixes concrete mud for the builders. These men are usually found on building sites and their job is to mix mortar (udaka) for the bricklayers. Mthethwa (2016) put together an online list of the top 10 words that are unique to South African construction sites. There is very little respect for daka boys and they often earn the least amount, usually they are employed by other employees to do this work for them.

As opposed to the female participants, the males introduced themselves by type of work that they did, or area of specialisation. Shadrack, for instance, introduced himself as "a garden and cleaning service." He had been working for different employers as a casual gardener for about 9 years, and saw his work as a service, and not as a domestic worker. Nkosi was a driver, a live-out, part-time employee although not registered: "*I am a driver, I take them to school in the morning and then it's up to me to wait for them until afterschool or go back to their home.*" Peace, Thomas Luyanda and Thapelo were 'handymen' who took any job they could find. Peace was a day labourer and also did any other work such as painting, walking dogs, and doing minor repairs as and when asked to do so in other jobs that he found.

They defined their work as a specialisation which enhanced their masculine identity. Not only does the employment of male domestic workers offer a service to the employer, it is as Sarasúa (1994) stated, status-enhancing and tends to be associated with wealth. As domestic workers, gender roles are still very pronounced. Women tend to do reproductive, caring work, while men tend to perform 'non-nurturant reproductive labour' (Duffy, 2007, p. 323), and in instances where they are in a nurturing role, this is mainly confined to caring for elderly males, lifting ill or disabled persons, or working in support of women who are carers (Parreñas, 2012). The participants in the study worked mainly outside the house as gardeners or handymen and none of them did any nurturing work.

The males were a lot more assertive about working hours, and usually started at a specific time, took breaks and knocked off at agreed times. In instances where participants were asked to work overtime, this was negotiated, but because they usually had the latitude to make decisions

about their work, they were able to finish on time. Nkosi for instance, said *"because I don't work all day. I only start working at this time (1pm – 2pm) and that is all I do. I also work only from Tuesdays to Fridays so it's not a full time job ...I work from 2- 4pm or so and then I am done."* Peace occupied the lowest level in the hierarchy of jobs as a 'daka boy', but he too, had clear hours of work. Although they did not enjoy this work, for some, it was the opportunity to learn a new skill such as painting and pool cleaning, although this was not at a professional level. Their work was mainly self-directed and they generally had room to decide which tasks to do first, for instance Sibusiso usually had his own specific schedule that he followed when he did the garden, and it was affirming for him to direct his own work.

Unlike female domestic workers, the uniform worn by males was both practical and not distinguishable from other males working in blue collar work. They wore the blue two-piece overalls with reflector stripes when gardening or working around the house. What made the males visible in my study is that they were African men walking dogs, and doing so in overalls made them more conspicuous and stand out as domestic workers. Although I had invited a few men walking their dogs to participate in the study, they declined. Of those approached this way, only Luyanda agreed. He walked the dogs in the afternoons and saw this as a fun part of his job, *"I can interact with other people."* Thomas, who was referred by others, also walked the dog, but did not enjoy this part of his work, preferring to wash the car instead.

Another key element of the working relationship was how the participants were addressed. In his study of masculinity, Morrell (1998) traced how hegemonic masculinity has changed over time and influenced how other marginalised and subversive masculinities negotiated power in their own areas of influence. Although White men have historically been viewed as all-powerful and as a source of power and oppression over women and other marginalised men, this is contextual. The state as the main organiser of power relations of gender, influences and in turn is influenced by other institutions such as the church, schools and workplace. In South Africa, colonisation and apartheid synonymised Black men with poverty and marginalised them in a variety of ways, one of which was the manner of address.

As already discussed in chapter 3, Zulu men have a rich history in domestic service, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal. Having been employed as Amawasha who dominated the domestic laundry service in the early 21st century, and others having worked in the household as house 'boys', this work was gradually feminised by the entrance of women into domestic work. Like men, performing domestic work requires strong energetic and powerful bodies (Morrell, 1998).

Domestic work is largely women's territory, and this implies that house 'boys' took instructions from women, not only was this emasculating, but also reflected the subordinated position of black men. Further referring to grown up men as 'boys', and the apartheid legacy that Africans address all White males respectably as *'baas'* (boss), or *'klein' baas* (young boss) and females as madam or *'missus'* regardless of age, reflects a condescending refusal to acknowledge the adulthood and manhood of African men (Van Onselen, 1982). While male domestic workers should no longer be referred to by offensive and derogatory names such as boys as in house 'boys' or garden 'boys', some people still use these terms. Unlike their role as *Amawasha* at the turn of the 20th century, African men in domestic work entered this occupation from a disadvantaged position. The 'kitchen boys' (Delport, 1995) or 'houseboys' (Gaitskell, *et al*., 1983) whose position the domestic space normalised, eventually gave way to women in this sector. Hansen (1989) discusses the preference of men whose ability to adapt to housework did not require that they unlearn already known ways of doing housework, like females (Nyamnjoh, 2006).

In this study, it was noted that the male participants were usually employed by other men and there was some hesitation in terms of how they were addressed. All reported being called by first name, and in the case of Nkosi, his employer addressed him as *mnumnzane* (Mr). The employers' children used to call him *malume* (uncle), a term generally reserved for older males who may not be related, and in this instance, to male workers such as taxi drivers or domestic workers. He did not want to be addressed this way, therefore *"I told them that they had to say mkhulu (grandfather) because their father is younger than me and they understood that I am much older than their father."* For him, *malume* was very general and he liked it when they called him *mkhulu*. This was not problematic for his employer or his children. Although the relations between the participants and their employers were cordial, there was still the employer-employee boundary, punctuated by race and social class. Luyanda, Thomas, and Sibusiso were all employed by White males, the majority of Shadrack' employers were White men and women. Nkosi and Thapelo's employers were Black males, while Peace was employed by a group of Black men. Although Shadrack explained that he did not mind taking instructions from a White person, he was acutely aware of the gender when it was a female. His preference that it be a man may have been because he felt emasculated having to take instructions from a woman. Sibusiso also explained that he was aware that his employer never referred to him as a gardener or worker, but simply as 'chief', a word usually used among peers

to convey respect. It was also noted that the participants used their African names when they addressed each other, but presented their English names to their employers.

Despite this work being low-income and stigmatised, the participants felt legitimated by employment. Roy and Dyson (2010) explain that wage labour can legitimate men. Even though they earned very little and worked in the domestic sphere, by disassociating their work from the domestic, nurturant work and rearticulating it into a specialisation, they were able to 'recuperate' their masculinity and reject femininity (Parreñas, 2012). It also helped them to maintain their masculine identity and personal dignity. Employment was seen as a positive for the participants, as they were able to fulfil their fathering roles as providers, although it was not their first choice of employment. Some of them such as Peace also did not tell their children the type of work that they did, often preferring that they assume it was a job such as *"driving long distance trucks"* which justified their absence from home and living in South Africa. This was despite both not being able to drive. Luyanda's story to the mother of his child was that he worked in a restaurant, and although his current girlfriend in Durban knew that he was a domestic worker, he did not self-identify as a domestic worker. Others did not disclose to their children, but told their wives the truth about the nature of their employment. Perhaps as a way of salvaging their dignity or as role models for their children, they did not want them to know that they were in low-wage, low status employment.

At face value, the power relations between the participants and their employers could be said to be unequal, however they were not altogether helpless. As with female participants, there was a power struggle between participants and their employers, although not as covert as in the case of female participants. To some degree they were able to assert themselves when they felt this was necessary. They too, like the female participants employed survival strategies which enabled them to cope with their degradation and working in this stigmatised occupation. Although they did not do nurturing work, domestic work was still considered emasculating and as reflected by Weinrich (1976, p. 242) "it is the considered opinion of African society that domestic service is no proper occupation for a man. It is seen as degrading him in his manhood and of providing him with no promotion possibilities and chances of bettering himself." But to suppose that this occupation is then better for women to work in, reinforces the view that women belong to a sector which has very little prospects for growth and maintains their position as low-paid, disposable people and workers.

9.3   The meanings ascribed to fatherhood

Fatherhood is a socially sanctioned role where men play different roles in families and society (Morrel & Richter, 2006). Various factors shape fathering and fatherhood which continues to change as a result of historical, cultural, socioeconomic, and other social factors (Lupton & Barclay, 1997). The male participants lived far from their families. Although five of them were married, some had other children outside marriage, or before they were married to their current partners. These children tended to stay mostly with their mothers or maternal relatives, such as Shadrack whose children stayed with their mother, but his live-in partner brought her children with and they all resided with Shadrack. The fluidity of their households did not mean that the participants were not in touch with their children, for instance Thomas did not co-reside with his firstborn son, but often "*ask(ed) his mother if he can come here for the holidays."* He was now cohabiting with his girlfriend, the mother of his two young children, and it seemed that she was the one facilitating the son's visit to eThekwini.

Peace was married to MaDineo and reported having two children, while she had three. Her first born was 17 years old and she had two children with Peace. All the children stayed with her family while they were in South Africa working. When they stayed in Lesotho, the eldest child remained with maternal relatives while she lived with Peace and their two younger children. Peace contributed to the maintenance of his children by giving money to MaDineo, who then sent it to her mother, however MaDineo used a larger portion of her income to meet the needs of the children. Peace justified his inability to send more due to the precarious nature of his work, but explained that *"at least I make sure that they get something every month, even though sometimes it leaves me with nothing."* This was not entirely true as he had an occasional girlfriend in eThekwini whom he also supported.

In almost all the households, there were three generations: the participants, children and grandchildren. Not all the children were those of the participants, in other households nieces and nephews, and other unrelated children were usually resident. Household membership tended to be fluid and encompass those not necessarily related by blood or marriage. Nkosi, for instance had four children and his wife also staying with the eldest daughter's two children in one shack. Shadrack stayed with a live-in partner and her children. The most stretched households in this study was that of Peace and MaDineo who both lived and worked in eThekwini while their three children were left behind in Lesotho with MaDineo's mother. The eldest child was MaDineo's but Peace was not the father. These two participants did not co-

reside in eThekwini, yet they defined their home in nuclear terms, as a family of five people despite all living in three separate abodes, and with a grandmother caring for the children.

While the men wanted to be with their children, often it was determined by the children's' ages, for instance the participants seemed to be able to relate better with older children because they could discuss issues with them, or attend soccer matches together when they were at home. Nkosi and Shadrack had older children, who were young adults and they found that their relationship focused mainly on adult responsibilities such as employment, ensuring that the grandchildren were taken care of, etc. They already had grandchildren whom they also supported through their incomes, and the discussions with their girl children were around the care of grandchildren, finding a job or caregiving. Time was highlighted as one of the most crucial aspects of fatherhood. Swartz and Bhana (2009) found that spending time with fathers was essential for young men who were fathers themselves.

Although the participants did not co-reside with their children, they reported that it was important that they spent some time with their children, as Shadrack indicated, *"my opinion is that if you are a parent and you don't stay with your children, I think that perhaps you could take it that the child is able to spend time with the mother….and to spend time with the father, it has to be equal on both sides. Even when he grows up, the child has to know that he has time with mom and time with dad."* Ratele, Shefer and Clowes (2012, p. 553) highlighted the issue of fathers "being there" and "talking fathers." Father presence or 'being there' referring to quality of time and bonding with the child which was more than merely being in the same physical space together. Nkosi also highlighted the importance of 'being there', *"I know that others stay much longer away from home than myself, but I would suggest that any opportunity they get…the little time that you get, then the parent has to give them attention."* In addition to being there, Ratele *et al.* (2012) found that fathers needed to be more nurturing and display affection, a type of fathering they represented as 'talking' fathers. These fathers were more affectionate, non-violent and very engaged with their children emotionally. This is in line with the new man typology of father who differs from the archetypal father who is distant and uninvolved. The participants expressed the view that they wanted to be involved with their children despite the challenges of distance and were also proud to be providers for their families.

The discussions with male participants were primarily around providing for their families. For Luyanda whose daughter was 18 months old, his parenting role was almost taken over by his

mother as she had made some effort to contact the mother of the child, and had been to see the baby even though no damages had been paid. He sent money periodically, but seemed to be focused on his needs and those of the current girlfriend, living in Durban. For other participants with younger children, parenting seemed to be entirely the mother's domain. Cooksey and Craig (1998) found that physical distance from children reduced the frequency of father visits, and because these participants were migrant works, they only saw their children a handful of times per year, often for a short visit.

As already indicated in chapter 4 men dominated the domestic work sector in Europe (Hill, 1996; Maza, 1983) from the 14th century until it was completely feminised from late 19th century in Europe (Lacelle, 1987), Latin America (Arrom, 1985), and sub-Saharan Africa. Because women have occupied this space for centuries, it is taken for granted that it is naturally women's space and that men are unable to do this work. As with parenting, the care of children, especially those of the aristocracy, changed around the 18th century where caregiving was primarily the responsibility of male servants but changed as more men entered paid work outside the home. None of the participants in this study believed that men could be primary caregivers of children.

Both men and women seemed to believe that only women were well-placed to care for children. Zandile for instance said, *"so when you are a mother you have to play the role of being a parent, and when you are a father, you have to play this important role because let's say, here is a father and there is no mother…here is a girl child …a teenager who gets her first period…what will you do? Where will you run to? You have to know what you have to tell your child… you have to tell the child that 'now you have reached this stage, this is how you must behave."* Shadrack said, *"when you are a woman and you raise a boy, it is difficult to raise him the way his father would have been able to …there are certain things that you may not be able to tell him. When he gets older and perhaps when he starts doing things that are out of order … perhaps, when he grows up the father can be there to see him when he does what he is not supposed to do."* I also noted that they tended to focus on the productive aspects of growing up and not on general parenting *per se*. It became the prerogative of women to raise children and of fathers to instil discipline and to provide for them.

Fatherhood is often defined men's ability to provide for their families, and absence from home does not mean that they not providers. In their study of father-child connections in Mpumalanga province, Madhavan, Townsend and Garey (2008) found fathers to be physically absent, but

remained the main breadwinners who were primarily responsible for the payment of school fees and other essentials. Nkosi explained: *"I also have to make sure that at home they have some needs that must be attended to. You see, I am responsible for them and they have no other source of income, so I am the main responsible person. I have to make sure that I pay for anything that they need."* Rabe (2007) also found that men with live-in partners supported the children even though they were not their biological fathers. Shadrack, who was separated from his wife for over 15 years, sent money home to his children who were young adults at the time of the interview. His youngest child, a son was 18 years old and in matric. Shadrack stayed with a girlfriend who had her own young children, whom he also maintained: *"we used to fight, she would complain when I sent money to my kids and we would really fight! She only wanted me to support her own kids, and I told her "I can give you a bit of money for your kids, but I can never abandon my kids"*, he explained. It is not unusual for men to focus on the children they reside with and abandon those they do not co-reside with. Although the consensus view is that father absence equals no child maintenance, Madhavan *et al*. (2008) showed that the converse is true as father support may transcend co-residence due to the fluidity of many African families. Male members of the extended family or even unrelated father figures, often step in as social fathers especially when fatherhood is absent, unknown or undisclosed.

9.3.1 "This thing of damages is really damaging us"

Both *inhlawulo* and sometimes *ilobolo* have significance particularly in relation to father involvement in contemporary South Africa. The payment of *inhlawulo* or damages is recognized under the Customary Marriage Act, 120 of 1998. This is a process whereby a fine is imposed on the father-to-be for impregnating a girl out of wedlock, thereby 'damaging' the girl (Hunter, 2006; Swartz & Bhana, 2009). This payment symbolises remorse for the offense, acknowledges the pregnancy, and initiates maintenance for the unborn child. The unmarried father ensures his claim to parental rights by undertaking this ritual. In cases where the father is still a minor or dependent on parents, his parents are expected to pay *inhlawulo*. However, in the climate of high unemployment, the payment of damages is astronomical and well beyond their means, therefore damages are sometimes not paid, or in many cases, the father denies paternity (Hunter, 2006). This brings shame to the girl and her family, the child is unacknowledged by the paternal family, and they pay no maintenance towards the living costs of the child. All but two of the participant's had not paid any damages to the children they had. Both Luyanda and Thomas had children out of wedlock who stayed with their mothers. Thomas clearly explained *"this thing of damages really kills us, imagine with all these expenses you*

still have to pay damages to her family. It is the same as me being unemployed, this job…it pays so little money that I can't even take care of myself, what about paying R5 000 or so…I cant." He was clearly overwhelmed by the expectation to pay damages for the two women with whom he had children. His income of about R2600 per month was barely able to cover his own living costs, so paying damages seemed insurmountable. All his children used their mothers' surnames and this was something that did not sit well with Thomas who said, *"It's like I am not a father, I am not a man. My children are there but they are not mine."*

Sewpaul, Mdamba and Seepamore (forthcoming) argue that the commercialization of *ilobolo*, together with the risings costs of living and increased unemployment make *ilobolo* unaffordable. Not only does this mean that women continue to bear children out of wedlock, but also that they have limited support from the children's paternal families. This is in line with Hunter's (2006) findings that the inability to fulfil their financial obligations, made men feel like fathers without *amandla* (power). Unpaid damages means that children born out of wedlock are unable to use their paternal surname, and certain rituals cannot be performed because the child has not been acknowledged and welcome into the paternal family. Although children born out of wedlock may use their mothers' surnames, this is seen as inappropriate and socially frowned upon (Nduna, 2014). Being raised under the maternal surname automatically disowns, undermines and invalidates the child. Non-payment of damages had social implications in that the men were also unable to integrate their children into their paternal families and facilitate a relationship with forefathers or ancestors (Mkhize, 2006). While problems around surnames seem to have created a perpetual sense of dissatisfaction and feelings of disenfranchisement among some people (Nduna, 2014), children want to use their father's surnames for birth registration and application for identity documents, passports, and in marriage (Nduna, 2014) as surnames have significance in a person's identity. Although *inhlawulo* used to be paid in terms of live cattle, the current practice is to make payment in the form of cash (Hunter, 2004). Of the seven male participants in the study, only two had children who did not use their surnames, Luyanda and Thomas. Both Luyanda and Thomas had not paid damages and did not expect that the children would use their surnames.

In cases where the mother brings a child born out of wedlock to another man, a formal process of *ilobolo* is paid for the child, who is henceforth adopted into the paternal family to enjoy all the benefits and share in the troubles of the new family as if it was her/his biological one. But not everyone wants to engage in this process. Shadrack, for instance did not want to formally adopt the children of his live-in partner because he was "not ready" for another commitment,

despite living with her for years. Luyanda, who was unable to visit his young daughter as and when he wished because he had not paid *inhlawulo*, said: "*I go with the pretence that I am going to see her, but I know that I will also see the baby. Her family would not like it, mine too, but what can I do? I ask her to come and see me, then we meet somewhere and I can see the baby.*" The extent to which he could see his child was facilitated by his girlfriend, the mother of the baby but he wanted to "*do things the right way*" but because he had not paid *inhlawulo* this was not possible. Swartz and Bhana (2009, p. 67) explained that the failure to pay or make arrangements to pay damages means that the family of the mother will make him feel uncomfortable and unwelcome "as the young man is afraid of going to see the family because then he is guilty of disrespect - and in amaXhosa culture disrespect itself carries a fine." The mother of Luyanda's baby stayed in Cape Town (Western Cape Province), he was from the Eastern Cape province and worked in KwaZulu-Natal, which meant that visiting his child and girlfriend was expensive, and in addition to that he had to take them gifts and money when he went to visit. On his low salary, he was unable to pay damages for his girlfriend, thus the baby remained unacknowledged and could not use his surname.

Similar to *inhlawulo, ilobolo* (bride price) has cultural and social significance, and *ilobolo* negotiations often precede any other form of union such as a 'white wedding'. Because the payment of *ilobolo* signifies marriage between parties where children automatically belong to the paternal family, this implies that they may rightfully claim any inheritance and be involved in paternal family decision-making processes.

9.4   Absent fathers

Father absence in the Black community has been intensely studied (Mavungu, *et al.*, 2013; Padi *et al.*, 2014; Richter, Desmond, Hosegood, Madhavan, Makiwane, Makusha, Morrell, & Swartz, 2012), and others like Morell (2006) explained the complexity of fathering, coupled with masculinity and the role of men in a nurturing role such as childrearing. Although the men in this study did not stay with their families, they still considered themselves a part of these households. Some often stayed away from home for a number of months at a time due to work commitments, but this should not imply abandonment of their families. Absent fatherhood has to be approached with care as most often those who do not co-reside with their families are automatically ruled absent. Indeed, the literature shows the extent of uninvolved, absent fathers in the South African context (Hall & Budlender, 2013), and the impact this has on children and families (Nduna & Jewkes, 2011). In this study, the male participants were known to their children, and were consulted frequently in decision-making and other issues that needed their

attention. It is borne in mind that the sample in this study may have self-selected, the participants presented the most socially desirable answers especially because they were in a focus group, as well as being interviewed by a female social worker. Despite assurances that there was no right or wrong answer, the participants tended to present a very good picture of themselves.

All the male participants lived off their employers premises, but did not stay with them as many rented accommodation near their places of work. Some like Thapelo, saw their children only a handful of times per year and he could not go home as often as he liked because the trip to Lesotho was very expensive. Although he did not see them often, he explained that he regularly sent money home. Like other transnational workers, he had to deal with strict visa regulations and pay a fine if he overstayed his visit in South Africa. The other male participants usually went home periodically or in emergencies, but all visited or connected with their children during the December holidays. Nkosi said: *"it was in the December holidays, we were together and they stayed from the beginning of December until they left on 5 January…they stayed for Christmas and New year…we stayed together and we had fun although it doesn't always happen that way….I mean that I don't see them that often so it was a special time."* Shadrack, whose children had been living with their mother for over 10 years said *"… and when its December I usually ask that they visit me."* The participants valued the time they spent with their children and wished for more face-to-face interaction and the space and time just to be together.

The pervasive physical absence of fathers from their children's lives has wide-ranging implications for their future relationships (Langa, 2010; Nduna & Jewkes, 2011). With frequent and prolonged absence, male authority may be threatened and thus reduce men's active involvement in socialising with their children (Mkhize, 2006). Although the men *'played'* with the children, often for only a few hours after getting home, this seemed to be their limit to the level of interaction. MaDineo felt that Peace overcompensated for his absence by overplaying his role, or making a show of it for the benefit of the public. In her view, Peace *"treats the children like glasses in the first few hours* (of his arrival)*, and then it seems that he loses interest."* The youngest seemed shy in his presence. Peace, on the other hand did not discuss this, but merely said *"my children love me to bits, just when I get home they rush to meet me."* Some of the participants were absent for months at a time but kept in touch with their young children. Sibusiso used to speak to his children over the phone even when they could not speak properly *"just so that they could be used to my voice."* For Thapelo, his children were excited

to see him after a long time *"when I get home. They become very happy and I get happy to see them and we often sleep late…they play and we are happy. Even when I go outside, they want to go with me…everywhere …and because I am not used to being there, they don't want me to go…they want me to stay."* Although the male participants indicated presence and involvement in the lives of their children, the female participants had different experiences of the men in their lives. It seems that there were high rates of abandonment either during pregnancy or soon after the birth of the children, a finding that resonates with that of other studies (Gilbert & Sewpaul, 2015; Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017).

In almost all the cases, the female participants wanted acknowledgement from the fathers, even if the fathers were no longer interested in them or their children. Puseletso's despair was clear: *"they don't have one father…Katleho's father… I last saw him when I was 3 months pregnant … with Bareng….his father is alive, he knows him very well … but he does nothing. Nothing for the child."* Similarly, Noluthando who had seven children, none of whom had damages paid for, said: *"they stayed with my mother from the beginning …their father was never there, I have two children with him."* The reported experiences of the males and the females were very different in terms of father involvement. But in the only couple who participated in the study, both Peace and MaDineo were involved as parents, with MaDineo's role being more central than that of her husband as she was the one who constantly called the children and was more in tune with their everyday needs than he was. Despite Cheadle, Amato and King's (2010) findings that children's gender is associated with increased contact for male children over female children, gendered differences were found in the case of communication with adolescent children and not a factor in terms of preference for spending time with a child of a specific gender. But age tended to make it easier for the participants to communicate with older children as they could speak to them directly, not through a caregiver's phone.

Although there were no marked differences between how they treated male and female children, the participants found it easier to discuss issues with male, rather than female children, especially when it came to reproductive issues. Shadrack for instance found it easier to speak to his son about 'men's issues' and explained that *"there are certain things that only a man can speak to a boy about, and this is difficult when children are raised by women."* The issue of men being best placed to discuss things with boys was repeated by many participants including females. For instance Monica said *" …because children especially boys have a way of growing up and it is important for him* (father) *to play his role…you see like when you find that he can speak to them when they are at a certain stage, they sit down with them and show*

them the way…you know like when there are things that happen…and when the father is around…you find that he is also grown up and some things he can't discuss with mom. But if there was a father then he could discuss it with him because the father ends up being like his brother."

The discourse around fatherhood and communication with their children was that males were better placed to talk to their sons, and similarly mothers were the ideal parents to discuss life issues with their daughters. All participants agreed that there was a need for 'talking' fathers and that this facilitated a good relationship with their children.

9.5   The monetisation of fatherhood as a sign of involvement

Men's role in caregiving is often construed in negative terms; if not absent, they are likely to be constructed as irresponsible, or abusive. The female participants in this study felt the same way, that they were still the primary caregivers even when the children were left with their fathers. Caregiving seemed to be essentialised according to gender and construed as natural for women, and not for men. Both male and female participants seemed to believe that women were best placed to be nurturing, while men ensured that the material needs of the family were taken care of. But by seeking employment far from home, the women were already operating outside the dominant norm. As providers, it meant that the women's social and economic positions were altered, this was interpreted by the men as a threat to their masculinity, despite this income helping the family to survive.

Like Morell (2006), Madhavan *et al*. (2008) caution against equating father presence with increased well-being of the family or father absence with decreased well-being or more suffering. Some of the female participants indicated that leaving an abusive partner actually improved the quality of their lives. Rorisang who removed her children from their father's care alleging abuse: *"you see what was the last straw, what really made me angry was, one day Thuto (daughter aged 10) left her jersey at school, so when that happened she told him that she forgot her jersey at school and would bring it back the next day, he hit her. He hit her so much, she had a gash in the head. She was so hurt she wanted to die. She forgot it at school and would get it the next day… but he attacked my child …My child had a blue eye, and was thoroughly beaten. When they asked her, she told the teachers that her father hit her for a jersey she forgot at school. The teachers called the police and they said that he should stop doing that. He was given a warning."*

This was just one of the many instances she highlighted of their father being abusive towards her children, especially after he had a live-in girlfriend. This was a man who also financially abused her for the duration of their marriage.

In this study none of the participants admitted being abusive, instead their complaints were that their girlfriends and families of their wives financially abused them. The perception being that because their children stayed with relatives, these relatives took advantage and asked for money more often than necessary. Luyanda complained that *"I don't even think it is for the baby, they ask for clothes every month for someone who is not even two years old?"* Thapelo said *"my mother is really making me pay for taking care of my child, even if it is not direct, but when I get a phone call from her, I start wondering what it is again."* In another instance, Shadrack was not told that his son had received financial aid from school but he kept paying school fees.

Parenting, especially fathering, becomes monetised when the provision of material needs supersedes other aspects of the parent-child relationship. Boccagni (2012) referred to 'monetisation'" of the relationship between migrant parents, their children and caregivers. In line with fatherhood being constructed in financial terms, the gap created by migration is therefore filled by material items and gifts. These material and financial benefits tend to feature largely in the discourse of both fatherhood and distance parenting as both parents went to great lengths to ensure that they bought gifts for the children and caregivers, in addition to sending remittances. As with other male participants, there was preoccupation with providing for their families. Children also ensured that their own age and gender specific needs were understood, for instance, Thomas's son was a teenager who *"demands that I buy only clothes with labels for him."* These were expensive, branded clothing and shoes like *Lacoste* and *UZZI*, far above what Thomas could afford, but was forced to layby or buy on credit in order to satisfy his son. In order to satisfy their children, some participants bought these only in December and gave these as gifts for Christmas.

Financial support is difficult when the man is unemployed, and because most of the participants were South African, their children received the child support grant. While some participants such Sebenzile and Siya (in the previous chapter) felt that one could live on the social grant, if the money was spent carefully, none of the male participants felt that the child support grant could meet all the needs of their children. But all wanted the children to receive the grant. Shadrack for instance was very vocal about wanting the child support grant, but asserted that this did not condone fathers not taking responsibility: *"It does help, even where there is a need*

for school items, things like those… even with food, government is usually just helping, but it is not much. To be honest, as a parent you have the responsibility to maintain your child ….I can understand if you are unemployed as a parent…but if you work, you must make sure that you use the little that you get. It is your responsibility …. that you maintain the child until he is self-supporting"

Other participants expressed the view that it was their responsibility to provide for their children, even when their mothers received the child support grant of R410 ($ 27.08) per month. This might be reflective of sampling bias, in that men who were supportive of their partners and children agreed to participate in the study, or participant bias in that men were saving face and expressing that which is socially desirable. Research points to the large-scale non-involvement and lack of support by fathers, as discussed in the literature review. As already explained in the previous chapter, to qualify for the government social grant, one has to earn less than R48000 ($ 3170.59) per annum for single persons, or R96 000 ($ 6 341.18) for a married couple. Government assumes that families are nuclear and therefore places conditions for those who are married. However, most African, and poor families live in extended families, and are able to pool resources. As explained above, the participants lived in multigenerational families therefore they could all receive social grants, regardless of parents' marital status. Nkosi's grandchildren who lived in the same household already received a child support grant, even though he supported them and their own fathers also made some contributions towards their maintenance.

9.5.1   Social fatherhood

The concept of social fathers, which is an ascribed role, and sometimes conferring status (Swartz & Bhana, 2009), requires that men provide financial support to children other than their biological ones. Rabe (2016) points to the invisibility of non-biological adult males living with children either as the partners or husbands of the mothers. The ascribed role of 'social father' (Swartz & Bhana, 2009) denotes men who are present in the child's life such as grandfathers, uncles, stepfathers, brothers, and other men who may perform various father-related roles for the children who reside with them. Ratele, Shefer and Clowes (2012) question the subordination of social fatherhood to biological fatherhood. It is understood that male virility does not equal fathering and active involvement in childrearing, and some men can, and often step in as social fathers (Mkhize, 2006; Rabe, 2007). The ability to provide for biological children, and those of other relatives tends to grant respect for a man who not only becomes a role model for young men (Lesejane, 2006), but also gives him authority over them. Because

fatherhood does not occur in a vacuum, it is a socio-moral process informed by the dominant discourses of what it means to be a man in one's society (Mkhize, 2006). Fatherhood is often linked to men's role as protectors, moral authority, family responsibilities, provider and role model - especially for young men (Chauke & Khunou, 2014). Some participants in the study, such as Peace and Shadrack cared for the children of their partners, in addition to supporting their biological children.

Social fatherhood encompassed more than financial support for children, and this meant that the participants could make decisions in relation to the children they were responsible for. As social fathers, they claimed to be responsible for financially supporting these children, but also had the latitude to make major decisions such as where the children resided, who the primary caregiver would be and what school they could attend. For instance Nkosi said *"…she is not married so her children are my responsibility, once he pays (damages) for them then he can have a say. I have been taking care of them since birth."* Nkosi's grandchildren were in pre-school (estimated to be around 6 years of age) and he had been maintaining them since birth, therefore as a social father, he had earned the right to make these decisions. Although social fathers took care of children and ensured that their needs are met, this has the potential to enable biological fathers to abdicate their responsibilities.

9.6   Conclusion

In the current, dominant and taken-for-granted notions of parenting, both women and men find themselves held to impossible standards. For women, the ideal mother is seen as giving of the self to the extent that her children's needs surpass her own. For men, the new father typology requires that they be more emotionally involved breadwinners who must also negotiate parenting within a previously female-dominated space. The definition of manhood and validation of masculinity is often through the man's provider role. While South African men are accused of being largely absent, what is invisible is the fluidity of families, and men as absent breadwinners and decision-makers in the lives of their biological children and those they are responsible for as social fathers. From the above discussion it is clear that despite hegemonic masculinity, Black men in low-income jobs also want to be intimately connected with their children, show them affection from infancy and share in their growth and development.

CHAPTER 10: SUMMARY, MAJOR CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present an overview of the significant findings and major conclusions emerging from the study. Informed by critical theory and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), the main aim of the study was to locate the structural factors that impacted the family within the narratives of the participants, how the participants attached meanings to parenting, and how parental roles were enacted from a distance. The thesis is underscored by an understanding of the structural factors that contributed to participants' decision to separate from their children, how dominant constructions of parenthood influenced the participants' meanings of distance parenting, and the consequences of parenting from afar not only for themselves, but also for their children and caregivers. It was also important to understand the role of fathers, especially where they were not separated from their children as a result of divorce or incarceration, and to see how they parented their children from a distance.

10.2 Summary of results

Studies of transnational or local migration tend to seek the experiences of children and those left behind, and the impact on their quality of life. Research focused on the experiences of migrant domestic workers is largely carried out in Europe, the US and the Philippines (Anderson, 2001; Parreñas, 2001). This study sought to understand how domestic workers in South Africa negotiated parenting, and the meanings they attached to parenthood, especially amid dominant constructions of what it means to be a 'good' mother or father, which is along idealized, intensive mothering and hegemonic masculine standards demanding co-residence with children. As domestic workers, the participants were forced to migrate to places of employment and leave their children behind. The findings reflect parenting from the perspective of a marginalized population, whose work often means having to choose between co-residence with their children or leaving them in order to earn a living to support them.

10.3 Dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood

Ideal family life is modelled around the standards of White, middle-class, married, mostly White, heteronormative, nuclear families. The ideal family has a father earning a family wage who supports his wife and children, with the wife taking care of the children and her husband (Fraser, 1997). The assumption is that partners will be married, live together as a self-sustainable unit, and have children. This is a norm in White middle-class families, and a standard against which all other families are measured. Black families are predominantly extended, and in South Africa, a majority live in poor communities, and are characterised by

high rates of parental absence (Hall & Sambu, 2017). Hochfeld (2008, p. 94) argued that by "favouring traditional families, even if inadvertently or subtly, deeply devalues other types of families." Families do not have the same access to resources and opportunities, and the global effects of capitalism keep some families in poverty and deprivation, while others live in abundance with a wide array of choices. Parenting is synonymous with mothering and both men and women parent differently. The participants in this study had internalised the nuclear, middle-class family ideal, with men as providers and women as nurturers even when their personal circumstances were different. Hochfeld (2008, p. 98) noted the double discourse in parenting where motherhood is "more active (caring, bringing up, day-to-day tasks related to social reproduction, nurturing)" and fatherhood tends to be "predominantly passive (monitoring, observing, supporting, modelling)." I begin with a discussion on how the participants made sense of mothering, this is followed by their understanding of fatherhood.

10.3.1 The practice of motherhood

Two forms of mothering seem to be binary opposites of each other, that is, intensive (Hays, 1996) or essential motherhood (DiQuinzio, 1999) and *othermothering* (Collins, 1994). Institutionalised, ideal motherhood is often defined within normalised practices of the dominant class and that which does not conform to middle-class life is marginalised (Hochfeld, 2008). The participants had internalised intensive mothering and subscribed to it, and they went to great lengths to accommodate this even when it came at great personal cost. Because 'good' mothers co-reside with their children, make them the centre of their world, and base their decisions on the well-being of their children (Arendell, 2000), this essentially means putting the mother's needs second to those of her children. This is despite childrearing not being the same among all women, especially those occupying different 'race' groups and social classes. The participants lived in extended families, and were largely not married. Absent fatherhood is predominant in South Africa. Although these women were able to nurture their children, they were forced to migrate to places of employment in order to provide for themselves and their children. The presence of other family members facilitated child care, and the decision to leave home. These women went to great lengths to ensure that they provided the expected care to their children, even when it was exploitative. The structures they put in place reflected their socioeconomic positions. Whereas more affluent women could 'buy' care, and participate in paid employment without compromising childcare (Macdonald, 2010) for working class women this option was rather restricted. The reality for many women living in poor and

working class families is that they live in extended families without any support from the fathers of the children. They depend on extended family members, and often on older daughters for emotional support and child care. Extended family members often step in to provide financial and material support, even when this erodes the meagre resources that they have. For the most part, Black women are single parents and their mothering practices involve the participation of *othermothers* who are usually respected and trusted, yet themselves exploited as they provide unpaid labour.

10.3.2 Replacement mothers

Whereas the participants left their children in the care of relatives and siblings, middle class women who enter the public workplace depend on nannies and day-care mothers to care for children in their absence. The participants were the replacement mothers, paid to care for the children of other women who could afford to extricate themselves out of this role. As nannies, their workplaces were not the same as any other, their work included care work, specifically to care for children while their own were left in the care of others, meaning that their own mothering experience was further complicated by the nature of their work. They mothered other people's children, yet their own children were left behind. They saw employers living with and enjoying time with their children, which for them was redefined as a privilege while it remained a right for their employers. This highlights the importance of nannies in childcare. Their role enables their employers - other women - to participate in paid employment outside the home without compromising childcare (Maqubela, 2016; Macdonald, 2010). By looking after their employers' children, the participants in this study facilitated entry into paid work for their employers, yet their role was not acknowledged. Instead they were 'zombified' (Nyamnjoh, 2005) as extensions of other women. They were often mothers without authority when it came to their young charges, by parenting according to the preferences of their employers. Their mothering skills and experiences were often undermined and they simply became channels through which other women mothered their children.

The participants constantly had to negotiate the tensions between two parallel, competing discourses – the universal discourse of intense mothering, on the one hand, and the contextual, normalised discourse of distant mothering, on the other hand. The general wish was to co-reside with their children and raise them, and not do this through substitute caregivers. They were working class and Black, thus occupying a disadvantaged social position, but strove to

emulate the lives of others living in middle-class, nuclear families with two parents. Just as their employers had sought the assistance of *othermothers,* they did so too. The difference was that their employers paid them to look after their children, as their employers built careers. The participants were in poorly paid jobs that offered no upward mobility. They also depended on families and older daughters to take on unpaid childcare. They, like their employers, were working mothers, which is sometimes frowned upon by society, because the norm is that women engage in symbolic reproduction and not material reproduction (Fraser, 1997).

The combination of breadwinning with nurturing to imply responsible motherhood when fathers were present or left at home with the children, further oppresses women. They had internalised 'good' motherhood along intensive, biological, motherhood, and all of them wanted to stay with their children despite this not being possible. As distance mothers, they reformulated and reconstructed caregiving and mothering (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila, 1997) to fit their circumstances as domestic workers and living in split families. Notwithstanding the challenges and frustrations of working in domestic service, the participants showed resilience.

10.3.3 Hegemonic discourse on fatherhood

The marginal role of men in parenting, regardless of who is left at home with the children, shows how feminised parenting is. The dominant discourse is around men as breadwinners and providers for their families. There was a difference between how men and women perceived their roles in relation to parenting. The high rates of paternal absence in South Africa, particularly in the African community are noted in this theses. This also highlights the increased burden of care that women carry in relation to children. The historical colonial and apartheid legacies, and contemporary socio-economic deprivations underscoring this are acknowledged, and structural changes in the interests of all families must be instituted. This must be complemented with challenging and changing some of the cultural norms that contribute to this, and the normalisation of paternal absence and distance parenting must be countered. Although the likelihood of children living with their fathers, increases with children's ages, this is only a minority and findings from this study, despite being limited in size, confirmed low rates of fathers as primary caregivers.

Childcare remains feminised and women are complicit in perpetuating this practice by continuously stepping in to 'assist' men who are left at home with their children. This

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normalises their role as part-time, marginal parents. When women are left behind, it is assumed that they will manage with single parenting, but this is not the case with men. If parenting is to be more egalitarian, then men will have to play a more active role in the care of children, not as experts or those who set the standards for parenting, but rather as hands-on caregivers. They would have to start with the 'dirty' job of changing nappies and sleepless nights, providing emotional labour, and generally 'being there' for their children regardless of age. By working far from home, the men reported providing for their families, thus undertaking a role in line with the hegemonic discourse on fathering. Although the narratives from this study showed that the women took on the dual role of nurturer, and oftentimes sole provider, the male participants did not consider extending their roles to incorporate nurturing work. Perhaps on account of being aware of dominant societal discourses, the men in this study emphasised their financial and material provider roles.

Living far from home did not challenge men's roles, they continued to undertake a role in line with the hegemonic discourse on fathering. The extent to which the men in this study were involved in parenting was mainly in the form of financial and material provision. Most 'supported' or 'helped' the mother in what was perceived to be her natural role - as parent. By playing a supportive role, this meant that parenting was the function of the mother (Hochfeld, 2008), and fathers merely gave mothers support in raising their children. Although the male participants reported a desire to spend some time with their children, the direct care of children was perceived to be the women's domain. They had internalised the dominant view that parenting was women's work and found validation in their provider role. While the men emphasised their provider role, the women highlighted their roles as both provider and nurturer, and bemoaned the lack of provision by the fathers of their children. The reports of the participants could not be verified. In one instance where the couple was interviewed separately, there were discrepancies in the views of the husband and wife. While Peace said that he shared a close relationship with his children, and spent time with them, his wife MaDineo viewed his relationship with the children as rather superficial. She saw it as 'showing off' as he exaggerated his interaction with the children for only a few hours on seeing them, and then lost interest.

The men reported pressure to support not only their children but other dependents such as grandchildren. By working in eThekwini, there was an impression that they earned a lot of money and this, they believed, made their extended families demand even more. Some of them

explained that when going home, they had to wear new clothes and shoes, and to take gifts for their wives and children, which confirmed the view that they were indeed well-off. Some of the children demanded expensive clothing and they bought these even if it meant purchasing on credit or borrowing money. Their relationship with children became monetised (Boccagni, 2012). Some of the participants were unable to see their children as much as they wanted, especially when they had not undertaken cultural rituals such as *inhlawulo* to acknowledge their children born out of wedlock.

The gendered roles in parenting showed that women were often actively involved in nurturing their children even when they did not co-reside with them. The double belonging (Boccagni, 2012) experienced by women, was not reported by the males in the study, their roles were along a material and financial provider role. But both males and females had internalised dominant constructions of ideal families, and ideal parenting and tried to parent along these standards.

The participants in this study had children, some as young as a few months old when they left home in order to provide for them. Their migration to urban areas was dictated by their socio-economic environment. The paradox is that to ensure the survival of their children, they had leave their children; which became a demonstration of responsibility as good mothers. Yet, in that leaving they had to endure the pain of distance parenting, which robbed them of the right to the ideal practice of intensive mothering, which all of them desired.

10.4   Benefits of migrant labour

Participants in the Canadian study by Grandea and Kerr (1998) wondered if their sacrifices were worth it if they received so little in return. They worked very hard, only to be paid very little and thus had little to show for their hard labour. The aim of labour migration for the participants was to support their children, and many of them did achieve this goal. Entry into the paid labour force gave them financial leverage, and respect from some people in their communities. Their ability to support their children meant that they had increased choices, and could meet basic needs of food and shelter. While the participants did not live lavish lifestyles, their standard of living was improved by their income. Two of the participants earned much higher than the national minimum wage for domestic workers and could afford to purchase homes for their families, their children and grandchildren went to school and had food to eat. These participants also had access to paid leave, a pension and access to microcredit from their

employer. For two other participants, employment meant that they could access credit and loans from the bank, one of them was able to save and also had a life policy.

The participants did not usually have access to formal social assistance such as social insurance, but most of the local participants, and one from Lesotho received government social grants. Although the labour laws recognised domestic workers as formally employed persons who had the right to the unemployment insurance fund, a majority of them were not registered by their employers with the Department of Labour. This prevented them from accessing social insurance in the event of incapacitation or retrenchment. Therefore, they formed their own sources of social and financial support such as *stokvels* and burial clubs. Savings clubs, such as *stokvels* gave members access to interest-free and collateral-free credit (Biggart 2001; Buijs 1998) that required reasonable monthly contributions, making them affordable and accessible to low-income workers such as domestic workers. By joining *stokvels* run by homegirls and homeboys *(abomkhaya)*, the participants not only benefited financially, but also socialised with *abomkhaya* who brought news from home, linked one another with job opportunities, accommodation and also gave advice where needed. It was common that the *stokvels* be used to meet the specific needs of the members, for instance some saved towards capital projects such as building their own homes. *Stokvels* were therefore a social protection system that these workers had put in place for themselves and their families. Other forms of support were in the form of relaying messages to and from family members back home, offering to take money, gifts, passports and other parcels to each other's relatives when visiting home. These networks were important sources of emotional, financial and practical support.

10.4   Participants' views of parenting from a distance

Notwithstanding the challenges and frustrations of working in domestic service, the participants showed resilience and recreation of parenting practices as distance parents.

They viewed the role of women as active in parenting and that of men as passive, limiting it to that of provider. But women had reconceptualised responsible motherhood to include breadwinning. For the men, however, their role as providers did not change when they became distance parents, at no point did it include caregiving.

10.4.1 Maternal absence and efforts to maintain closeness with children

Maternal absence evoked feelings of guilt, self-blame and embarrassment. Although they had migrated in order to provide for their children, they felt guilty for leaving their children in the

care of others, and when children did not turn out well, they felt that it was their fault. While findings from other studies show societal vilification of distance mothers, who are seen as abandoning their children, in this study the participants did not feel judged for leaving their children in the care of others, perhaps because it was so prevalent and normalised in their communities, or because they felt that they were showing responsibility by migrating for work to support their children. It was crucial for them that their children understood that they had to leave home in order to care and provide for them.

Parenting from a distance meant that there was double belonging on the part of the mothers. In order to recreate intimacy, the participants communicated with their children frequently, the most widely used form of communication being the telephone. They called home numerous times per day, and it was common for them to wish the children good morning, and good night, to help them with homework over the phone, and to respond to complaints, and share in their achievements.

They also planned expenditure of their remittances together with the children, usually the eldest daughter. As with other studies of transnational mothers, daughters were 'parentified' and an important support system for the participants. They sent remittances to them, planned how the money was to be spent and controlled expenditure of the remittances so that the money was used for what it was intended for. Their partners were not trusted with this task, and in some instances this brought resentment and anger.

10.4.2 Paternal absence and hegemonic masculinities

The men's role as providers was affirmed by labour migration; the participants were doing what fathers do, which was to provide for their families. The difference in this case is that they were doing it from a distance. Their role as fathers was not reconfigured to include caregiving, and it was interesting to note that both men and women in the study did not feel that it was a man's role to be involved in nurturing. Men were simply 'called in' to address certain issues, and expected to step out from this role until needed. The men felt that they were good fathers because they provided. They were physically separated from their children, but felt that they 'were there' for them.

10.4.3 Socio-cultural factors affecting parenting

Father absence features strongly in South Africa, and it is unfortunate that cultural factors also contribute to this discourse. The payment of damages (*inhlawulo*) played a significant role in the involvement of the men in their children's lives. For those who wanted to be a part of the

lives of their children, the inability to pay damages prevented them from having contact. The value of damages amount to thousands of Rands, depending on how much a maternal family wants. As casual workers, it seemed that they could not afford to pay damages on their wages. The participants felt emasculated by their inability to pay, as one of them expressed how this made him feel like less of a man. His child could not use his surname and the extent to which he could have contact with his child was through his current girlfriend, who was able to negotiate with the mother for his son to visit him during the holidays.

Non-payment of damages also meant that they children were unacknowledged, and this posed a problem as they could not use the fathers' surnames. This implied that even when they applied for IDs, these would show their maternal instead of paternal surnames, marking them as illegitimate which brought shame on the children. The participants could also not perform certain important cultural rituals such as *Imbeleko* for their children, and this effectively excluded these children from the paternal family, and claims to paternal ancestry (Nduna, 2014). In practical terms, with unacknowledged children the pool of potential caregivers in their parents' absence shrunk. Even if paternal relatives wanted to care for the children in the absence of their parents, this was culturally unacceptable. The mothers of their children could not access this important resource which could have sometimes been readily available. In order to meet their parental responsibilities, they sought culturally acceptable caregivers (Illanes, 2010), mainly maternal relatives to care for children.

Paternal presence is often associated with increased well-being of the family or father absence with decreased well-being or more suffering, thus the call for greater father presence and involvement in the rearing of children (Morell, 2006; Madhavan *et al.* 2008).

10.5 Consequences of parenting from afar for themselves, their children and significant others

The consequences of parenting from a distance were young motherhood, alcohol use, wasteful expenditure of remittances, abuse of children physically, financially and sexually. Children felt lonely and missed their parents, mothers had to constantly reassure them of their love and this often manifested in a monetised relationships. Some challenged parental authority and bowed to peer pressure.

Young motherhood was common among the participants and their daughters, which had implications for the future of their children and grandchildren. Their daughters were parentified

young, became young parents to their siblings, and some of them had her own children at a young age; the cycle tended to repeat itself. Young motherhood was normalised in the communities from which they came, with motherhood often being seen as a marker of maturity, femininity and adulthood. Young motherhood placed enormous pressure on the financial resources of their families, yet they still fell pregnant. The absence of their parents as guides could account for the high rates of teenage pregnancy, especially in the African community. The cycle of poverty also continued as these young mothers entered into low income work, or inherited domestic worker jobs from their mothers and continued to work in this sector, leaving their own children in the care of their *othermothers*.

Young motherhood also meant that girls did not complete school, thus increasing their chances of working in low-income employment. The sacrifices that their parents made for them to attend school, seemed to have been wasted. This was also found to be the case with transnational mothers (Contreras & Griffith, 2012; Pantea, 2008).

Sending of remittances was one way of facilitating closeness to children, especially daughters. Some of the children were too young to handle money, therefore the mothers depended on other caregivers to distribute money and to use it to meet the needs of the children. None of the married participants sent money to their partners, rather to caregivers. Because most of the caregivers were grandmothers, money was sent to them. According to the participants they used it to buy food, pay for school fees and school-related activities, transport and other necessities. Most of the participants sent money home, but others opted to buy the necessities and send those home instead. This was mainly where the children were too young to use the money. Another participant did not send money to the caregiver of her children, she left the social grant card with the paternal grandmother, and justified it as her contribution to the upkeep of the children. But this was not her money, it was a non-contributory cash transfer provided by government for poor children, and payable to the primary caregiver of the children. She was doing what some men do in relation to social grants. They refuse to maintain their children, justifying this by saying that the mothers were already claiming child support from the state through the child support grant. This is a way of abdicating their responsibilities towards the maintenance of their children.

Some of the relatives misused the money sent for the children. Money and items sent for their children, were used by care-givers for the care-giver's children. In some instances the women expressed concerns about their children being hit, and being treated differently compared with

the care-givers children. The participants expressed concerns about children becoming wayward in their absence, about use of alcohol, early pregnancies, and school dropout, and in one instance having to deal with the rape of a daughter who was left behind at home.

10.6   Negotiation of parenting roles and responsibilities between parents, their children and caregivers.

Parenting roles were largely not negotiated. For fathers, it was assumed that the mothers would assume this role in their absence. Similarly, for a majority of the mothers in this study, migrating for employment meant that their own relatives would assume caregiving roles. It was women who took on a caregiver role even when the fathers were left behind with the children. Caregivers took on this role usually with very little discussion, it was assumed that they would automatically care for the children in the mother's absence. Half of the sample from the Madziva and Zontini (2012) study left home after making suitable childcare arrangements with spouses or paid caregivers, for those who could not do so, this was a result of being forced to flee from their homes. From this study, all the participants planned their migration to the city, and often made informal arrangements for childcare with *othermothers*.

Othermothers were, *mamkhulus, mamncanes, gogos* and other caregivers. Older daughters also assumed childcare in the absence of the mothers. The literature tends to rarefy the popular cultural adage of 'it takes a village to raise a child' - the importance of the collective in child-rearing in African contexts. But villages in South Africa are in crisis, and systems of care have been eroded as families struggle under the weight of HIV/AIDS, poverty and the onslaught of free-market, capitalist ideology. While the literature tends to rarefy *othermothering* and communal caring (Collins, 1994; Sudarkasa, 2004), which are positive moral values linked to the principle of *Ubuntu*, this practice allows for the exploitation of poor women who often provide unpaid care and labour. It was a taken-for-granted assumption on the participants' part that these women were available for unpaid childcare.

Othermothers were usually respected and regarded as competent to care for the participants' children, and parenting required constant communication between them. Cultural issues were considered in terms of choice of caregivers. These generally were maternal relatives such as the children's aunts, grandmothers and in some cases older siblings took care of younger children. At no point were the male participants worried about childcare arrangements, they simply left the children in the mothers' care, or assumed that their partners would find suitable caregivers. Only a minority left children in the care of their fathers and this was an anomaly.

Even in these instances, the fathers were physically present, but not actively involved in parenting their children. Other female relatives stepped in to provide care in the mothers' absence (Boccagni, 2012; Carling *et al*., 2012; Hall & Sambu, 2017; Mokomane, 2014; Pantea, 2011), which concretised the role of women in caregiving.

Caregiving arrangements with caregivers were often informal, and mothers were located between children and the caregivers. They often implored their children to be 'good' and to 'listen' to their caregivers. While caregivers seemingly had the leeway to parent the children in any way they saw fit, some did this as much as possible in line with the wishes of the mothers. There were instances where the caregiving arrangements were not in the best interest of the children. The consequences of leaving their children in the care of others were sometimes dismal for the mothers and their children. The stratification of care (Ambrosini, 2013) was clear in the case of maternal grandmothers caring for their grandchildren, and living with them in stable homes. Although the literature shows high rates of child mobility where children do not live with their parents, and where there is frequent child shifting (Plaza, 2000), in this study the participants did not report much child shifting. Their children were in the care of close relatives or siblings and because many stayed with relatives in family homes, this provided some stability although it meant that in some instances, the participants were the breadwinners for the entire household.

The disproportionate amount of childcare carried by *othermothers* and family is problematic and often exploits women who perform this unpaid labour. Conversely, the availability of other women facilitated distance mothering, and kept men out of the caregiving space. While those in middle and upper classes enjoy the benefits of intensive mothering, women who cannot afford paid childcare are forced to depend on social *othermothers* for childcare. All mothers regardless of 'race' or social class want to be with their children, and this needs to be supported (Seepamore & Sewpaul, forthcoming). The recommendations provided below constitute the means by which this might be attained.

10.7 Recommendations

This research delved into an understudied area of distance parenting and related consequences for parents, their children and caregivers in Durban, eThekwini. It also highlighted how parenting roles and responsibilities were navigated from a distance while parents attached meaning to parenting within the dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood. The recommendations for policy and practice are presented below.

10.7.1 Recommendations for policy

South Africa has some excellent pieces of policy to strengthen families. However, the problem lies in their implementation. The White Paper on Families (2012), The Integrated Parenting Framework (2012), the Children's Act (2005), and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997) all relate to men and women in parenting. The provisions of these policies have to be implemented, for instance *Strategic Priority1 "Promotion of Healthy Family Life"* in the White Paper on Families (2012) which calls for increased father involvement in the lives of children, not only in material provision, but also as visible members of families who have a positive contribution to make in childrearing. Various government departments have outlined their roles in the envisaged strategies to strengthen and support families, yet this strategy lacks clear monitoring guidelines, and the extent to which these priorities have been implemented remains unclear.

Although the Integrated Parenting Framework by the Department of Social Development (2012) acknowledges 16 different types of families, including single parents and orphan households, it does not acknowledge families where parenting is from a distance, despite this phenomenon being so widespread and historically entrenched. However, it acknowledges that children may be parented by others in addition to fathers and mothers. The strength of this policy is that social fatherhood, a reality for most children in South Africa (Mkhize, 2006) is recognised. Notwithstanding popular claims about the absence of fathers in the lives of their children, adult men are involved in the lives of children even when they are not their own. These men play a crucial role in the lives of unrelated children, such as mothers' boyfriends or partners as social fathers, but they are rendered invisible (Rabe, 2016). In the popular media, they tend to be presented as potential abusers or people with bad intentions, but this is not always the case. They must be acknowledged and their contribution to the lives of children, celebrated. This does not imply abdication of father roles by biological fathers, but acknowledgement that other social fathers play a crucial role in parenting.

10.7.2 Strengthening the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Programme (ISRDP)

The lack of opportunities for gainful employment in rural areas, was one of the key factors that contributed to participants leaving their homes and children to seek employment in urban areas. South Africa has outlined ambitious goals and strategies to promote and strengthen ISRDP (Department of Rural Development and Land Reform, Strategic Plan 2011-2014). The overall impacts of the ISRDP are envisaged to be: job creation, home ownership, healthier living conditions, local economic development, better infrastructure, transfer of skills, and building

institutional capacity. With national and provincial government support and dedicated funding for local government development in rural areas, these impacts might be realised. Such realisation might go a long way in retaining men and women, in decent and gainful employment, in their rural areas so that they do not have to separate from their children in order to provide for them.

10.7.3 Unmarried fathers and sociocultural norms

Section 21 of the Children's Act (2005) focuses on the rights of unmarried fathers in relation to biological children. While mothers tend to have automatic rights in relation to children, unmarried fathers do not. The conditions under which fathers may acquire these rights are clearly spelt out in this section, and they allow full parental rights if, at the time of the child's birth, the father was living with the mother in a permanent life-partnership, consents to be identified as the child's father, contributes, or has attempted in good faith to contribute to the child's upbringing or expenses in connection with maintenance of the child for a reasonable period. It is usually through the payment of damages, where the man acknowledges paternity and if this is not paid he and his family have no claim or contact with the child, cannot perform cultural rituals such as *imbeleko* which confer legitimacy and claims to paternal ancestry. Unacknowledged children are unable to use paternal surnames which creates a sense of illegitimacy, shame and embarrassment. The use of a father's surname is important for birth registration and application for identity documents, passports, and in marriage (Nduna, 2014), therefore non-payment of *inhlawul*o has long-term ramifications.

In their chapter entitled *"Disrupting Popular Discourses on Ilobolo: The Role of Emancipatory Social Work in Engendering Human Rights and Social Justice"* (Sewpaul, Mdamba & Seepamore, forthcoming) argued against the promotion of certain cultural practices such as *ilobolo* as it contributes to a violation of human rights. Using sociological evidence they demonstrate how the demands of the practice contribute to unmarried and single motherhood, and absent fatherhood, which compromise children's biopsychosocial well-being. They proposed that seemingly innocuous and relatively entrenched cultural practices such as *ilobolo*, which have become normalised, do in fact, violate the human rights of men, women and children. Social norms that reproduce dominant gender discourses and practices need to be challenged so that "harmful aspects of culture are confronted, while retaining those that are positive and that allow for inter-generational cultural continuity and human flourishing." (Sewpaul, Mdamba, & Seepamore, forthcoming).

Women who parent their children from afar also need support, but strict adherence to culturally acceptable caregivers robs them of a support structure that they need if certain cultural rites such as *ilobolo* or *inhlawulo* have not been performed. The cultural payment of damages has to be scrutinised, challenged and changed to meet the current needs of families, especially those needing protection and support such as children and mothers.

Social work is well-placed to enhance the work of non-governmental organisations and academics promoting father involvement in parenting, such as the Fatherhood Project, Men As Partners, Fathers Speak Out and Agisanang Domestic Abuse Prevention and Training (ADAPT) (Peacock & Botha, 2006), One Man Can (Van den Berg, Hendricks, Hatcher, Peacock, Godana & Dworkin, 2013); Brothers for Life and Sonke Gender Justice Network, Men's Mentoring Project by Community Action towards a Safer Environment (CASE), among others. The aim is to change the perceptions of society regarding childrearing and involvement of men. These programmes aim to include men in care, support and protection of families, they redefine fatherhood and promote holistic father involvement. These are fora via which social workers can use different forms of praxis to heighten and transform consciousness, and in so doing get people to challenge and change taken-for-granted assumptions around stereotypical gender roles (Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017; Sewpaul, 2013). Popular media must also be used to educate for difference in the interests of positive and engaged parenting on the part of men and women.

Research results detail the negative consequences of separation of children from their parents, and the narratives of the women in this study, reflect their concerns about their children living with *othermothers*. It would seem that the exalting of *othermothering* in the literature, reflects the need to make a virtue out of necessity. The women loved their children, missed them, and wanted to be with them, but were forced to leave their children in the care of others. To expect that they would want anything less than that deemed fit for women in middle and upper classes, would be to maintain double standards; it is a violation of their dignity, and a negation of their humanity (Seepamore & Sewpaul, forthcoming). Rather than construct socio-economic deprivations and their consequences as cultural issues (IASSW, 2018), state and non-state actors in South Africa must challenge structural injustices, agitate for structural changes, and support e.g. the goals of the White Paper on Families in relation to the promotion, strengthening, and preservation of families (Department of Social Development, 2012).

10.7.4 Improvement of working conditions

As discussed in the analysis, the working conditions of the participants played a huge role in their ability to parent as they desired, with the greatest factors being poor pay and leave conditions which influenced the frequency with which they could see their children. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997) has to accommodate men and those in low wage employment such as men in domestic work. The importance of father involvement from birth is not encouraged by policies such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (lack of paternity leave) where there is no provision for father-child contact time besides the three days of family responsibility leave while the maternity leave is four months. This demonstrates that the laws are not supportive towards the role of fathers as nurturers. Their roles remain financial, moral and socio-culturally defined. Despite various calls for the amendment of Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1997) to include paternity leave, this legislation has not changed. Men's paternity leave and the nature of domestic employment in South Africa have implications for parenting. Increased men's involvement in childrearing as a result of shorter working hours and the availability of paternity leave (Mokomane, 2012) must be considered. Civic groups, trade unions and different sectors of the community have been motivating for a change in the legislation, yet besides 21 working days of annual leave, and three days family responsibility leave per year, no other leave is available for new fathers. While paid maternity leave is four months, three days paternity leave for fathers reflects the wider societal attitudes towards men in relation to parenting.

Sectoral determination 7 for domestic workers was promulgated to accommodate the distinctive nature of work for those in the domestic work sector, but in its attempt to formalise domestic work, the conditions of employment were modelled along the dominant constructions of 'formal employment', thereby disadvantaging workers in this sector. For instance, the working hours of domestic workers could be tailored to the demands of the workplace such as splitting shifts. An employee could work for certain hours in the morning, do any other work during the day, and go back on duty in the afternoon/evening. This way she/he can study, shop or rest in between shifts.

The positon of domestic workers as employees is poor, and many were constantly seeking alternative employment. Some ended in "blow-ups" or another form of "unhappy endings" (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994, p.55). For some it was better to flee and leave without being paid, while others made up stories explaining their inability to continue working for their previous employers. There were also muted acts of rebellion, which compromised the employer-

employee relationship. If women had more protection in the workplace, they would have more bargaining power and might not have to revert to use of strategies that sabotage themselves and their employers. It is imperative that employers and employees understand their rights and responsibilities, and to shift from blame to responsibility; from hopelessness to accountability and empowerment for all parties concerned. Both employer and employee could not claim ignorance of the law, or at least of their own responses to perceived unfair treatment by the other.

10.7.5 Support of migrant families

In terms of cross-border migrants, as with the recommendations of Mantouvalou (2015) and Kiwanuka, *et al.* (2015), visa laws should be flexible. There is long history of migration into South Africa from countries in the Southern African Development Community such as Lesotho and Zimbabwe. The region must enter into agreements which will give working permits for people to work in South Africa, allow multiple entries for longer working periods.

The accommodation of migrants, specifically of domestic workers could be changed in order to accommodate their families. Xulu (2012) explained that the conversion of the hostel system and the transformation of migrant spaces in South Africa, saw the conversion of former single sex workers' hostels of the apartheid into Community Residential Units (CRUs). These are social housing units designed by the South African government and form an important site for the exploration of the redefinition of rural-urban connections of the working class in our society. Employers could be encouraged to accommodate workers and their families in the urban areas, although this may not be possible in their backrooms. Adequate accommodation of domestic workers may facilitate parenting and boost employee morale when they co-reside with their children, or live near enough to see them daily. Where employees are unable to co-reside with their children, decent pay and longer weekends will enable them to spend more time with their families.

10.7.6 Universal social protection

The findings in this study show that poverty pushed the majority of the participants to seek employment. Poverty spurs migration, and rural-urban migration mirrors the migration of people from sending communities in the Global South to receiving, more affluent countries in the Global North. Reliance on the social grant is high in South Africa and largely as a result of political will and a vibrant civic culture, the provision of non-contributory social assistance to millions of South Africans continues (Devereux, 2011) together with a prioritisation of budget

toward social assistance. Holzmann, Sherburne-Bez and Tesliuc (2003), make a compelling point that state social security is a human right, one which is not a luxury that only rich countries can afford or that drains a country's resources. It should rather be perceived as a government-led investment in its people, whilst focussing on social transformation and societal inclusion (Midgley 2012; Standing 2007). The foregoing assertion resonates with arguments for a Basic Income Grant (BIG) (Taylor, 2002; Sewpaul, 2005) and a social protection floor (Mpedi, 2008) which have merit in developing countries such as South Africa. The 2002 Taylor Commission of Inquiry recommended a comprehensive social security system, encompassing more than just traditional concepts of social security in the form of social grants, but also the development of strategies and programmes designed to ensure, collectively - a minimum acceptable living standard for all citizens (Devereux, 2011). The move away from targeted care to a basic social protection floor is imperative. And so is the call for broader strategies of poverty alleviation, and expansion of opportunities and skills training especially for women (Ntini & Sewpaul, 2017) to enhance their independence and career choices.

10.7.7 Towards a universal caregiver model

The universal caregiver model proposed by Fraser (1997) advocates for gender equity through the removal of sexist stereotypes and cultural associations of breadwinning with masculinity, and caregiving with femininity. Like women, men are not a homogeneous group and cannot be treated so. There is a need to valorise both universal breadwinner/ caregiver parity so that they are remunerated equally. Workplace reforms together with institutional norms, call for the recognition of social injustices and redistribution where there is economic injustice (Fraser, 1997). This model promotes the elevation of childbearing and childrearing to parity with paid labour, and a redress of the widespread undervaluation of skills and jobs coded as feminine, and non-White. It aims to make the difference between material, public paid work and symbolic, private, unpaid reproductive work "costless" (Fraser, 1997, p. 56). Despite men being actively involved in the public sphere, in material reproduction as paid employees, they have a role to play in parenting and the universal caregiver model may balance the roles of men and women, and destigmatise care work by men. With new father typologies (Pleck, 1987) where men are more emotionally involved in childcare, a reconfiguration of parenting roles would disassociate parenting from gender.

10.8 Overall conclusions

Much pressure is put on men and women to parent along dominant constructions of motherhood and fatherhood even when they are not middle class, or living in nuclear families.

Parenting from a distance must be recognised as valid as it is, and not measured through institutionalised notions of motherhood or hegemonic notions of fatherhood. Using all the resources at their disposal, female domestic workers were able to recreate, to some degree, a sense of co-presence in the lives of their children and tried to mother as intensively as possible. What also complicated mothering was their position in-between and betwixt motherhood and nanny-hood, which emphasized their marginal role in mothering. They were not able to fully claim a position, either as intensive mothers or as nannies. On the one hand, they were mothering their own children from a distance, and on the other, facilitating intensive mothering for their employers. They were not independent third parents of the children they cared for, because their role was reduced to that of invisible extensions of their employers (Macdonald, 2010). As working mothers, they were marginalised, and as nannies they were side-lined. They are perpetually in the margins as distance mothers and as nannies.

The findings also show discourses that underpin hegemonic masculinity, and how this affects fatherhood, which is usually couched in financial and material provision. The male participants tended to define responsible parenting along material provision. Bread winning and the ability to fulfil this role as providers was a priority, it affirmed their position as good and responsible fathers which was in line with dominant constructions of fatherhood.

Another important factor in terms of childcare was a consideration of socio-cultural practices in the form of the payment of *inhlawulo* or damages. This was a determining factor in terms of qualification to be a caregiver. Bearing in mind that the payment of damages signifies an apology for impregnating a woman out of wedlock and that it acknowledges paternity, non-payment is offensive to maternal relatives of the child. But damages are expensive, and the participants in this study could not afford the exorbitant amounts that were likely to be demanded. The father and his family members were denied contact or any rights in relation to children, even if they wanted to care for the children in their mother's absence. The two unmarried fathers who had not paid damages were essentially excluded from their children's lives, and as low-income workers, it seemed that they would never be able to pay damages. This contributes to the high number of children whose fathers are 'absent' in South Africa, and who are unable to belong to their paternal families because of socio-cultural practices. Sewpaul, Mdamba & Seepamore (forthcoming) suggest that such practices be challenged and changed so that they are in line with the current needs of families.

For the women participants, by parenting differently from a distance, they become subjects of deviancy discourses. Further, as bivalent collectivities (Fraser, 1997) who suffer not only economic injustice, but also cultural injustice as women who are poor and Black, they were marginalised as mothers, as women and as the working class. These mothers also wanted to mother intensively, but their reality dictated otherwise, therefore they parented through o*thermothers*.

There is a need to challenge the vilification of intensive mothering and the rarefication of *othermothering*. There is also a need to shift the discourse from mother-blaming, intensive mothering to *intensive parenting* for all people. The women witnessed, on a daily basis, other women - usually their 'madams' and their children - living with the advantages of intensive mothering, so whether "racist, colonialist, masculinist" (Alldred, 1996, p. 127) or not, and perhaps precisely *because* intensive mothering is associated with "members of the middle and upper classes" (Hays, 1996, p. 163) the women desired this! They were Black women, struggling in low wage labour, but they loved their children no less. To expect that they would want anything less than that deemed fit for women in middle and upper classes, would be to maintain double standards; it is a violation of their dignity, and a negation of their humanity (Seepamore & Sewpaul, forthcoming). The discourse needs to shift from the *privilege of intensive mothering* to the *right to intensive parenting* for all people in South Africa, irrespective of race, class, gender, geography, sexual orientation, family structure or family type.

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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Biographical information

1. Gender
2. Age
3. Level of education
4. How many children do you have?
5. What are their ages?
6. Gender of children
7. Where do you stay?
8. What kind of job do you do?

Caregiving arrangements

9. How long have you been living away from your children?
10. Who do you live with?
11. Where do your children stay?
12. What is the reason for not staying with your children?
13. Who is taking care of them? Why?
14. When did you last see them?
15. When do you plan to see them again?
16. How do you keep in touch with your children?
17. What is the parenting arrangement that you have? (what is your role, your partner, your caregiver, the children?)
18. What do you think is working well with this arrangement?

Relationships and parenting

19. How would you describe your relationship
    a. with your children?
    b. your partner?
    c. the caregiver of your children?
20. Do you find it easy/difficult to parent from a distance?
21. What could make it easier to parent your children?
22. How can the following make parenting from far better for you
    a. Your partner (if applicable)
    b. Employer intervention
    c. Government
    d. others
23. How is this type of parenting affecting you?
    a. Your partner
    b. Your relationship with partner?
    c. Your relationship with the caregiver?
    d. Your relationship with the children?
    e. The community?

24. What do you think you of yourself as a parent? Please elaborate.
25. Any suggestions for people who are also distance parents like yourself?
26. Any recommendations to policy makers/government?

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Study Title: Distance Parenting: The Views Of Domestic Workers, Their Partners And Key Informants In The Ethekwini Metro

Investigator: Boitumelo Seepamore

Institution: University of KwaZulu-Natal

Daytime/after hours numbers: 031 260 7640/ 072 326 4447

Good day, my name is Boitumelo Seepamore, and I am doing research for the purpose of obtaining a PhD in Social Work at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I would like to invite you and your partner to participate in this study because you live away from your children. I wish to understand how being away from your children affects you, your relationship with them and with your partner.

Taking part in this study is voluntary and there is no payment, you may also choose not to participate or leave the study at any time. Participation means that I will interview you and your partner separately for about one hour each at a time and place convenient to you. If you give permission, a tape recorder will be used so that I can go over what was said during the interviews and not have to take notes as you speak as this can be disturbing. All of your answers will be kept private and your names will not be known or named in the report that I will write. Your interview answers will only be seen by me and my supervisor but will always be kept in a locked cupboard. Before I submit the research paper, I will invite you to a meeting where the findings of the study are discussed and to verify that your responses have been captured correctly. if you are not comfortable to talk in a meeting, I can make arrangements to see you separately.

If you are comfortable with taking part in the study, please sign the consent form showing that you understand what this study is about and that you agree to participate. I am aware that some of the things we will talk about may make you feel uncomfortable. Arrangements for support and counselling will be discussed when we meet and if you decide to make use of these services, you will not be charged for them.

Thank you for taking the time to consider participating in the study.

_____

Boitumelo Seepamore (Ms)

I _____ agree to participate in the study
entitled *Distance Parenting: The Views of Domestic Workers, Their Partners And Key
Informants In The Ethekwini Metro* by Boitumelo Seepamore. I agree to being interviewed and
for a tape recorder to be used.

Date _____

Signature _____

UCWANINGO NGOKUBA UMZALI

Igama lami ngingu Boitumelo Seepamore, ngenza uphenyo lwezemfundo ngenjongo yokuzuza iziqu zobudokotela emkhakheni wezenhlalakahle esikhungweni semfundo ephakeme eNyuvesi yakwa Zulu Natal. Ngifisa ukukumema ukuba uhlanganyele ekwenziweni kocwaningo olunesihloko: *Ukuba umzali ongekho eduze nomndeni: Impilo yabasebenzi basezindlini, abalingani babo, nalabo abonolwazi olunzulu ngempilo yabo, esifundeni sase Thekwini.*

Inhloso yaloluphenyo ukuthola ukuthi abasebenzi basezindlini bazikhulisa kanjani izingane zabo bengahlali nabo. Uyaziswa ukuthi unalo ilungelo lokunqaba ukubamba iqhaza kululucwaningo uma ungahambisani nalo, futhi uyaziswa ukuthi akukho nkokholo etholakalayo ngokubamba iqhaza.

Uma uvuma ukubamba iqhaza kululucwaningo kucelwa isikhathi esingangehora lapho uzokhulumisana nalowo ocwaningayo, futhi uyaziswa ukuuthi ingxoxo iyoqoshwa ukuze kukhumbuleke okobe kukhulunywa ngakho.

Uyaqinisekiswa ukuthi leyongxoxo ayizukulalelwa nanoma imuphi umuntu ngaphandle kwaloyo obhekele ukuqhubeka kophenyo (surpervisor).Okuqoshiwe kogcin wa endaweni ephephile ehhovisi lophenyayo, futhi kuyo shatshalaliswa emuva kweminyaka emihlanu, ngokohlelo.

Uyacelwa ukuba usayine ngezansi uma uvuma ukubamba iqhaza kululucwaningo

---

IMVUME YOKUBAMBA IQHAZA OPHENYWENI LWEZEMFUNDO

- Ngiyavuma ukuthi u Nks B Seepamore ungazisiwe ngophenyo olunesihloko: *Ukuba umzali ongekho eduze nomndeni: Impilo yabasebenzi basezindlini, abalingani babo, nalabo abonolwazi olunzulu ngempilo yabo, esifundeni sase Thekwini.*
- Ngiyavuma ukuthi nginikeziwe, ngafunda futhi ngakuqonda okubhaliwe ngalolucwaningo olungenhla
- Ngiyavuma ukuthi nginikiwe isiqinisekiso sokuthi imininingwane ngami ayiyukuvezwa uma sekukhishwa umphumela wophenyo.
- Ngiyavuma futhi ukuthi ngivumelekile ukuthi nginganquma ukungaqhubeki nokubamba iqhaza ocwaningeni, ngaphandle kokusaba.

Igama   Signature / Mark or Thumbprint   Date

APPENDIX D: UKZN ETHICS CLEARANCE FORM

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

20 October 2015

Ms Boitumelo Khothatso Seepamore (215081640)
School of Applied Human Sciences – Social Work
Howard College Campus

Dear Ms Seepamore,

Protocol reference number: HSS/1467/015D
Project title: Distance Parenting: The views of domestic workers and their partners in the eThekwini Metro

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received on 29 September 2015, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol have been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Your

....
Dr Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/ms

Cc Supervisor: Professor Visanthi Sewpaul
Cc Academic Leader Research: Dr Jean Steyn
Cc School Administrator: Ms Ayanda Ntuli

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
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100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
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