MY MADAM: SAME RACE, DIFFERENT CLASS

LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS OF UNDOCUMENTED, MIGRANT BASOTHO DOMESTIC WORKERS EMPLOYED IN BLACK, MIDDLE CLASS HOUSEHOLDS

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IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF MASTERS OF ART

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ABSTRACT

Jacklyn Cock's *Maids and Madams* is a study on domestic work in the Eastern Cape which places a focus on black domestic workers who work in white families. Cock's study was ground-breaking research within labour development in South Africa (with regards to domestic service). The apartheid system regarded domestic work as that of social reproduction: domestic workers left their families to replenish and reproduce the labour power of white families, whose members were employed in a formal workplace. The contribution to this system, according to Cock (1989), was unbreakable because they did not earn enough money to disrupt the system.

The respondents of this thesis are undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers. These domestic workers have much in common with Cock's respondents. For one, they leave their homes and families to replenish the labour power of black middle class families, whose members are employed in a formal workplace. The difference between this thesis and Cock's study is that the respondents' employers are members of the black middle class. Furthermore, the employees are undocumented Basotho domestic workers. Undocumented, migrant, Basotho domestic workers are in a similarly vulnerable position to that of Cock's respondents. This dissertation engages with the extent to which *Maids and Madams* is still relevant to the living and working conditions of a new vulnerable workforce in the domestic sector: undocumented, female, Basotho domestic workers employed in black, middle-class households in Gauteng. The dissertation also finds that the relationship between the black migrant domestic worker and the black middle class employer is influenced cultural aspects of what domestic chores represent in black families, and the element of respect from employers (particularly to elderly domestic workers) or lack thereof. This dissertation underlines that the term "ousi" makes the Basotho domestic workers a collective, and not individuals. Thus the term "ousi" can be viewed as the term that takes away the identity of the domestic worker.

The theoretical framework of the research is labour process theory (LPT). The new wave of labour process theorists are much more focused on the service industry. LPT is significant to this research because its focus is on the subjective experiences of the workers. This is the core purpose of the thesis. The focus of the new wave LPT involves a shift from understanding workers at a macro level to understanding the subjective experiences of the workers (in the service industry) at a micro level. This provides an appropriate framework to

study the subjective working and living experiences of undocumented, migrant, Basotho domestic workers.

The research design is based on qualitative research. The research made use of in-depth and semi-structured interviews. The selection of respondents was done through purposive sampling. They findings of this research highlighted the central themes in the relevant literature. However, the key findings of this research also reveal tensions and contradictions that are not explored in detail in the existing literature. For example, the relationship between the black middle class employer and the black domestic worker has tensions which originate from a cultural context. The respondents of this dissertation and their employers are of the same race, yet are of a different class.

"To serve people takes dignity and intelligence. One may serve people, but one is not a servant. The kind of work that one performs does not define who one is".

- *Maid In Manhattan*, 2002

Domestic workers serve families, but they are not the families' servants.

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is focused on the living and working conditions of undocumented, migrant, female domestic workers. This is addressed through an analysis of the perceptions of undocumented, migrant, female domestic workers. No employers were interviewed. The reason for this is to provide a platform for the domestic workers (who are usually in a vulnerable position) to discuss the nature of their work based on their experiences. There is a significantly high number of women who are domestic workers. The nature of domestic service remains informal and open-ended. It is important to understand the intricate details, which are not always visible, that significantly contribute to the nature of domestic service.

The argument of this dissertation develops with the intention to answer the main objective of this dissertation: To what extent is Jacklyn Cock's seminal study, *Maids and Madams,* still relevant to the living and working conditions of live-in undocumented migrant, Basotho domestic workers employed in black middle class households?

This study examines the living and working conditions of undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers who work for black middle class families. This study uses Cock's *Maids and Madams*, locating the significance of this study to the current living and working conditions of undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers who are working in South Africa. Jacklyn Cock studied domestic workers under the apartheid system. Cock's study highlighted the vulnerability of the domestic workers under the apartheid system. The political and legislative nature of the apartheid system positioned domestic workers in a legal vacuum. The study of this dissertation focuses on undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers in South Africa. There are strong similarities between the respondents of this research and Jacklyn Cock's respondents: the respondents of this research are positioned in a legal vacuum and their vulnerability is exploited. The difference between the two sets of participants is that Cock's respondents were in a vulnerable position because they were black people under the oppressive system of apartheid. The respondents of this research are in a vulnerable position because they are not South African and are living in South Africa without the necessary legal documentation.

BusinessTech (and other media publications) published an article/articles in November 2016 stipulating that as of the 1st of December 2016, employers have to pay their domestic workers higher wages. These wages are, as of the 1st of December 2016, R1 701, 06 (Area A) and R1 562, 21 (Area B). BusinessTech (2016) further provides that there have been proposals which argue that a minimum wage should be closer to R8 000, 00 per month in order to provide the domestic workers with the bare means to live a dignified life. There are groups of researchers which have located the minimum wage for domestic service to reasonably be between R4 000 and R6 000 (BusinessTech, 2016). To most of the respondents of this dissertation, this wage increase does not include them in practice, therefore does not affect them.

South African law, in relation to domestic service, has developed since 1994 with the intention to minimise the vulnerability of domestic service. One of the ways in which the vulnerability of domestic service is minimised is through the regulation of working hours and wages of domestic workers. Wages are not the only factors which result in domestic workers being vulnerable.

There is not much literature on undocumented migrant workers in South Africa. This dearth of literature on undocumented migrant workers in South Africa is a reflection of the uncontrolled and perhaps unknown realities of the respective participants. Literature has not covered much on the exploitation of migrant workers in South Africa. This dissertation did not intend to cover the vulnerability of migrant workers, but the findings of this dissertation have observed the elements of the vulnerability of migrant domestic workers. Furthermore, there is not enough pressure put on employers to register their domestic workers. The laws put in place to deal with employers who do not register their domestic workers are largely ineffective. The result of this is the large number of undocumented migrant workers in South Africa who exist in a legal vacuum. This dissertation underlines the factors that contribute to the vulnerable nature of domestic service. The dissertation aims to discuss these factors from the perspective of domestic workers themselves.

Domestic work consists of gardeners, drivers and/or persons who look after children, the aged, sick, frail or disabled in a private household (UIF Solutions). There are limitations on the protection of the rights of migrant domestic workers, particularly if they do not possess a work permit. To a significant extent, the vulnerability of domestic workers, which Jacklyn

Cock highlighted in *Maids and Madams*, remains a defining characteristic of domestic work, especially for those who migrate to South Africa from other countries.

The domestic workers who are the focus of this thesis are migrant Basotho domestic workers who have come from Lesotho and into South Africa. The respondents are specifically domestic workers who work in private households as cleaners. The sample respondents used is migrant, Basotho domestic workers who are working for black middle class employers.

The ten respondents are human beings who have families and other intricate details about their lives which form a strong part of their identity first, before they are domestic workers. This dissertation underlines the matters which are concerned with the living and working conditions of migrant domestic workers in South Africa, but I also wish to make it a personal dissertation which is dedicated to these women.

This topic is very close to many people's realities. There are many children who grew up and still grow up in black middle class families who have been practically raised by Basotho domestic workers. As the children grow into young adults, they too hire migrant Basotho domestic workers and follow the examples of their parents in terms of how they treat their domestic workers. Jacklyn Cock argued that "*domestic service is significant in that it is an important point of incorporation into urban industrial society for black women; Many domestic workers are migrant for whom urban employment has become an 'escape route' from harsh grinding poverty and a strategy for survival in an increasingly complex and hostile society*" (Cock, 1989: 11). Although written in 1989, this is a very relevant phenomenon in 2016, particularly for the respondents of this research. Not only is this a relevant phenomenon, it is also a growing phenomenon. The growth of the black middle class is growing the number of migrant domestic workers being hired in South Africa.

The dissertation also draws on Dalita's (2009) dissertation which focused on African employers and South African domestic workers. Dalita's research addressed the gap in the literature on the relationship that African employers have with their employees. It is a significant study because it provides a platform to discuss the relations between African employers and African domestic workers. This research aims to address the gap in the literature on the relationship between undocumented, migrant, Basotho, female domestic workers and their black middle class employers.

The realities of the respondents, like many other undocumented migrant domestic workers in South Africa, have been turned into opportunities of exploitation and illegal businesses –

contributing to the criminal economy and existing in secrecy. The supply of the undocumented migrant domestic workers, particularly Basotho domestic workers, is greater than the demand for them. The minimal legislative interference has led to these migrant workers being put in a position to be taken greater advantage of. This dissertation will discuss this further, combining findings and literature.

This dissertation specifically communicates from the perspective of domestic workers. They are a vulnerable workforce who seldom have a platform to discuss their grievances or even their version of events when it comes to their jobs. No employers were interviewed.

All the respondents of this research were undocumented. What does the change and increase in minimum wage for domestic workers mean for undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers? The realities of domestic workers are very much similar – migrant domestic worker or not. The increased regulation of their minimum wage has a direct impact on the domestic workers' living circumstances.

Thesis outline

Chapter two outlines the literature review of this dissertation. It discusses the significant points of this study such as a general overview on domestic service in South Africa, the current working and living conditions of domestic workers, domestic work as a process of social reproduction, and the nature of domestic work.

Chapter three provides the research design of the dissertation. It delivers the data collection method, the sampling method, and the challenges of the research. It further engages in the ethical considerations of the dissertation.

Chapter four introduces the general findings of the research. It is followed by chapter five which presents the findings of the living conditions of the migrant Basotho domestic workers. Chapter six is an analysis of the living conditions of migrant, Basotho domestic workers which are presented in chapter five.

Chapter seven presents the general findings of the working conditions of migrant, Basotho domestic workers. It is followed by chapters eight and nine, which provide an analysis of the working and living conditions of the migrant Basotho domestic workers.

Chapter ten concludes the dissertation. The conclusion of the dissertation essentially stipulates that Jacklyn Cock's study, *Maids & Madams,* is still relevant to the living and working conditions of undocumented, migrant, Basotho domestic workers.

Each chapter of this dissertation is designed to speak to the main objective of the dissertation. New wave LPT provides a useful platform to understand the living and working experiences of workers at a micro level. The micro level directly communicates the intricate and detailed experiences of, specifically, the respondents: undocumented, migrant, Basotho domestic workers. Jacklyn Cock's book, *Maids and Madams,* is the primary reference for this dissertation. It compares the experiences of Cock's respondents to the respondents of this research. The dissertation thus aims to evaluate whether or not the experiences of Cock's respondents are still relevant to the living and working experiences/conditions of the respondents of this research.

CHAPTER TWO:
VULNERABILITY OF DOMESTIC WORK

2.1. Introduction

Domestic services are regarded as one of the least prestigious of all occupation. Cock places domestic service in a cultural context as well as in an economic system in order to locate the reason behind domestic service being regarded as the least prestigious of all occupations. Cock highlights that the activity of sweeping the floor may be a ritual which is used to humiliate and punish an individual in the army (Cock, 1989: 57). Within the cultural context, child-minding and water-carrying have been allocated to young children, old and handicapped people of either sex, and those who are physically weak or socially marginal to be involved in more valued tasks (Cock, 1989: 57). This is an indication that domestic work chores are usually reserved for people who are regarded to be in need of being "useful". It is also an indication of the insinuation that it is work which can be performed by "anyone". It is not like other professions where specialists are usually required. Perhaps this is the beginning of the vulnerability of domestic service.

The focus of this research is to evaluate the living and working conditions of undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers. It intends to evaluate the extent to which Cock's study, Maids and Madams, relevant to the living and working conditions of undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers. The use of Jacklyn Cock's book *Maids and Madams* is essential to this research because it is the primary literature in the study of domestic work in South Africa; it is ground-breaking research.

This chapter is divided into five sections. The first section will provide a general overview on domestic service in South Africa. This section reflects the importance of domestic work, in South African households and conversely highlight the vulnerability of domestic service regardless of its necessity. Domestic work is an intricate part of the replenishment of labour and this is where its importance comes from. Domestic work provides employment for a large number of people. This section will assess the key feature of domestic work which differentiates domestic service from other professions. This section further places domestic

work on a global scale and briefly discusses the social position of domestic workers on a global scale. Section one provides a brief discussion on the social position and vulnerability of domestic service not only in South Africa, but in other countries as well. Lastly, section one of the literature review briefly discusses the labour process theory and the service sector in the labour process theory.

Section two provides a discussion of migrant domestic workers in South Africa. This section engages in the current working and living conditions of domestic workers based on media reports and recent articles that have been written regarding Basotho domestic workers. These matters affect, directly and indirectly, the working conditions as well as the living conditions of Basotho domestic workers in South Africa. It further provides a discussion of the working conditions of migrant domestic workers in the Middle East (this is included with the intention to highlight the migrant domestic worker problem on a global scale and underline that South Africa is not the only country that is faced with this social issue).

This section also provides a discussion of the reasons why migrants choose to leave their countries in the first place to work in South Africa – particularly focusing on the migrant domestic workers from Lesotho. The section further engages with South African law that speaks to domestic workers. A study conducted by Kiwanuka *et al* (2015) on migrant domestic workers is used in this section to provide a perspective of the domestic workers themselves on their working conditions, hours of work, remuneration, lack of social benefits, and work dynamics. Furthermore, there is a discussion about the current policy framework, which touches on the immigration policy in South Africa.

Section three focuses on domestic work as part of the processes of social reproduction. This section outlines the position of domestic service under the capitalist system as well as how domestic activity itself can be regarded as unpaid labour and thus not priced in the market place. This is an important aspect of this research because it speaks to the question of the vulnerability of domestic service. Furthermore, it touches on the element of aesthetic labour required in domestic service. By discussing its role/importance in the labour process. Section three looks at how the demographic composition of domestic work is/was structured by the state.

Section four seeks to explain South African labour legislation which is relevant to domestic work. It highlights the powerlessness of an individual who is in domestic service. This section examines Cock's (1989) argument that domestic work, during the apartheid era,

existed in a 'legal vacuum'. This argument is relevant to this research because the Basotho domestic workers, who are working in South African households, seem to also exist/work in a legal vacuum. However, for a different reason and/or under different circumstances than Cock's respondents. Furthermore, this section discusses the living and working conditions of live-in domestic work with respect to labour legislation before 1994.

Section five discusses the nature of domestic work. This section discusses the nature of work in domestic service by looking at employment, the household as a production unit, and the notion of domestic workers being 'one-of-the-family'. Domestic work tends to be an isolated activity. This section discusses this isolation by engaging with the dynamics of the employment relationship between the employer and employee within the working environment. Section five assesses the nature of domestic work in South Arica post the apartheid era. Finally, the section engages with what Fish refers to as the 'new' employer, who is African and middle class, and the literature on black middle class in South Africa. It zooms into the employment relationship 'between the domestic worker and the African employer. It is important to note that, as Cock has brought to our attention, black employers are not a new phenomenon in domestic work.

2.2. General overview of the literature on domestic work

In the South African context, domestic work represents the oldest and most common form of wage labour for black women. The increase in black middle class women and in women going into formal employment, there is an increase in employers hiring domestic workers. Furthermore, the mining industry which brought black men into the mines and away from their homes and families: women went into domestic service. Therefore, it makes sense that there was still such a significant number of black women who were still in domestic service. According to Delport (1995: 9), this is a form of inequality based on gender within the profile of a domestic worker. It is important to note and bear in mind that domestic work is not, nor has it ever been, an exclusively female domain. In Zambia, the vast majority of domestic workers are men and women are considered to be unsuitable for this job and/or position (Delport, 1995: 11). Cock (1989: 70) also notes that in fourteenth-and-fifteenth-century England, sons of upper-class families performed domestic service in aristocratic households. The point is that domestic service has been, and still is, performed by men. The care-giving aspect of domestic service is dominated by women but there are men available in this aspect of domestic service. Literature has underlined that in South Africa, domestic work has always

been performed by people who were in a vulnerable social and economic position unlike England, where during the fourteenth-and-fifteenth century, sons of upper-class families performed domestic work. Domestic work has changed over the years, yet in South Africa, it has always been a position that was filled by vulnerable people – both male and female.

The domestic work profession is said to be a "highly feminised sector" (ILO 2013b). The sector is characterised by its predominantly black female force, which originates from disadvantaged backgrounds, limited exposure to formal education as well as a dire need to survive on a daily basis (Marais & van Wyk, 2015: 65). Cock (1989) maintains that female domestic workers are more exploited than male domestic workers because of the system of gender domination or patriarchy. Cock (1989) further expresses that female workers generally received lower wages and they usually have to continue to perform unpaid domestic labour in their own homes as well. The employment context of domestic work underlines the fact that the feelings of fear render the domestic workers powerless. The sense of institutionalised fear has evolved over generations and is deeply rooted as well as internalised in the domestic work sector (Marais & van Wyk, 2015: 67).

The South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers (SADSAWU) advocates for the effective implementation of labour legislation through education (Ally, 2009 Does SADSAWU have any policies regarding undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers? There is not much literature on this. On 6 and 7 of March 2015, SADSAWU held a strategy development workshop for organising and recruiting migrant domestic workers in South Africa (ILO 2015). The action plan that was discussed at this workshop stipulated that SADSAWU should formulate a pre-migration awareness strategy which informs migrant domestic workers about their rights in South Africa (ILO 2015). The plan further notes that SADSAWU should alert migrant domestic workers that they can participate in the activities of SADSAWU (ILO 2015). The programme further provided information on how SADSAWU should recruit and organise migrant domestic workers (ILO 2015). There were no discussions at the workshop on how to incorporate undocumented migrant workers into the union. Nevertheless, SADSAWU did recognise that the greatest challenge in implementing the necessary programmes for migrant workers is that most of them are undocumented (ILO 2015). It was further noted that South African immigration policy has no legal provisions for the migration of low-skilled workers such as migrant domestic workers (ILO 2015).

This is one of many documented policies that indicate the limits that exist in the protection of undocumented, migrant workers. The lack of legal provisions for the migration of low-skilled workers such as migrant domestic workers raises the question of the legality of the migrant domestic workers in South Africa. Cock (1989) stated that domestic workers as well as farm workers were excluded from the definition of "worker" in the labour legislation of South Africa and therefore were unprotected. The undocumented, migrant, Basotho domestic workers appear to be unprotected. The current labour legislation in South Africa does not explicitly exclude undocumented, migrant domestic workers from the definition of a 'worker'. However, the practicality of the nature of the undocumented, migrant domestic workers' living and working conditions seems to be unprotected as the workers which Cock writes about. This is an important note for this dissertation; *Maids and Madams* is relevant to the current living and working conditions of undocumented, migrant, Basotho domestic workers.

2.2.1. General overview of domestic work on a global scale

Marais and van Wyk (2015: 64) note that Africa is the third largest employer of domestic workers globally. Marais & van Wyk (2015: 64) cite the international labour organisation's (ILO) global and regional estimates, concluding that there are approximately 3.8 million female domestic workers employed across the continent (ILO cited in Marais &van Wyk, 2015: 64).

In the Middle East, domestic work exists in a hierarchy. The hierarchy of domestic workers is usually distinctively organised according to class and race (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 2). Upper-class families employ Asian women, Filipinas or Indonesian women to be specific (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 2). Middle class families employ South Asian and/or African domestics who are generally paid lower wages (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 2).

In the event that a family employs more than one domestic worker, the division of labour between the two domestic workers is determined according to their race. Asian women are usually employed to care for children and the elderly. African women are employed to perform cleaning and cooking tasks (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 2). Again, we see the black/African woman in the cooking and cleaning tasks of domestic work. Does the race of the women play a significant role in the vulnerable nature of domestic work which they are subject to?

Domestic workers in the Middle East, as in other countries, are not all female. There is a significant preference for female domestic workers. Migrant male domestic workers may be employed for cleaning, cooking and care-taking, but they are more often guards, drivers, and gardeners within households (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 2).

Employers who hire domestic workers may have a significant preference for women, despite the availability of men. However, there is a societal and cultural expectation to have women at home, performing the social reproductive work, and men are expected to be working in the "world".

Several researchers frame their interpretation of the experiences of migrant domestic workers through the concept of "the home and the world" (Frantz, 2008; Moukarbel, 2009; Moors et al, 2009; de Regt, 2010; Webner & Johnson, 2011; Fernandez, 2011; Liebelt, 2011; and Sabban, 2012). The concept of the home and the world speaks to the yearnings, aspirations, fears, and disappointments of the women and thus functions as a metaphor for the 'intimate' relationships that are formed by the domestic workers between self and others (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 2). The home is the private sphere where family, caring and emotions are typically signified as the natural domain of women (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 3). The world outside of the home is the public sphere which is assumed to be the legitimate domain of men (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 3). The apartheid era saw the mine rush where men were called to mining – working outside of the house. The women were to stay at home and perform house chores. Their job opportunities were being domestic workers and replenishing the labour of their employers. This paragraph is an important paragraph because the domination of women in domestic service indicates that there is not a lot that has changed from when Cock (1989) was writing to now. The home is still a female dominated space (when referring to the workplace) while men are encouraged to work in the outside world.

2.2.1.1.Working conditions of migrant domestic workers in the Middle East

Contract domestic workers enter into formal employment contracts, which are usually arranged and set-up through private employment agencies that operate collaboratively across source and destination countries (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 9). The contracts outline salaries, hours of employment, duration of the contract, and their rights (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 9).

However, it is essential to note that in the event that a contract is signed predeparture in the source country, it is not legally binding in the destination country (Fernandez & de Regt,

2014: 9). The practical and legally binding ideal is that another contract is drawn up in the destination country; this is a local legal obligation that is not always followed (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 10).

Live-in domestic workers' work in a totalising private sphere in which, ironically, they have no privacy, space for the "self", nor relationships with people who are not their employer (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 12). In order for the domestic workers to find privacy, they must leave the employer's home (which is their place of work) and move into public places such as parks or malls (Moors et al 2009 cited in Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 12).

Live-in migrant domestic workers live with employers and this produces considerable pressure on the domestic workers because the employers can constrain the worker's behaviour during work time as well as during their off time (Fernandez, 2014: 57). The foreignness of migrant domestic workers in the Middle East further extends to a double exclusion from the public sphere in the context of a political engagement, i.e. first as women, and second, because the public sphere is generally constituted as "out of bounds" for migrant domestic workers as well as all migrant workers (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 12). In addition to the above stated exclusion, the workers' exclusion from the entitlements of citizenship status renders them invisible as political subjects in the public sphere (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 13). The consequence of this fundamental exclusion is that the workers are unable to participate in "rational, democratic dialogue" or any other forms of decision making in the public sphere (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 13).

Most employers confiscate the migrant domestic workers' passports in order to control their movement and ensure that they do not abscond (Fernandez, 2014: 57). The confiscation of papers ultimately limits the women's freedom to move outside of the employers' homes and thus limits their ability to abscond.

2.2.2. General overview of domestic work in South Africa

South Africa's employment rate for domestic workers is the highest within the African region; it has an estimated engagement of 924 000 workers of whom only 40 000 are male (Stats SA, cited in Marais & van Wyk, 2015: 64). The domestic work sector provides a platform of work opportunities for those who have limited education, are unemployed, are confronted by an impoverished existence, and lack social support. Empowerment remains an elusive concept. Male domestic workers themselves feel emasculated by having to take

orders from a white 'madam'. They experience great hardships when saving for lobola from the extremely low wage which is paid in this industry (Delport, 1995: 12).

Cock discusses the concept of intersectionality of the black woman. She is oppressed because she is black (under the apartheid system), she is oppressed because she is a woman, and is subjected to the violence of poverty. How she and the madam experience chores is different: the madam can outsource the dirty work she refuses to perform. An element of this phenomenon seems to appear here as well, except in a class differentiation of labour in domestic service. Two women in domestic service yet the dirty work is outsourced to the black/African domestic worker. There seems to be a pattern in the black race: African in the Middle East, black people under the apartheid system, and the respondents of this research: undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers. The point which is being made here is that this element of race playing such a significant part in domestic work, particularly in South Africa, is important. It is historical and the oppression and intersectionality which Cock (1989) discusses is still relevant in the working conditions of this dissertation's respondents.

2.3.Migrant domestic workers in South Africa

The sense of 'illegality' criminalises undocumented migrant workers and thus grants legal legitimacy to discrimination and deliberate exclusion of undocumented migrant workers (Machinya, 2016: 1). According to Machinya (2016: 1), the criminalisation of undocumented migrant domestic workers creates legalised 'unfreedoms', thus producing undocumented migrant workers as a subordinate workforce that exists without a formal legal status (Machinya, 2016: 1).

Machinya (2016) based his research on undocumented migrant workers from Zimbabwe who worked and lived in Witbank. His research focused on the experiences of 'illegality' in the everyday lives of the undocumented migrant workers from Zimbabwe.

Some employers are portrayed as having a general preference for undocumented migrant workers because their illegal status does not leave them with many options; this therefore makes them a cheaper, hardworking and more obedient work-force compared to South Africans (Machinya, 2016: 2).

Female domestic workers from Lesotho, often referred to as "ousi", work in South Africa in large numbers (Hlemanzini, 2014: 1). The exploitation of migrant workers from Lesotho is to the extent that domestic work agents are informally operated in the back rooms of houses in

Soweto (Hlemanzini, 2014: 1). eNCA has reported on the informal agencies that now exist for domestic workers from Lesotho. According to the eNCA report, employers pay a "finder's fee", while domestic workers are charged a registration fee as well as a fee for training and accommodation (eNCA, 2015: 1). The passports of the domestic workers are confiscated (eNCA, 2015: 1). Migrants from Lesotho are given 30-days to stay in South Africa (Makoro, 2015: 41). The immigration Act, which came into effect in 2014, provides that should these 30 days be exceeded, the respective immigrant will be declared undesirable for a year, i.e. he/she will be unable to enter South Africa for a year (Makoro, 2015 :41).

There has to be socio-economic and political reasons that explain the high level of Basothos migrating to South Africa. Neo-liberal approaches view migration as an integral part of development as well as an inevitable process of levelling out inequalities in economic opportunity (Molefe, 2009: 6). The new economics of labour migration school (NELM) views migration as a family strategy to overcome imperfections in insurance and credit markets in credit-constrained rural areas as well as a strategy for managing household risk (Lucas & Stark, 1985; Taylor et al. 2003). Migration is also viewed as development failure and thus dependency theorists maintain that migration is a symptom, not a cause, of the uneven development that arises because of the exploitation of peripheral economies by the core (Hette, 1990). This point communicates to the fact that the unequal developments in South Africa have caused townships and informal settlements to be dependent on the cities. The people in the townships and rural areas are the domestic workers in the cities; they are part of the workforce which does the menial work that keeps the city functioning. The domestic workers work in the houses and homes of the city. This communicates to the above discussed concept of the 'home and the world' as well as the intersectionality that Cock (1989) writes about. The respondents of this dissertation are subject to both concepts.

The minimum wage for domestic workers in Lesotho was confirmed R468.00 in 2014 (Makoro, 2015: 37). South Africa differs to the advantage of the domestic workers in this regard as it has a substantially higher minimum wage. It is unlawful to pay a domestic worker below the prescribed minimum wage (SD7). When domestic workers work overtime (more than the ordinary hours prescribed in a week), the domestic workers must be paid overtime (SD7). Overtime payment is one and a half times the rate for ordinary hours (SD7).

Cock's (1989: 30) research in the Eastern Cape shows that there was no bargaining over wages between domestic workers and their employers. There is no published research that

contains evidence indicating a change in this finding by Cock. Wages appeared to be settled entirely by the employer and this reflects the vulnerable position of domestic workers (Cock, 1989: 30). The introduction of minimum wages has involved the law in the levels of payment for domestic workers.

In the current circumstances, Basotho migrants have had to resort to domestic work as an alternative source of income due to (among others) retrenchments on the South African mines (Francis 2010: 168). In order to ensure the survival of their households, given the retrenchment of Basotho men from the mines, Basotho women (who are largely uneducated and mostly skilled in household chores) had to resort to paid domestic work in South Africa because Lesotho lacked job opportunities and when jobs were available, they paid very low wages (Molefe, 2009 :33).

Cyrus (cited in Lutz, 2008: 178 – 179) explains the migration opportunity structure which is shaped by accessibility and connectivity. Geographical distance is a characteristic of accessibility (Cyrus cited in Lutz, 2008: 179). Lesotho is recognised as a poor country with a gross national product (GNP) per capita of $540 in 2000, which is comparable with the average annual GNP per capita for Sub-Saharan Africa ($500), but is well below South Africa's annual GNP per capita of $3020 (Hassan & Ojo, 2002: 1). Eighty percent of Lesotho's population lives in rural areas (Hassan & Ojo, 2002: 1). The country's economy is defined by limited agricultural and pastoral production as well as light manufacturing of clothing, textiles, and leather (Hassan & Ojo, 2002: 2). The economy of the country is further built on declining remittances from Lesotho mineworkers working in South Africa as well as the receipt of royalties for supplying water to South Africa (Hassan & Ojo, 2002: 2).

The migrant labour system in South Africa is largely influenced and perhaps an inherent effect of the mineral revolution of the late 19th century. The mineral revolution spoken of is an indication of migrant labour in South Africa not only referring to workers who come into South Africa from neighbouring countries; it is also a system of controlling African workers within South Africa (Glover, 2015: 5). Migrant labour provides abundant cheap labour for employers. Migrant workers were initially almost all men who needed to earn a wage (Glover, 2015: 8). At a later stage, women who came into South Africa from neighbouring countries became migrant workers, chiefly doing domestic work for white families (Glover, 2015: 10).

The ILO's studies show that there is a large number of workers who fill domestic jobs; many of these migrant workers who fill domestic care jobs are women from poor countries with few employment options and/or opportunities (ILO, 2013). Most migrant domestic workers are not protected by labour laws and are vulnerable to exploitation.

The logic in the sequence of the topic began at the point where the sense of illegality felt or experienced by the undocumented, migrant, domestic workers granted the legitimacy to the discrimination against them. The point of employers being portrayed to have a general preference for the undocumented migrant workers follows the above spoken of legitimacy to the discrimination against them, and is further followed by the argument of the exploitation of the migrants. This strategically underlines the vulnerability of the respondents. The development of the logic of the sequence of topics directs itself to the uneven development of countries, underlining that the socio-economic and political consequence of this uneven development results to the poorer people resorting to domestic work and its nature for the purpose of employment.

2.3.1. (Im)migration control in South Africa

South Africa attracts many migrant workers who are looking for better opportunities because South Africa has economic dominance in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) (Machinya, 2016: 1).

The above stated point is significant and can reasonably be a reason why there is a large number of undocumented, migrant workers in South Africa.

Migrant illegality serves as a lynchpin of oppression for undocumented migrant workers. The oppressive nature of everyday governance of illegal migrant workers produces the migrants as economically and politically precarious; they live under the constant threat of apprehension and deportation (Machinya, 2016: 1). Machinya (2016: 1) highlights that the threat of deportation essentially forces undocumented migrant workers in a life of temporal-spatial imprisonment which confines the workers to a never-ending cycle of oscillating between home and work which therefore segregates them from the wider society. He also explains that migrant illegality constrains the free movement of the migrants, thus complicating their ability to find job opportunities in the labour market which therefore further makes them a form of an entrapped labour force (Machinya, 2016: 1). Machinya (2016: 1) concludes that deportability is a political-legal constraint that essentially hinders

undocumented migrant workers from selling their labour power in the labour market and thus makes them a part of unfree labour.

2.3.1.1.Reasons for migration

It is relevant to understand the reason why migrants choose to migrate; more importantly, it is important to understand why people migrate without the necessary documentation. Migrant workers usually live in their country of migration under unfavourable conditions. Undocumented migrant workers find themselves in an even more unfavourable position because there are limits to the extent to which the law can protect them. Despite the unfavourable conditions which the migrant workers live in, there is still a large number of the people who migrate. The primary reason for migration, particularly in the case of domestic workers, is to find employment in another country (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 2). The intention of finding employment in another country is to improve the domestic workers' livelihoods. The lack of secure livelihoods in rural areas and the poor regional economy are catalyst factors that assist in explaining the motivation for people to move (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 2).

2.3.1.2.Choice of destination

The choice of destination may vary from one person to another, however the choice of destination is interesting to know. If the above paragraph is true, that people migrate primarily to find jobs, then perhaps one should evaluate the other country's employment rate. A significantly motivating factor of the choice of destination is the presence of social networks in a particular place. The social networks facilitate employment, to an extent, in that particular place (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015.: 3). Other issues include the lack of job opportunities in other places and/or, in some cases, the proximity to borders for the purpose of visa renewals (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015.: 3).

2.4.South African law on migrant domestic workers

Domestic work in South Africa is largely informal and is negotiated outside of labour laws and regulation. Migrant domestic workers usually find their jobs through illegal agents or their connections. In other words, unemployed migrant domestic workers may know employed domestic workers who are aware of people who are looking to employ domestic workers and thus refer the unemployed domestic workers. Recruitment is performed mainly through word of mouth and agreed to verbally between employer and employee (Kiwanuka *et al*, 2015: 1). Job requirements are vague (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 1). Termination of

employment is often carried out without notice (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 1). Migration has consistently been one of the underlying features of the domestic work sector in South Africa, either as internal migration from rural areas to cities during most of the twentieth century or more recently as cross border migration (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 2).

2.4.1. Conditions of work

Four of the respondents which Kiwanuka *et al* (2015: 3) had written contracts of employment; the other respondents either had no contract at all or referred to a verbal agreement between themselves and their employers. Many of the respondents, according to Kiwanuka *et al,* (2015: 3) did not know what a contract was, why it was necessary, or how to ask for one.

2.4.2. Hours of work

Kiwanuka *et al* (2015: 4) states that their study's findings revealed widespread transgression by the employers of legislation relating to hours of work. Sixteen of the twenty-seven respondents were working more than the stipulated eight or nine hours a day with no overtime pay (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 4).

2.4.3. Remuneration

The salaries of domestic workers range from R500 to slightly more than R3000 (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 4). Wages are not tied to any standards generally speaking, there is no set amount for each day actually worked. In most cases, paid leave also did not apply (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 4). The job satisfaction amongst the respondents in this particular study was significantly based on the amount of money that they earned to the extent that some respondents were willing to work longer hours if it meant more pay (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 4).

2.4.4. Lack of employment benefits

Employment benefits (such as pension schemes, workers' compensation for disability and injuries at work, unemployment insurance, medical aid schemes, maternity and sick leave) were almost non-existent (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 4). Some domestic workers are not registered for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF); and foreign-born workers are not entitled to unemployment benefits unless they have permanent resident or refugee status (Kiwanuka *et al*, 2015: 4).

2.4.5. Work dynamics

A key issue of workplace dynamics, generally speaking, is the relationship between employer and employee (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 5). This significantly determined working conditions and thus had a significant impact on the overall job satisfaction of the employee (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 5).

2.4.6. Current policy framework

Policies regarding domestic work touch on the ILO's convention concerning decent work for domestic workers, which came into force in 2013, is the ILO's documented as ILO's first ever convention covering domestic workers and recognising their economic role (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 5). South Africa and Mauritius are the only SADC countries to have ratified the convention (Kiwanuka *et al,* 2015: 5).

2.4.7. Immigration policy

An employee needs to provide evidence that the employer has advertised the position and that a contract has been signed before they can apply for a work permit to work in South Africa as a domestic worker (Immigration Act 13 of 2002). Because of the obstacles to foreign-born workers obtaining work permits for low skilled work, a large number of domestic workers either work illegally in the country on a visitor's visa (which they renew every month or every three months by crossing a border and then crossing back into South Africa); or they are undocumented migrants with no permission to be in South Africa (Immigration Act 13 of 2002). Immigrants who do not comply with the Immigration Act and Refugee Act risk the possibility of detention and deportation.

Women are moving into cities and migrating to other countries with the purpose to seek and find employment in the domestic work sector. Many women who enter into domestic work come from poverty-stricken backgrounds. They move to places outside of the homes and into domestic work with the intention to find/seek a better life.

2.4.8. Domestic work and South African labour law

The powerlessness of the position of a domestic worker is said to be fostered by the domestic worker's perception and control over their work life (Marais & van Wyk, 2015: 66). Likewise, the strengthening of the position of the domestic worker and empowerment in the domestic work context is fostered by the domestic worker's perception and control over their

work life (Marais & van Wyk, 2015: 66). Domestic workers are employers which are disempowered and have been disempowered for many decades because of the nature of their work as well as the employment relationships between domestic workers and their employers. This is perhaps the case with other vulnerable workers. The difference between other workers and domestic workers, particularly the respondents of this dissertation, is that they are not seen to be 'legal workers'. The power dynamics which exist in the relationship between a domestic worker and the employer is of the nature that can essentially put domestic workers at the risk of retaliation as well as potential job losses should the domestic workers confront their employer/s on issues which relate to employment (Mkandawire-Valhmu *et al* 2009 cited in Marais & van Wyk, 2015: 67).

Cock (1989) argues that domestic work existed in a "legal vacuum". A legal vacuum is a situation where there are no laws which address those particular circumstances (Cock, 1989: 6). In the case of domestic workers, there were no laws stipulating the minimum wages, hours of work or conditions of service but only laws regulating the movement of domestic worker in urban white areas (Cock, 1989: 6). Cock (1989) further stipulates that the failure of protective legislature resulted in the exploitative practices of the employers.

The live-in domestic worker was common during this time as legal accommodation was limited for 'natives' in Johannesburg (Dalita, 2009: 12). The accommodation provided for the domestic was a basic one room structure in the employer's back yard which contained a bed, chair, a table, and sometimes, a shower. (Cock, 1989: 35). Cock (1989) argues that the employer used the living arrangements as a way of controlling the 'maid'; the employers controlled the number of visitors that the domestic workers had and the living arrangement meant that work never stopped because employers could call the domestic workers anytime when they needed them (Dalita, 2009: 12).

Even though the literature portrayed domestic workers as passive victims to the exploitation from their employers, domestic workers were able to exercise their resistance in more concealed ways, from stealing the positions of their employers to taking longer to finish chores (Cock, 1980). Ally (2009) argued that domestic workers strategically used the intimate nature of the job to independently control their work. The domestic worker used these personal relationships to negotiate working hours, remuneration and leave. The lack of labour rights forced domestics to find strategies for themselves that would help them deal with their own situations (Dalita, 2009: 13). The lack of citizenship of domestic workers during

apartheid created a dependency on their employers and did not allow for the workers to be able to form collective and organise against their employers (Dalita, 2009: 13). However, this did not mean that domestic workers did not have more forceful and overt forms of resistance. The South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU) was launched in 1986 was and still is the largest domestic workers' union. The main aim of the union was, and still is, to bring improvements in the relationship between workers and employers so as to be able to negotiate better working conditions (Ally, 2008: 5).

2.5.Theoretical consideration and hidden meanings

King takes on a political stance with regards to domestic service; highlighting that racism perpetuates itself in a disguised format and thus forms an integral part of the 'hidden meanings' of the domestic service relationship (King, 2007: 19). King (2007: 27) highlights that the intimacy, daily reaffirmation of racial and class differences, and the deferential manner expected all to compel the domestic workers to see themselves through the "gaze" of their employer.

King (2007: 27) cites Fanon as she considers the 'Negro' question and in doing so, adds further detail to the perspective of the 'other' (Fanon, 1993 cited in King, 2007: 27). King refers to Fanon's acknowledgement of white ideologies of supremacy having left significant scars on the black psyche; underlining that regardless of the sincerity, the Negro is the slave of the past (Fanon 1993: 225 cited in King, 2007: 27). Fanon concluded that the only destiny for the black man is white (Fanon 1993: 11 cited in King, 2007: 27). King takes from Fanon's conclusion that what Fanon writes about is still pertinent to the domestic service relationship because, according to King, the position of a black servant is faced on a daily basis with a white world which is not theirs (King, 2007: 27). As the mistress is the 'other' to the master, the domestic worker is the 'other' to the mistress: the relationships are founded in power inequalities and they in turn feed and maintain the power differential (King, 2007: 28).

King's argument, stated above, is relevant in Cock's study for example, where the employer is white and the domestic worker is black. However, in the case of this dissertation where both the domestic worker and employer are black, it is understood differently. The domestic worker is still the servant and the domestic workers still see themselves through the gaze of the employer. However, the employers have adopted the white culture of having "servants" as opposed to "helpers". The concept of domestic workers working for black employers is not new, it has happened before. But, based on the findings of this dissertation, the treatment that

the black middle class employers give their domestic workers is either the same as how white employers treat domestic workers, if not worse. Furthermore, the fact that the domestic workers prefer white employers because the domestic workers accept the treatment better from white employers as opposed to black employers proves King's argument.

2.6.Political economy of South Africa

South African domestic workers were not able to bridge the poverty gap with their remuneration from domestic service (King, 2007: 74). There were no viable employment alternatives for domestic workers to move into; a significant feature of modern industry in the rationalisation of its production processes with the intention to maximise capital and a streamlining of its workforce (King, 2007: 74). Domestic workers were aware of their position in the labour market, aware of the precariousness of their position and they thus resorted to remaining domestic servants (King, 2007: 75).

However, King makes the point by stating that "*If the South African industry moved further towards capital intensity rather than labour intensity, job opportunities would be for the specialised rather than the majority*" (King, 2007: 82). A valid point made by King (2007: 83) is that black South African women were initially situated in the informal and secondary labour markets. Black domestic workers are still situated in the informal and secondary labour markets. Domestic service was and still is the largest employer of African women. The position of domestic workers is unclear in the labour as it is not referred to as a "profession".

All the rights of domestic workers have been in place since the promulgation of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) of 1983, but had not been comprehensively implemented for black workers until the ANC's accession in 1994 (King, 2007: 87). The intention of bringing domestic service into the jurisdiction of the BCEA was an attempt to formalise the work arrangements of domestic workers and give them protected legal rights (King, 2007: 87).

2.7.Domestic Work: Aesthetic labour and social reproduction

Lan highlights that the work in the service sector tends to overlap with the personal life as the private and the public life become blurred and mutually penetrated (Lan, 2001: 98); this is exactly what is highlighted in the vast majority of domestic service research. These are factors which contribute to aesthetic labour. There is a direct reference to the personal life of the domestic worker overlapping with her professional life. Live-in domestic workers live

with their employers, therefore, everything which happens in their lives outside of their working hours, happen in their place of work. For example, in the event that a domestic worker has a visitor, the respective visitor has to visit the domestic worker in the domestic worker's employer's house. This means that the number of visits or visitors that the domestic worker has is controlled. The amount of activities that the domestic worker can perform outside of their work are limited. Aesthetic labour refers to the image of being sedated by the rules and regulations of a workplace based on your duties of work and regardless of what is being operated on beneath the surface of your face and body. In other words, aesthetic labour is emotional labour; it is the emotion which is required from a person/the body when completing a task or when working. Aesthetic work is a kind of a constant emotion which one reflects and seems to maintain as one is forced to remain numb under the front that they display; the work which is required for this is usually in the service sector where customer service has to be attended to with nothing short of a smile and friendliness.

Domestic workers are said to be counsellors to their employers at times. On the one hand, the employers confide in the domestic workers about personal issues or issues which the employers may be experiencing at their work places. On the other hand, the emotions of the domestic workers are not necessarily discussed; some of the employers who employ domestic workers do not even know where their domestic workers live in Lesotho (in the context of this dissertation). Most domestic workers who have been interviewed in past research papers indicate that their job requires a level of aesthetic labour.

Fernandez & de Regt (2014) provide feminist debates on public – private boundaries. Based on the reported observations of feminist historians in Europe and North America, the transition of industrial capitalism saw the public sphere has been identified as a male and/or masculine dominated sphere while the private sphere of the home is exclusively and specifically identified to be the female sphere (Hakesworth 2007 cited in Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 4). Industrialisation provides the household (that was previously a site of production) to be a place reconstituted as a site of consumption (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 4). The state previously recognised women's labour within the household as productive; this very labour is now devalued and thus renders women dependent a of the male wage worker who is the "breadwinner" as well as the head of the household (Davidoff 1998 cited in Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 4). It is with this perception that the private sphere of the home is regarded as the site of reproduction, sexuality, nurturing and emotional life (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 4). The result of women assuming the private sphere is the devaluation of

social reproduction. Women who assume the private are women are who are moving into professional roles such as lawyers, doctors, and educators (to name a few). Feminists identify this phenomenon as social reproduction in that the reproduction of labour power and the domestic and caring labour required for the accomplishment of human needs (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 5).

One of the main claims of Marxism is that human activity is either the sphere of production or in circulation (Fortunati, 1995: IV). Fortunati highlights that although this Marxist claim may seem to exclude most of the work which is characterised to be particularly for women, the work of reproduction (the work done on ourselves and our families to reproduce ourselves) reproduces our labour power (i.e. our ability to work for capital) (Fortunati, 1995). Therefore, the work of reproduction is essentially production for capital.

Fortunati (1995) separates production and reproduction in terms of what creates value and what does not create value. Fortunati points out that production directly creates value and reproduction is considered to not be as important but it replenishes labour power therefore indirectly adds value as it is part of the creation/recreation of power (Fortunati, 1995: V). Furthermore, production and reproduction have been gendered in that production is associated with men and reproduction is associated with women (Fortunati, 1995: IV). Reproductive work is the value of unpaid work which contributes to capital accumulation. Yet if one puts housework under the spotlight of capitalism, the views of Fortunati expresses that housework is not just private work which is done for a husband and children- it has become an important social activity on which capitalist production thrives (Fortunati, 1995).

Where does the literature place the woman who works in a household? Interestingly, Dunaway (2012: 454) underlines that the capitalist worker has been the marginalised, housewifed unfree labourer – most of them being women (Mies 1986: 116 cited in Dunaway, 2012: 454). The woman's work in the home is descriptively a premarket form of labour where the household never engages in income-earning activities which are traded publicly (Dunaway, 2012: 454). The work which takes place in the house is not part of the formal labour market. It may replenish the labour of the people who work in the labour market, but it is not part of the labour market. The parasitic nexus which exists between waged labour and housewifisation has caused for the vast majority of workers to be boxed into semi-proletarian households from which capitalists can easily drain hidden surplus (Wallerstein 1995 cited in Dunaway, 2012: 454).

Ally (2009) who writes post the apartheid era, argued that the complex legal network of state regulation for control generated the dependency and exploitation of the domestic workers.

The colonial state as well as the apartheid state structured the demographic composition of domestic work (Ally, 2009: 41). The structure of the demographic composition of domestic work composed domestic work as an occupation reserved for black women. Cock (1989) argued that reserving domestic work for black women reflected what she called 'triple oppression' i.e. domestic workers were oppressed as blacks, as women and as workers.

2.8.The nature of domestic work

The nature of domestic work is an essential aspect to highlight because it may bring forth the reason as to why domestic work is so vulnerable. This particular aspect of the literature review discusses the employment of black domestic workers, the concept of 'one of the family', and the isolated working environment of the domestic worker. The nature of domestic work further looks into the household as a production unit, and finally, domestic work in South Africa post the apartheid-era.

2.8.1. Employment

Many white women, according to Delport (1995: 14), have successfully escaped the kitchen while the majority of black women have merely managed a leap from agricultural service to domestic service. It is a very relevant fact and thus speaks to the concept of Cock's Maids and Madams where the focus is black 'maids' and white 'madams'.

2.8.2. One of the family?

Initially, domestic workers are said to have been employed in rural communities where these domestic workers were able to live with their families in their employers' house/s (Delport, 1995: 21). These domestic workers were considered to be part of the employer's household and were thus looked after – even though it was in a paternalistic manner (Delport, 1995: 21). Today, the vast majority of domestic workers are employed in urban areas and the dynamics have significantly changed.

The process of working within the household puts the domestic worker in an ambiguous situation where she may seem like 'one of the family', but in reality, she is merely a distant companion (Hansen, 1989). The fact that the domestic worker's work is intertwined with the lives of the employer, employers tend to distance themselves from the domestic worker in

order to avoid the uncomfortable situation (Ally, 2009: 98). This exists in some cases; some employers are okay with having a relationship which exists outside of the employment relationship. Ally discuses that the relationship between the domestic worker and employer is one where closeness, familiarity and intimacy resides alongside the distancing and estrangement (Ally, 2009: 98). Scholars argued that this ambiguity in the relationship forms the basis of the exploitation of paid domestic work, which structures the unique type of dependency and exploitation within this form of labour (Ally, 2009: 99).

The concept "like one of the family" is said to belittle domestic work as a profession and obliges domestic workers to perform more duties out of familial obligation rather than part of the employment agreement (Ally, 2009: 100). Fish (2006) argues that for the worker, being a part of the family means wanting a certain amount of agency when it comes to performing certain tasks. Domestic workers also associated being a part of the family with being able to sit down and discuss their personal lives with their employers (Dalita, 2009: 41).

Domestic labour in South Africa has often been referred to as paternalistic (Cock, 1989: 81). The paternalistic aspect of the relationship has two implications: there is a sense of superiority on the employer's part and an intense sense of dependence on the side of the worker (Cock, 1989: 68). Cock expresses that the employer was viewed as a source of strength and support, especially in helping domestics with schooling expenses, clinic fees and presents of clothing (Cock, 1989: 68). This further speaks to payment in kind. Cock (1989) argued that payment in-kind from the employer is a mechanism used by the employers of domestic workers to promote personal loyalty and commitment from their employees. This paternalistic care reinforces the dependence of the domestic worker on the employer and it further reinforces the hierarchical nature of the relationship between the domestic worker and the employer (Cock, 1989: 82). The fact that the employer can give the domestic worker gifts that she cannot return or repay shows the employer's superiority and the subordination of the worker (Cock, 1989: 82). The act of gift giving is also used to mask or disguise the conflict of interest inherent in the relationship; for a lack of a better word to compensate for the exploitation (Cock, 1989: 82). Even though the sometimes-sincere generosity of the employers helps the domestic worker untangle herself from the laws and restrictions which bind the lives of black people, it also creates a kind of paternalistic relationship that is entirely demeaning for the dependent servant (Cock, 1989: 82).

Employers use the intimate nature of the paid domestic work as a practice of power; the phrase and/or ideology 'like-one-of-the-family' becomes a tool of control to manipulate the domestic worker (Ally, 2009: 99). The ideology of 'like-one-of-the-family', according to Ally (2009) delegitimises domestic work as real work and erases the workers own familial obligations therefore paving way for the employer to extract further labour and loyalty through the myth of family obligation (Ally, 2009: 99). This myth belittles domestic work as a form of work and compels domestic workers to perform more duties out of familial obligation rather than part of the employment agreement (Ally, 2009: 100).

Dalita's (2009) study reveals that whilst some employers felt that it was important to treat their employees well, others came to a realisation that being too nice or being 'part of the family' has led to the domestic workers taking advantage of the employers. Dalita (2009: 65) argues that in some instances paternalism has lowered the ability of the employers to assert the power that they have over the domestic workers. The employers also benefit from this notion because the bond that results from being part of the family will make it difficult for the domestic worker to challenge the employer's exploitation (Dalita, 2009: 65).

2.8.3. The isolated working environment of the domestic worker

The domestic worker's workplace is the employer's home. The danger exists in the possibility and high probability of domestic service become a total institution, particularly in the case of live-in domestic workers (Delport, 1995: 25). Live-in domestic workers are further exposed to the absence barriers which separate the employee's sleeping, working and playing life (Delport, 1995: 25).

Delport (1995: 26) highlights that domestic workers express that it is not the actual physical work of domestic work which makes domestic service intolerable; rather, it is the feeling of being at the constant call of the employer. The reality of domestic service is built upon the management of the domestic worker's leisure time by the employer – whether the employer is conscious of this fact or not. Domestic workers generally have minimal choice about what they do in their spare time, particularly live-in domestic workers (Delport, 1995: 27).

2.8.4. The household as a production unit

The employment of domestic labour plays an important part in maximising household welfare and profits on the terms that are favourable for the employer (Delport, 1995: 32). The wage of the domestic worker is one of the few costs which are controllable by a household as

there is a conflict of interest between high worker wages and the maximisation of household welfare (Delport, 1995: 32). Therefore, it is in the interest of the household to minimise the labour costs of the domestic worker. In the general sense, the wages of the individual worker exceed the minimum subsistence costs but are still insufficient to cover the subsistence costs of a domestic work as well as her family (Cock, 1989: 38).

2.8.5. Domestic work in South Africa post-apartheid era

The introduction of democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought about the formalisation of the status of domestic workers as recognised professional workers within South African law (Dalita, 2009: 14). The Labour Relations Act (find full thing with year) (will further be referred to as LRA) provided protection for domestic workers through conditions of work such as working hours, leave and dismissal (BCEA). However, due to problems with regulating domestic workers' conditions of employment under the general provisions of the BCEA, Sectoral Determination 7 was enacted to regulate the minimum conditions of employment for domestic workers (Jacobs *et al*, 2013: 276).

The workspace and/or workplace of a domestic worker is the intimate space of family life, i.e. a household and the set-up of a home where the nature of the work puts the domestic worker fixed in the private lives of their employers (Ally, 2009: 95). The nature of domestic work, care-givers specifically, ranges from tasks such as washing under wear and changing sheets, to voluntarily or involuntarily being put in a position of over-hearing family arguments; the lives of the employers becomes part of the domestic work (Ally, 2009: 98).

2.9. Labour Process Theory

Labour process theory proposes that in order to understand work organisation, it is essential to locate the organisation of work in the structure of the broader society which it is embedded (Adler, 2007: 1314). Commodity (the labour of the domestic workers in this context) contains two contradictory aspects which Adler underlines: the commodity's value as something useful and the commodity's exchange value, i.e. the commodity's power to command money in exchange (Adler, 2007: 1314). In relation to domestic work, the manner in which one can understand domestic work, particularly in this dissertation where the living and working experiences of the domestic workers will be subjected to the subjective experiences of the participants, within the structure of a broader society.

It is very interesting that the labour process theory underlines the necessity of a commodity's value as something useful as well as the commodity's exchange value. The living and working experiences of the respondents, as domestic workers, reflect their employers' perspective of the respondents' commodities' value as something useful and the respondents' commodities' exchange value.

The respondents (undocumented migrant domestic workers) lack the access to the means of production, and must thus sell their capacity to work, i.e. the respondents' labour power (Adler, 2007: 1315). The respondents must sell their labour power as if it were a commodity on the labour power.

Labour process theory is drawn on this research. The new wave labour process theory demonstrates that traditional concepts such as skill and technology, as well as post-labour process theory concepts such as identity and professional status, can all be referred to in order to understand the manner in which work is organised for domestic workers. In order to work with labour process theory in the context of this dissertation, there needs to be a shift from investigations which take place at a macro level to those investigations which take place at a micro level (Ruggunan, 2013: 100). The reason for investigations to shift from a macro level to a micro level is because it regards workers' identities and professional status (Ruggunan, 2013: 100). Labour process theorists have traditionally focused on the organisation of production in manufacturing industries. In this instance, work relations are studied at their macro-structural levels (Ruggunan, 2013: 100). The new wave of labour process theorists have an interest in the examination of work and workers in the service industry. These theorists are focused on the subjective experiences of workers and argue that labour process theory cannot be reduced to a set of inescapable and objective laws of capitalism where capital's and labours' interests are predetermined and inevitably opposed (Tinker, 2000: 257 cited in Ruggunan, 2013: 100). This research will use labour process theory to guide research on the living and working conditions of Basotho live-in domestic workers in Gauteng, East Rand.

An employer buys the capacity to work when a worker is hired (Holloway, 2007: 2). According to Holloway (2007), an employer merely buying the capacity to work causes the indeterminacy of labour. An embodied capacity that a worker brings into the workplace must be managed with consent (Holloway, 2007: 2). Control is said to be a form of management and thus functions as a separate category of authority (Holloway, 2007: 2). Domestic workers

are controlled through different ways. The domestic workers may not be aware of the control measures and due to the fact that employers were not interviewed for this dissertation, there is very little written on control, frustration and resistance.

A range of difficulties in introducing a new work paradigm in South Africa have been identified (Kraak, 1996:53-63). One of them being the issue of class replacing the issue of race yet there are still racial consequences in class issues, i.e. black domestic workers and black middle class employers in the context of this dissertation.

2.10. Black middle class in South Africa

The origins of the black middle class lie in the scattered educational efforts of the Christian missionaries which were established from the early days of white settlement in the territories that eventually became South Africa (Southall, 2014: 3). Nkululeko Mabandla notes that the combination of cultural and economic factors meant that social mobility was a question of access to land as well as an increase in education (Mabandla, 2015: 78). He uses these factors (i.e. cultural and economic factors) to express the changes and advances of black middle class from the colonial period up to post-apartheid period. Missionaries encouraged new ways of living such as stores that sold clothing, household items and agricultural implements (Mabandla, 2015: 78). Missionaries encouraged, furthermore, the move towards square houses (moving away from traditional round houses or rondavels); this new type of house was symbolic of new patterns of consumption which tied African societies firmly to the British colonial economy (Mabandla, 2015: 78). The logic of consumerism which was embedded in the design of living space was evident in the introduction of the 'matchbox' houses in African townships (Mabandla, 2015: 78). "*With a proper house, then comes a table, then chairs, a clean cloth, paper or whitewash for the walls, wife and daughters dressed in calico prints…*" (Bundy 1988 cited in Mabandla, 2015: 78). Statements made by missionaries essentially played a significant role in colonial social transformation in that access to land, education, a combination of subsistence and commercial agriculture, and lifestyle and consumption changes contributed to social stratification within the African society and led to the rise of new, post-traditional classes, and the black middle class (Mabandla, 2015: 78).

Mabandla's study is based on Mthatha's black middle class. He underlines that the generation of the 1950s to the 1976 existed under segregation laws which also further demarcated residential and business areas for black people and white people (Mabandla, 2015: 81). The

forced removals which were consequent of this political reality resulted in large numbers of African people being forced into locations which were far from businesses and their places of work (Mabandla, 2015: 81).

Southall (2014: 15) discusses the black middle class under late apartheid where he highlights that professions of black middle class were concentrated in the law, medicine, teaching and nursing but also increasingly penetrated the corporate sector as managers (Dreyer, 1987: 16 cited in Southall, 2014: 15). The emergent of a petty bourgeoisie (Chiefs, politicians, civil servants, teachers and traders) also took place during this period; the petty bourgeoisie professions conferred substantial material benefits (Southall, 2014: 15).

Ndletyana (2014: 7) writes that a significant number of black middle class people were placed in the black homelands; these homelands were built in the idea of separate but equal development. Homelands were said to be independent under the apartheid system (Ndletyana, 2014: 7). In practice, homelands were economically unviable and they were dependent on the apartheid government for their budget; it is however, here that the black middle class was "bourgeoned" (Ndletyana, 2014: 7).

Black middle class is a largely post-apartheid construction (Ndletyana, 2014: 15). The fact that the black middle class is a product of racial redress which has created a rift between the term itself and its white "counter-part" (Ndletyana, 2014: 15).

The black middle class under high apartheid became more radically disposed and further met the realities of a dramatic increase in the employment of women as teachers and nurses (Southall, 2014: 12). The term "African Bourgeoisie", under high apartheid, referred to large landowners, industrialists, merchants, and bankers (Southall, 2014: 12).

As White Township officials withdrew into impersonalised municipal bureaucracy at an increasing rate, they were being replaced by the "new elite of public servants" who then possessed professional positions in the administration of housing, welfare, and community centres which had been handed over to African control (Southall, 2014: 13). There was also a beginning of a managerial elite when white retailers opened up African branches in townships and staffed the African branches with African personnel who were knowledgeable about the changing African consumer trends (Southall, 2014: 13).

Black middle class is, furthermore, not entirely distinct from the working class (Ndletyana, 2015: 15). Black middle class is distinguished by income, education and residence; however,

the black middle class still maintains similar links with the working class where there are shared cultural values and practices (Ndletyana, 2014: 15). This is due to the fact that a predominant component of the black middle class is first generation (Ndletyana, 2014: 15), i.e. the black middle class, according to this article, is still in formation. The black middle class is progressive in the political sense and has led to an anti-liberation struggle and is now actively involved in the county's political life through means of seeking to ensure that the state remains transformative (Ndletyana, 2014: 16).

Countries such as Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Zambia have produced extensive research on African employers through scholars such as Pape (1993), Bujra (2000) and Hansen (1990). South African literature has not produced a lot on African employers.

2.11. African Employers

A large amount of literature on domestic workers focuses on the inter-racial relationships between white employers (madams) and black workers (maids), and therefore the exploitative practices of white employers (Whisson and Weil 1971; Gaitskell 1983; Cock 1980). The current literature which discusses the current state of the working and/or living conditions of domestic work since the introduction of rights for domestic workers focuses on how the inter-racial relationship between the maid and the madam has, or has not, been affected by the introduction of rights for domestic workers (Fish 2006; King 2006; Ally 2007). There has now also been the introduction of the so-called new black 'madams' in literature when discussing domestic workers and their employers (King 2006, Fish 2006).

There are many cases in which it is argued that many African employers and employees already have a pre-existing relationship in the form of distant cousin or family friend from rural areas, when they hire their domestic workers. These rural women are used as a reservoir for cheap labour to which family members have first access. In some ways hiring them is seen as a favour, taking them away from the rural life which lacks hope and prosperity (Carroll 2004). But some black middle class families are now taking a more professional route, hiring people outside of their families completely.

Carroll (2004) brings forward a powerful point that in addition to the pre-existing relations, the 'madams' find themselves with 'maids' that are older than them and they assume a motherly/sisterly role which immediately dis-empowers the employer in terms of giving instructions. In this case, cultural beliefs also play a role in shaping the nature of the relationship between the 'maids' and 'madams'. For example, in African culture it is

considered unacceptable for a young person to give orders to his/her elder. This creates difficulties when the elder is the 'maid' and employer cannot give orders for fear of being viewed as disrespectful.

Fish (2006) engages in a discussion about the 'new' employer, i.e. the black employer. He states a highly interesting point to contemplate on: he highlights that the interesting aspect of the black employer is the element of class division becoming an essential turning point in understanding the question of inequality when understanding the relationship between employers and the domestic workers.

The phenomenon of domestic workers in African households is not new even though there is very little which has been written about it. Cock (1989) discusses that during the colonial period, San women and children were employed by isiXhosa farmers who wanted servants. The number of African employers has increased, however, the majority of employers of domestic workers in South Africa are still white people.

Carroll (2004) writes that African domestic employers are said to be worse than white domestic employers. Pape (1993) further expresses, in support with this statement, that exploitation occurs in African households particularly where there are low levels of income compared to the income that comes into the white employer's household and thus paying the domestic worker higher wages.

The characteristics that the African employers seek in their domestic workers are similar to those which white employers seek. An example which Carroll (2004) uses is that of African employers seeking immigrants or migrants (usually from Lesotho) or women from the rural areas because they are viewed to be hard-working, quiet, obedient, and less likely to want to go home all the time because home is very far.

Fish (2006) argues that in the event that employers and employees have the same racial identity, their social position differentials are sternly lessened in that those who are in a privileged position need to assert their social power it is necessary in cases where the only difference between the employer and the employee is their class status.

2.12. Conclusion

It is important to have sound knowledge on the existing literature about domestic workers before embarking on a research journey. The purpose of reading the existing literature is so that this dissertation does not repeat existing questions or perhaps does not pick up on the

questions which have not been answered and yet are evident in the daily lives of many people.

The literature provided thus far concerning domestic work and the employers of domestic workers has certainly provided a strong foundation for this dissertation. The existing literature provides a point to begin the conversation about domestic workers and their experiences in their different workplaces. It is thus important to extend the knowledge of domestic work and the people involved in domestic service. The ever-changing society and the continuous shifts of political systems affect the people who are referred to as a 'vulnerable workforce'. And it is important to understand the differences between the current 'vulnerable workforce' and the past 'vulnerable workforce'. For example, under the apartheid system, the 'vulnerable workforce' consisted of domestic workers who were South African and worked for white employers. These domestic workers were vulnerable because they were black women in South Africa and during the apartheid system – a system dominated by a white government.

The respondents of this dissertation are a vulnerable because they are black women who are not South African. The respondents do not have the necessary documentation to be in South Africa for longer than a month at a time, i.e. they are undocumented. The respondents work for black middle class families. The 'power' dynamics of the relationship that exists between the respondents and their madams is no longer racial – it is a matter of class. And this discussion is the gap in literature concerning domestic work and contemporary South Africa.

The argument of the dissertation will develop towards the overall objective of the dissertation: To what extent is Jacklyn Cock's study, *Maids and* Madams, relevant to the living and working conditions of live-in, undocumented, migrant, Basotho domestic workers who are working for black middle class households?

CHAPTER THREE:

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the data-collection and analysis of the methods implemented in understanding the extent to which Cock's analysis in *Maids and Madams* is relevant to the living and working conditions of migrant Lesotho domestic workers working in contemporary South Africa for black middle class families. This chapter communicates the 'how' of the research question. The research site was the Ekurhuleni district in Gauteng.

3.2. General overview of the qualitative research

A qualitative research method was used. Qualitative research approaches are appropriate as they enable the revelation of personal perspectives, experiences and understandings of individual actors (Gelo *et al,* 2008: 272). For this research, the qualitative research design has revealed the personal perspectives, experiences and understanding of the respondents (Basotho domestic workers) through data analysis as qualitative research methods are data-driven: (Gelo *et al,* 2008: 272).

An interpretive paradigm was used to understand the living and working conditions of domestic work from the respondents' perspective. This is important because there is no single reality or truth therefore the reality of the respondents needs to be interpreted in order to discover the underlying meaning of their experiences and labour process. According to the interpretivist paradigm, "[r]esearch can never be objectively observed from the outside, rather it must be observed from inside through the direct experience of the people" (Mack, 2010: 8). Through this paradigm, one is aimed to understand the interpretation of the social world through a culturally and historically derived perspective (Crotty cited in Gray, 2013: 23). The interpretivist paradigm is not, however, without limitations. One limitation lies in the fact that interpretive research cannot always be verified or checked against evidence therefore one needs to be very careful in this regard because it is very easy to generalise (Mack, 2010: 8). Through this paradigm, one aims to understand the interpretation of the social world through

the culturally and historically derived perspective of the respondents (in this case, domestic workers) (Crotty cited in Gray, 2013: 23).

3.3. Data collection method

What makes in-depth interviews such a critical and relevant research method for this particular study is that they are a discovery-oriented research method, which provides the researcher with the ability to deeply explore the feelings, perspectives and attitudes held by the research respondents (Guion, Diehl & McDonald, 2011: 1). Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to follow a topical trajectory in the conversation which may stray from the interview guide (Barriball, 1994: 330). This method was of great benefit to the research because even though the interview questions were set ahead of time, it provided allowance for the respondents' freedom to express their views in their own terms (Barriball, 1994: 330). Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with domestic workers who are working in the households of black middle-class families in the Ekurhuleni district in Gauteng.

An informal interview was conducted with each domestic worker over the telephone. This telephone informal interview aimed to schedule a face-to-face interview with the respondents. The face-to-face interview took place four days. The first three days saw two domestic workers being interviewed a day during their lunch break. These interviews took place in the park where the women spent their lunch breaks from time to time. The domestic workers proposed that the interviews take place at these particular parks, underneath trees which provided incredible shade. The interviews, which took place on the fourth day, took place on a weekend; four domestic workers were interviewed. I attended a stokvel meeting, which these ladies host once a month and the domestic workers were more than happy to be interviewed during their stokvel time.

The interviews were between thirty minutes to an hour long. All the interviews were recorded and then transcribed. The interviews were conducted in Sesotho and then transcribed into English. All the respondents were notified that the interviews were recorded and full confidentiality and anonymity was guaranteed.

Employers are deliberately excluded from this research because the research is more focused on the voice of the domestic worker. Employers are given a voice on countless platforms therefore this research only focuses on the voice of the domestic worker; after all, it is the working and living conditions of the domestic worker which is being researched.

3.4. Sampling method

The research made use of purposive sampling. Purposive sampling specifies that the researcher's sample must be tied to the research's objectives (Palys, 2008: 697). Research respondents are not created equal for the purpose of specific topics of research: one well-placed articulate informant often advances the research far better than any randomly chosen sample of 50 and it is important for researchers to take this into account (Palys, 2008: 697). In order to generate effective data for this research, it is essential to interview people who are directly affected. Interviews will be done with ten domestic workers who work in the households of black middle-class families in the Ekurhuleni district in Gauteng.

Ten domestic workers were interviewed. Each of the domestic workers is a migrant from Lesotho. Each domestic worker is employed in Gauteng, in the Ekurhuleni area. The research centres on the perceptions of Basotho domestic workers of their working and living conditions.

The names below are not the real names of the respondents (hence, they are italicized throughout the text). This anonymity protects the identities of the respondents.

Table 1: Basic and demographic information of respondents

Participants	**Age**	**Gender**	**Population group**	**Home language**	**Other languages**	**Marital status**	**Highest level of school**
**Mpho*	33	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	IsiZulu (Basic) and English (Basic)	Married	Grade 8
**Bohlale*	38	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	IsiZulu (Basic) and English (Basic)	Married	Grade 8
**Neo*	40	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	IsiZulu (Basic) and	Married	Grade 8

					English (Basic)		
*Reabetsoe	24	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	English (Basic)	Married	Grade 10
*Khomotso	21	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	English (Basic)	Married	Grade 10
*Katleho	48	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	English (Basic)	Married	Grade 8
*Kgothalo	40	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	English (Basic)	Married	Grade 9
*Bontse	23	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	IsiXhosa (Basic), Tswana (Basic) and English (Basic).	Married	Grade 10
*Shoki	30	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	Sepedi (Moderate) and English (Basic)	Married	Grade 10
*Thatohatsi	31	Female	Mosotho	Sesotho	IsiZulu (Moderate) and English (Basic)	Married	Grade 10

The purpose of selecting the above sample is for the validity and reliability of the research findings. The respondents listed in the table above are all from Lesotho and are all undocumented. They share similar responsibilities and have a limited education, and therefore limited job opportunities. Their experiences may not be identical, but they all find themselves in the position of a migrant domestic worker because of similar reasons. This

sample will purposefully speak to the research objectives and provide in-depth data of working and living conditions of the research respondents.

Three women out of the ten respondents are between the ages of 20 – and 29. Four women out of the ten respondents are between the ages of 30 – and 39. And three women out of the ten respondents are between the ages of 40 – and 49. All ten of the interviewed domestic workers are married and at least have one child. To be specific, five of the domestic workers have two children. One of the domestic workers has three children. And four of the domestic workers have one child.

Table 2: The status of Basotho domestic workers in South Africa

Respondent	**Legally in South Africa?**	**Legal documentation to be working in South Africa?**	**Employees registered by employer?**	**Do you have a contract of employment?**	**Training received to look after children?**	**How many children do you look after?**
**Mpho*	No	None	No	No	None	4
**Bohlale*	No	None	No	No	None	3
**Neo*	No	None	No	No	None	3
**Reabetsoe*	No	None	No	No	None	3
**Khomotso*	No	None	No	No	None	3
**Katleho*	No	None	No	No	None	2
**Kgothalo*	No	None	No	No	None	2
**Bontse*	No	None	No	No	None	3
**Shoki*	No	None	No	No	None	6
**Thatohatsi*	No	None	No	No	None	4

The table above indicates the status of the Basotho domestic workers in South Africa and the direct general effect it has on their lives. This information is important and is part of the sampling method. It indicates the vulnerability of the sample and illustrates their existence in

a legal vacuum. It further indicates the similarities that this particular sample has with the sample of Jacklyn Cock (1989) in *Maids and Madams*.

3.5. Challenges of the research

It was quite difficult to schedule times for the interviews. All of the research respondents are live-in domestic workers therefore, there was not a consistent "after work" time to be interviewed. Therefore, the only available time was their lunch hours as well as over the weekend when they are away from their place of work because they are required to work over the weekend should they be available to work. This is why the data collection took approximately a week, where most of the interviews took place on a Saturday during their stokvel meeting.

The interview questions had to be verbally translated to Sesotho. The research respondents have a basic understanding of the English language; English is not a language that the domestic workers are able to fully express themselves in. All the interviews were conducted in Sesotho and then were later translated to English for the purpose of transcribing the data.

A greater sample would have been great. The experiences of these women may differ in detail but the circumstances and/or results of their professional reality reflects itself to be the same. To gain access to more domestic workers was quite a challenge and would have thus resulted in the research not being completed on time.

3.6. Ethical considerations

Bordens and Abbott (2008:189) stipulate that ethical research practice requires the researcher to obtain informed consent. The ethics policy of Rhodes University was followed at all times during the research. The respondents in this study was voluntary and respondents were not bribed in any kind of way to be part of the research. Each interview commenced with an information session to highlight the participants with the aim of the study as well the respondents' right to participate or not participate in the study. This happened during the telephonic informal interviews when an interview session was being scheduled. This information was further communicated at each face-to-face interview before the interview was commenced. A signed consent letter that is attached in the appendix of the research.

The respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their participation in the study. The respondents of the study are domestic workers who have no work permits and are not registered workers in South Africa. The confidentiality of the respondents is not compromised nor disclosed and is maintained at all times. This confidentiality is successfully

implemented through the use of pseudonyms for each of the respondents. The respondents and the researcher met at a place which was comfortable for the respondents.

3.7. Conclusion

This chapter has indicated how the data was gathered for this research. The use of a qualitative research approach has been used, specifically followed by in-depth semi-structured interviews. The sample used specifically rounds up respondents who are relevant and affected by the subject matter. The chosen research design has guaranteed a successful data collection process. This approach is used to provide detailed information in order to achieve the listed objectives.

Existing research has indicated that there is a high level of vulnerability in domestic service. However, labour law has brought forward changes in this regard through the inclusion of domestic service in labour laws. Domestic workers, during the apartheid era, existed in a legal vacuum and were a vulnerable group of people because they were black. Migrant domestic workers exist in a legal vacuum and are vulnerable because they are not South African. It may thus mean that the living and working conditions of the Lesotho migrant workers are similar to those of domestic workers in the apartheid era.

CHAPTER FOUR:
THE WOMEN BEHIND THE APRONS

4.1. Introduction

The women behind domestic work come from their own families. They are first mothers and/or wives before they are domestic workers. However, their jobs seem to make them come across as if all that they are, are domestic workers. The amount of time which they are given 'time off' in order to see their families is minimal. The interviews constructed with the domestic workers reflect the reality that the domestic workers spend more time with the families that they work for than they spend time with their own families. This means that respondents spend more time as domestic workers than what they do as either mothers or women. This is the same phenomenon which Cock (1989) speaks of when she communicates the findings of her research in her study, *Maids and Madams.*

This chapter will explore the identities of the respondents. The women behind the apron are fundamental to the overall objective of the dissertation. The identities of the respondents form an important part of the subjective perceptions and experiences of their living and working conditions.

4.2. The women behind the aprons

The women who assume domestic work are not educated enough to assume any other professional positions. In this particular research, the respondents are educated up to grade ten at most. Five of the interviewed domestic workers are educated up to (and completed) grade ten. Four of the interviewed domestic workers are educated up to (and completed) grade eight. And one of the interviewed domestic workers is educated up to (and has completed) grade nine. Based on the above-mentioned findings, it is evident that minimal education is a significant factor in domestic work. Due to the fact that the respondents have minimal education, their options for employment are not as 'great' as the options of an educated person who has a university degree. The options of work for the respondents are even less than the options of people who have just a matric qualification. The minimal education of the respondents could perhaps be the genesis of the vulnerability of the domestic workers.

The stories of the women are different. However, the stories of the respondents lead them to domestic work and maintain why and what motivates them to stay and work in their current households.

4.3. Where are respondents from?

All of the respondents are from Lesotho. *Mpho* is a 33-year old Mosotho woman who is firstly a mother of two daughters, a wife, and then a domestic worker. Her home is located in a small village in Lesotho called Mafiteng. *Mpho* went through a process of "*Ho shobediswa*[1]" when she was fifteen years old. *Ho shobediswa* is a practice where young girls are taken by older men and are forced into marriage. If the young girl's family is able to pay the family that "took" her, then the young girl will be sent back home. If the family is unable to pay the man's family, then the young girl will have to marry the man and live her life as his wife moving forward. *Mpho's* family was unable to pay the required amount of money to fetch Mpho from the family that had taken her, and she therefore had to quit school mid-grade nine and be a wife. Her husband worked in the mines in Johannesburg. He would return home twice in a month to bring money to support her and their two children. He also had to support his own family.

The practise of *Ho shobediswa* has affected many Basotho women. In the context of this dissertation, it has affected the level and amount of education that the affected respondents had. This is a cultural practice that is aimed to get young girls married and start a family. However, the men who leave their wives and children and not support them have forced their wives into work. The work which they are able to perform is exploitative.

After five years of marriage and two daughters, *Mpho*'s husband stopped coming home to bring money for his wife and his children. This is how *Mpho* came to seeking employment in the first place – and leading up to the domestic service she performs today. *Mpho* was forced to find a job in order to support her children. After her husband had stopped coming to Lesotho on a regular basis, Mpho moved back home to her parents. She moved back to her parents with her two children. She first worked in a clothes-making shop, which was owned by Chinese. According to *Mpho*, the Chinese paid the workers in the shop (who were mostly Basotho) very low wages. The employees worked long hours and they worked under harsh conditions. *Mpho* insists that she did not mind the long working hours or the working conditions that they worked under, it was the payment which they received that she had a

[1] Arranged Marriage

problem with. The pay was not enough to support her and her two children. She decided that she would leave Lesotho and find work in South Africa.

When *Mpho* first arrived in South Africa, it was not her intention to work as a domestic worker. She thought that she would work in shops as a sales woman. Chinese shops have paid the respondents low wages in the past. It is these low wages which eventually pushed the respondents to domestic work; domestic work, according to the respondents, pays more money than the Chinese shops that the respondents worked for in Lesotho. It is this reason that the respondents could not get to South Africa and work for Chinese shops again. Her cousin, who was employed in South Africa as a domestic worker, suggested that she go into domestic work. Her cousin knew of a family that needed a live-in domestic worker and introduced her to the respective family. *Mpho* states that she accepted the job because it was paying her more than the Chinese back in Lesotho ever did, and the job was also providing her with a place to stay.

Mpho has been working as a domestic worker in South Africa for seven years. She has worked for five different families: two white families, one Indian family, and two black families. She is currently working for a black family. The family has four children aged 18, 16, 14 and 8. Her employers (the parents of the children) are both professionals who assume significantly high positions in government. *Mpho* is unsure of what these positions are. The family has two live-in domestic workers, *Mpho* and *Bohlale* (who is also one of the respondents of this research).

Bohlale is also from Mafiteng. She, too, resorted to domestic work because her husband left her with three children; one of which she had outside of the marriage. *Bohlale* fell pregnant with her first son at the age of 14. Her family decided that it was fitting for her to marry the man who impregnated her. The man's family felt the same way and the two got married. She then had another son and a daughter in her marriage. Her husband worked as a domestic worker in South Africa; he was not necessarily the caregiver, he was a gardener. He was not, however, a live-in domestic worker. He made a living out of cutting grass for various homes and lived in a shack in one of the townships in the Ekurhuleni district. *Bohlale* worked in a clothing shop owned by Chinese. She was not making enough money to feed her children and her husband did not send money for them on a monthly basis. *Bohlale* says that this was one of his ways of controlling her. The money which she would receive from her husband was on a rewards-based system. If she did "everything right" and did not give him a "hard time" in a

particular month, she would receive money for herself and the children. She does not necessarily label him as abusive but she does say that he did hit her from time to time when he was home visiting them. As a result, she preferred it when he was not around and when he did not send money home, she did not bother him about it. She ended up returning home because she ended up having a bad relationship with her in-laws because her as well as children became a financial responsibility to her in-laws.

This is yet another example which reflects that consequences of the practice of *Ho Shobediswa* where the woman is the one who suffers the most. Some of the respondents state that the practice of *Ho Shobediswa* is aimed at bringing two families together. However, this is evidence that this is not always the case. *Ho Shobediswa,* in this case, has resulted to the respective respondent suffering far more than what she probably would have had she at least completed her matric and not have been 'taken for marriage' at such a vulnerable age.

One of the houses where *Bohlale's* husband worked, the employers asked him if he knew of a reliable domestic worker. Her husband's employers told him that they would provide the domestic worker with a place to stay at their home and three meals a day. Her husband suggested *Bohlale* and called her to inform her that he had found her a job that will help them both financially in a big way. That is how she was introduced into domestic service. Her husband disappeared shortly after she arrived to assume her new job in South Africa, leaving her to be the only parent who now supports their three children. She worked for the family that provided her first job as a domestic worker for ten years and then moved to work where she now co-works with *Mpho*.

The other women have stumbled upon similar obstacles to get to where they are today – in the position of a domestic worker. Most of the women's stories reflect that they are married by men who have left them and moved on with life without them – leaving them with children. Contrary to what literature says about domestic workers' feelings towards their jobs, the respondents of this research highlighted issues they have with their jobs, but most agree that they are in their current jobs because they need the money to provide for their respective families. Perhaps the very 'need' of the respondents' current jobs put them in a position where they accept the treatment that they receive from their employers. The black middle class employers are aware of the cultural practices that happen in various African cultures and African countries. Therefore, the employers are aware, even if it is briefly aware, of the

causes and factors that have lead the respondents into domestic work. This means that the employers may be aware of the extent of the vulnerability of the respondents.

4.4. The language/s they speak

Lesotho's official languages are Sesotho and English. All the interviewed domestic workers are fluent Sesotho speakers because Sesotho is their home language. English, however, is a second language for the participants and was taught to them in school. The schools that these women went to were township schools where Sesotho was the language of teaching. English was only taught in grade 5 at a second language standard. Therefore, all the women insist that they are able to communicate enough to get by however their English is not as

"*good as the English which is spoken by the children that live in the houses that they work in*" (Bontse, 2016-08).

Shoki particularly chuckled when she was asked the question on her language ability. She expresses that the children that live in the house that she lives in strictly speak English, even with their black parents. After expressing how wrong she believes the parents of the children are for this, she states that she feels like she is learning a lot more English from the six children in this household. The mother of the children is a housewife and she speaks Sesotho fluently. Her family is from Lesotho and *Shoki* is surprised that she is not teaching her children Sesotho but rather communicates with them in English.

Shoki then expresses that she is also able to speak Sepedi. *Shoki* underlines that before she worked for the family that she works for now, she worked in a Sepedi speaking family. According to Shoki, Sepedi is not far off from Sesotho so it was not too difficult for her to learn.

Bontse expressed that before she worked in Gauteng, she worked in the Eastern for a few months. She first worked as a cleaner at a local clinic and then worked as a cleaner again at a hotel. This is where she learned how to communicate in isiXhosa. The family that she currently works for is from the Eastern Cape. She met them at the hotel that she worked at in Port Elizabeth and now works for them in their house in Gauteng. Therefore, she communicates with them in either English or isiXhosa, mostly isiXhosa. She giggled when telling me that her isiXhosa is not so great and sometimes she wishes to express herself in her own language. But she is now used to making adjustments to suit her employers.

Bontse learned how to speak Setswana from her current boyfriend. She expresses that she is a married woman but her husband has been gone for so long that she considers herself "not married" any more. She laughed when expressing that she is still very young – 23 years old to be specific – therefore she too moved on with her life. She is dating a man who she labels as a "*nice Tswana-speaking man*" who teaches her how to speak Setswana. She expresses that she does not struggle a lot because Setswana is a language that has many similarities to Sesotho.

Thatohatsi, Neo, Bohlale and *Mpho* all know how to speak basic isiZulu due to their interactions with taxi drivers. The respondents expressed that at some point, they need to have a relationship with taxi drivers because these are the people who help them keep their passports up to date. This matter will be discussed further under the section of the living conditions of the respondents. Furthermore, the women expressed that isiZulu is a language that is spoken most frequently in Gauteng, particularly in the East Rand. Most of the encounters that they have with the gardeners of the family or any other people who may come to the house to perform some kind of maintenance, all communicate in isiZulu. Therefore, these women have learned to speak isiZulu in this way. The respondents also express that because they are not from South Africa, they try to learn a language that will assist them in "blending in" and not being "Lesotho outcasts stuck in Gauteng". In this particular case, they believe that isiZulu is the safest language to know because it is, according to their interactions with other people, the most spoken language after English.

All of the respondents expressed that they are able to communicate, at least at the most basic level, in English because of their levels of education. The linguistic ability of the respondents is a reflection of the extent to which the respondents have been exposed to various languages. The respondents have a strong Sesotho command because it is their home language and they communicate using the Sesotho language the most. The other languages that they are able to communicate in are at the level that they have had the ability to communicate in them.

4.5. Working for black middle class families

Many of the respondents say that working for black people in general has both a good side to it and a bad side to it. The reality is that each of the respondents feel that financially, they are in a much better job. Not all of the respondents were domestic workers for white people before their current jobs; however, each of the domestic workers has worked for a different racial group in some way before their current job.

The table below illustrates the past employments of the respondents. The information that is illustrated below reflects the number of families that the respondents have worked for, the various racial groups that the respondents have worked for, and the number of respondents who have always worked for black middle class families.

Table 3: Graph illustrating the race groups that were the employers of the participants

Number of Respondents	Respondents	Worked for Chinese employers	Worked for White employers	Worked for Indian employers	Worked for Black employers
5	Mpho Neo Katleho Kgothalo Bontse		They all worked for white employers as domestic workers. Neo worked in a house as well as on a farm. Katleho worked in a household as well as in a private-owned company.		
3	Mpho Bohlale Neo	They all worked for Chinese			

		clothing stores.			
2	Reabetsoe Khomotso			Reabetsoe worked as a domestic worker. Khomotso worked as a cook and a cleaner in a Halaal restaurant.	
1	Shoki				She worked for black employers as a domestic worker.

Katleho has been working as a migrant domestic worker in South Africa for the longest time. She expresses that she first arrived in South Africa when she 19 years old and has been working as domestic worker ever since; in other companies, she was referred to as a cleaner. The family, which she is currently working for, is her first experience of having black employers. She has been working for this family for three years now.

Katleho expressed that the adjustment is both good and unprofessional compared to what she has become used to over the years. She expressed that regardless of how her previous employers treated her, her salary always came on time like clockwork. The disadvantage of working in the companies which she worked for before she was a living-in domestic worker is that she was always a casual worker and never permanent. This is an indication of the fact that she had minimal benefits and her wages were low. Now she works for an employer who continuously confides in her about everything, including the financial status or situations that

exists between the madam and her husband – and then she is expected to understand why her salary may come late because of that.

An incident that upset her as she was being interviewed is when her salary was three months late. She details that her 'madam' had not been to work because she had a baby. While she was on maternity leave, people at her place of work were being retrenched and she was one of the casualties and was told not to come back. The "madam", (whom we will refer to as Mrs X and her husband as Mr X) earned a bigger salary than her husband did. When Mrs X lost her job, she had to take her payout and save it because Mrs X expressed to *Katleho* that Mr X's salary would not be enough to cover the whole family especially now that they had a new baby. The end of that month came and instead of *Katleho* being paid, she was told that her salary would be late. *Katleho* did not fight it because it was not happening for the first time, but she was frustrated. *Katleho* supports her family back home in Lesotho where the only two people who are working are currently working in Chinese shops where they work long hours for very low wages. She knows that her siblings cannot take care of the whole family and that her salary really makes a difference. Furthermore, she supports her two children who are also living with her family in Lesotho. Her husband does not work. He lives in a house that *Katleho* herself has to maintain and he has, according to Katleho, a serious alcohol problem. It is for this reason that *Katleho* took her children to stay with her family and her husband stays on his own in their house.

The end of the second month came and left and she did not see her salary. On the third month, she asked Mrs X when she would be paid. Mrs X asked her to be more patient and understanding to the sensitivity of her position. It was only on the third month that she told *Katleho* that she would pay her as soon as she found a job. Mrs X found a new job in the fourth month and paid *Katleho* all four of her salaries in that particular fourth month on her payday.

Katleho expresses that the problem that she has experienced while working for black employers is that they expect quality labour from her yet pay for it on undiscussed terms and conditions. The reality is that she is an employee. She is not there to listen to the issues of Mrs X. *Katleho* expressed that:

> *When Mrs X is at work, her boss pays her on time regardless of his personal financial problems and regardless of the company's financial position. She needs to think of me as herself working at her particular workplace. When her pay-day arrives, she*

> *expects her money, not excuses. I, too, expect money and not excuses. I also have family responsibilities and other things which I wish to do with my money. I am here to work, and I expect my salary on time so that my plans can be implemented on time.* (Katleho, 2016-08).

Shoki, on the other hand, has always only worked for black employers. She also mentioned that her employers tend to pay her late from time to time and it is frustrating. She mentioned that it has been that way since she started working for black employers so it is something that may bother her but she is used to it by now. Her issue is that of respect.

Shoki discusses that as black people, regardless of class or cultural background, there is a mutual respect amongst us as people based on the principles of Ubuntu. She acknowledges her employers as employers first, but because of their age, she further acknowledges them as elders to her and thus gives them the necessary respect. She then expresses that seventy-five percent of the time; the respect is also granted to her. Her "madam" (Mrs Y) has very little children and very few friends therefore *Shoki* becomes a bit of an "eldest daughter" to Mrs Y where she talks to her about many personal issues. *Shoki* mentions that Mrs Y's family is very big and when they come to visit, she becomes a domestic worker for all of them. Once they have left, Mrs Y will share the family problems with her. *Shoki* expressed that she never wanted to get involved because the issues sound "messy". But sometimes, she cannot help but believe that the problem is Mrs Y.

Shoki discussed that when it comes to disciplining her children, Mrs Y is unable to do so. She fully believes that the genesis of the problem is that Mrs Y speaks too much English with her children and is therefore unable to raise children the African way. Secondly, she expressed that every time she and Mrs Y get into an argument, she becomes a rude woman who seems to be without "*home training and discipline*". After such a sharp statement, the follow-up question was "what does she fight about with Mrs Y?" She expresses that Mrs Y does not cook in the house and she does not even do her bed. She expresses that as a married woman, Mrs Y expects *Shoki* to do too much for her husband and it is uncomfortable for *Shoki* because she feels as if she is invading the privacy of a grown and married man.

Reabetsoe worked for an Indian household. She was continuously raped by the man/husband in that particular household. According to Reabetsoe, the wife knew what was going on but she labelled the situation as "my maid is sleeping with my husband". Reabetsoe states that the wife and the husband made it a secret that no one was supposed to know about. However,

Reabetsoe was physically abused by the wife, her direct employer who was a housewife and thus was with Reabetsoe throughout most days. Reabetsoe became pregnant with the employer's child (the husband). When Reabetsoe told her employers about that she was pregnant, she was immediately fired. When Reabetsoe was asked why she did not report the rape and physical abuse to the police, Reabetsoe said that when she told her employers that she would report them to the police, the employers laughed at her. They told her that she should not even be in South Africa and if law-enforcement knew that she was in South Africa without the necessary documentation, she will be deported before they even think about arresting the employers. Her son, whom she named Ofentse (which means "he conquered") now lives with Reabetsoe's mother in Lesotho as she is working in Johannesburg for her black middle class employers.

The abuse of domestic workers is evidently still happening in the household of the employers. None of the domestic workers have experienced abuse in the black middle class households. The vulnerability of the domestic workers is sadly to the extent that they are too scared to report this kind of abuse because, more than being afraid of their employers, they are afraid of their citizenship status in South Africa and the challenges that they experience because they are undocumented.

4.6. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the respondents. It is a significant because in order to understand their perception of their experiences as domestic workers, it is important to understand who they are as people. Furthermore, in relation to the overall objective of the dissertation, it is interesting to see the extent to which the respondents of this dissertation are similar to the respondents of *Maids and Madams*.

This chapter has understood the respondents within the context of where they are from, the languages that they speak, their past working experiences, and their current working experiences. This will form part of the overall answer to the overall objective of the dissertation.

CHAPTER FIVE:
UNDOCUMENTED, MIGRANT BASOTHO DOMESTIC WORKERS IN EKURHULENI, GAUTENG

5.1. Introduction

The respondents, whom are all undocumented Basotho migrant domestic workers, were born, bread and grew up in Lesotho. Their living conditions seem to be a lot simpler, in terms of lifestyle, than the lifestyles which they respectively live in South Africa. Some of the women say that their homes in the homelands do not have electricity. The lifestyle in the homelands are of such a nature that people awake as the sun comes up. They use natural resources to set up fire for the purpose of cooking, and use boiled water to wash dishes. The water is boiled through a pot which is placed on a fire that they set with the purpose of cooking and, as it is in this case, boiling water. Furthermore, the lifestyle of the domestic workers in Lesotho sees to them bathing with a mixture of boiled water and cold water (which may either be fetched from a tap outside of the house or at the river which they usually fetch water from and then boil before use). The absence of bathtubs as well as showers have resulted to the people who live in these areas to bath in a big dish which they refer to as a *waskom*[2]. The boiled water mixed with cold tap or river water is further used to clean the house. Children are generally encouraged to play outside and most activities take place outside of the house. Most, if not all, the people living in rural Lesotho generally have chores to do throughout the day. Therefore, by the time the sun sets, the chores are complete, supper has been cooked, served and eaten and the evening dishes have been washed. It is time for sleep.

The expenses of the respondents at home include buying food, buying furniture for their houses, which may be rondavels or basic square with four to six rooms. They need to buy clothes for the people whom they live with, (who are usually family) school uniform for their children, stationary for school and other school-related expenses. Furthermore, they have to pay school fees. There are also traditional and cultural ceremonies that take place at different stages of people's lives. These ceremonies cost a lot of money and what is needed at some of the ceremonies differs from others. These ceremonies happen for adults and for children.

[2] Waskom: A dish that is big enough to be used to either do laundry or take a bath. See appendix 4.

They are important for the relationships that families have with their ancestors. These are unavoidable and thus the money is necessary and needs to be present in order for these to take place. A big expense is usually dedicated to buying the livestock that is required and will thus be sacrificed.

Work is important under these conditions; hence, people pursue work as soon as possible and at times, sacrifice further education for work. The financial responsibilities do not go away. The move to South Africa aims at making their financial burdens a lot easier however, the living conditions in South Africa may be more expensive than it is in Lesotho because in South Africa, electricity, for example, is a necessary expense.

The respondents underline that Gauteng, "the place of gold", carries the connotation that there is a lot of money shared by all who live there. Therefore, the families of the respondents expect to be "well taken care of" if one of their family members work in Gauteng.

When the respondents were interviewed on their living conditions in South Africa, their responses differed on the basis of financial pressure. This chapter will discuss the respondents living conditions in South Africa.

5.2. A reflection of the living conditions of the migrant Basotho domestic workers

Some of the migrant domestic workers who work for black middle class households find their living conditions convenient. According to three of the ten respondents, living in their employers' homes/place of work financially works to their advantage. Seven out of the ten respondents do not like living with their employers for various reasons.

The table below illustrates the participants' perceptions of their living conditions.

Table 4: The participants' perceptions of their living conditions.

Respondents	Does the living arrangement work for you?
1	"Yes. Despite the various challenges which may come with living in the same house or sharing space with a family that has employed you 24/7, there are positives which I benefit from. The arrangement works for me because I save on rent (I do not have to pay for rent) and other expenses to keep a household running such as water, electricity and other household rates".
2	"Yes. I save a lot of my money. I do not earn a lot of money and as

	someone who comes from a background where I did not have to pay so many household expenses, living with my employers helps me to minimise expenses in South Africa so that I can send as much money as possible back home in Lesotho. I do not want to find myself adding on to my expenses therefore, by living with my employers, does not add rent to my list of financial burdens".
3	"Yes. I do not have to pay for water, buy electricity, pay for rent or any other rates. I use my salary to thus pay some of my bills or send the money back home".
4	"No. To live with my employers means that I have no knock-off time. I knock off when my employers have had their last cup of tea and I have to wash those dishes. The lady in the house (one of my employers) is very strict with dishes not being washed; therefore, dishes cannot stay in the sink overnight".
5	"No. I have very early mornings as I have to wake up before everyone in the morning to prepare breakfast. Due to the fact that I live in the house with them, I have no excuse for oversleeping. I cannot sleep past 6am. And it is also very difficult to get time off. Even on days which I am considered to be off, if I am in the house, the cleaning and cooking chores must be done by me – no matter how minimal the work that needs to be done".
6	"No. I do not enjoy overhearing the arguments that my employers have. And because they know that I know what happens or overhear their arguments, they expect me to understand things that I have no business understanding".
7	"No. I can definitely feel that this is not my house. I wish that I had a house next to the dogs and far away from the main house. That way, no one will bother me if I am not working or if it is not during my working hours. My peace is disturbed even when I am supposed to be off duty. The children in the house knock on my door when they want food or something to drink regardless of the time. The teenagers go out until very late and when they come back, they either make a noise right outside of my door and then my sleep is disturbed, or they knock on my door, wake me up just to ask me if there is food for them to eat. At times, I am expected to wake

	up and open the gate for them as their parents are asleep. My private time is not respected".
8	"No. My privacy is minimal".
9	"No. I have a controlled personal life. I cannot have any visitors and even the amount of times I can go and visit people is limited because it is dependent on when or if I finish my duties before I can head out".
10	"No. I have minimal privacy and I am treated like one of the children in the house. My employer shouts at me using an inappropriate tone, as if she is speaking to one of her children. Every time we get into an argument about her coming and out of my room and doing as she pleases, I am reminded of the fact that this is her house and she will do whatever she wants in this house".

Most of the domestic workers seem to feel that the living arrangement with their employers is not ideal. In fact, most of the domestic workers strongly feel that the disadvantages of living with their employers outweigh the advantages. However, due to the fact that it is of significant financial advantage for the respondents to live with their employers in the same household, the respondents explain to find other alternatives to make their stay more comfortable. One of the things that the respondents do is visit often during the weekends. Most of the respondents mostly visit their boyfriends whom they met in Gauteng.

The alternatives include frequent overnight visits to the men whom they meet in Gauteng; men whom the respondents refer to as their boyfriends. The living conditions of their boyfriends may not be of the standard of middle class black people, but because the men they date are South Africans, they usually have their own houses – however small or designed (i.e., shacks, small houses or RDP houses).

The respondents emphasise that they spend as much time as they possibly can outside of the house. The time may be very little but even during lunch breaks, they are able to meet each other and sit together on a pavement just 'to catch up'. In as much as it may be for the reason of wishing for sanity outside of their place of work, it is also because they come from living conditions that do not allow for one to be outdoors all day. Their living conditions at home (in Lesotho) promote interaction with various people on a social level. The interaction that they have on a daily basis with their employers, it is on a professional level. On weekends

when they are not working, the respondents try to avoid the house (their workplace/place of residence in South Africa) so that they do not have to spend the day outside of the house. The weekends then will see to the respondents spending time in malls or shopping centers, and parks with other domestic areas who work in the same area as they do.

5.3. The physical living conditions of the respondents

The physical living conditions of the respondents are the most obvious and immediate factors that underline the living conditions of the domestic workers. The table below illustrates the features that make up the physical living conditions of the interviewed respondents.

Table 5: The physical living conditions of the interviewed respondents

Respondents	Room outside of the house	Room inside the house	Private Toilet	Table	Chair	Bed
1	✓		✓		✓	✓
2		✓			✓	✓
3		✓			✓	✓
4		✓		✓	✓	✓
5	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
6	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
7		✓		✓	✓	✓
8	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
9		✓		✓	✓	✓
10	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

The table below is an extension of the table above; it indicates additional aspects of the respondents' physical living conditions.

Table 6: Physical living conditions of the respondents

Respondents	Cupboards	Drawers	Pillow (Pillow cases included) provided by employers	Bedding (Mattress, Blanket, Sheets) provided	Mirror	Other

				by employers		
1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Heater; Radio
2	✓		✓	✓		Couch; Radio
3	✓		✓	✓	✓	Extra Mattress; Radio
4	✓		✓	✓		Extra Blankets; Radio
5	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Heater and a kitchen; my room is a flat outside of the house which contains an outside kitchen as well; Radio
6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Outside kitchen; Radio
7	✓		✓	✓		Gas Heater; Radio

8	✓		✓	✓	✓	Gas Stove; Radio
9	✓		✓	✓		Couch; Radio
10	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Gas Stove, Extra blanket, and heater; Radio

5.4. Confiding in the domestic worker and confiding in the employer

The respondents who I interviewed discuss that their employers confide in them about many of their personal issues. The consensus is that employers confide more in the domestic workers than the domestic workers confide in the employers. Furthermore, employers confide in domestic workers about very personal issues, while employers use the opportunity to confide in employers to rather strategically discuss the issues that they may have with their work conditions.

Most of the respondents chuckle at the some of the stories that their employers have told them; they further make fun of them, highlighting that some problems are more funny than serious. All respondents indicate that it is their female employers who confide in them while the male employers do not make an effort to communicate with them. In fact, when they refer to their employers, they usually refer to the wife in the house. The respondents were careful to not go into detail about the things that their employers have confided in them, but they were able to say that the issues which employers have confided in them about vary.

Kgothalo works in a household where the wife is one of two wives (polygamy). She discusses that her employer confides in her a lot about her husband, the first wife and her in-laws. There are many dynamics that have to come into play when one enters into a polygamous marriage, particularly as a second wife. *Kgothalo* grew up in an environment where polygamy is not frowned upon. She is not part of a polygamous marriage, but she gets it

because in Lesotho, particularly in the royal house, it is not a foreign concept. *Kgothalo* believes that perhaps her employer confides in her because she gives good advice on how to deal with the matter as well as to off-load.

"*In the black culture, when a woman gets married, she has to sacrifice even the relationship which she has with her family and create new family bonds with her in-laws as they now are her new family*", explains Kgothalo (2016-08).

However, *Kgothalo*'s employer does not have a good relationship with her in-laws. It is for this reason that *Kgothalo* claims to have a found a sister whom she can confide in about her marital problems, because her in-laws are not there for her.

Thatohatsi works in a family where not all of the children were born in that marriage. The couple which she works for only has one child between them; the other children are from previous relationships. Two children are from the husband's previous marriage and the other child is from the wife's previous relationship. *Thatohatsi* expresses that this tends to be challenging for her and therefore her employer confides in her about the challenges she is faced with which comes with this issue. *Thatohatsi* does not go into detail about what discussions they have had. However, she does mention that she has begun to be critical of her version of events because by her employer's family spending a lot of time at their house, she has heard her employer's mother speak ill of the children who are from her husband's previous marriage. *Thatohatsi* also mentions that she has heard her employer's family speak ill of people who are married into the family. *Thatohatsi* exclaims that such antics which she has noticed have made her realise that her employer and her family may be a significant part of the problems she has with her step-children.

Other issues which employers seem to confide in the respondents about include work related issues (salary issues, internal and external conflict which extent from the work environment). Employers also confide in the domestic workers about gossip pertaining to their friends and the dynamics of the circles that they run in. At times, *Mpho* puts forward, there is no need for their employers to tell them or confide in them about a particular issue – they usually notice the tension. *Mpho* underlines that the money and status which has come with being a black middle class family in Gauteng may have come with a slight detachment from what is expected from a black wife. And she has puts emphasis on the fact that this seems to be the genesis of the problems that "*[t]hese young black girls who have gone to school and now have money*" have in their marriage. *Mpho* discusses an incident that she witnessed happen to

her employer to back-up the above made statement. *Mpho* begins by discussing cultural necessities in terms of behaviour when someone has passed away in your family. As a bride in a black family, according to *Mpho*, your dress code and your behaviour are the most basic displays of respect to the family and the death at hand. *Mpho* expresses that her employer has complained about the treatment that she receives from her in-laws. When a member of the family past away (in her marital family), *Mpho*'s employer first and foremost got a domestic worker (i.e. *Mpho*) to go and do the chores which she was supposed to do at her in-laws' house as the bride of the house. And to add salt to the wound, her employer was dressed in an inappropriate fashion at the funeral. *Mpho* then states that the manner in which she carries herself will naturally attract a distaste consequences of disrespecting culture. When *Mpho*'s employer confides in *Mpho*, she reaches out for support in a way from *Mpho*.

5.4.1. The extent to which the respondents become part of the family when their employers confide in them

In the event where both the employer and the domestic worker are black people and the difference between them is class as opposed to race, being part of the family tends to take different conditions which qualify to make a domestic worker "part of the family" and the respondents feel very strongly about this.

According to the respondents, what does it mean to be part of the family? The respondents all associated the concept of "being part of the family" with an African blueprint – a concept which goes beyond being passed on with old clothes and Christmas gifts. The black domestic worker and the black domestic worker are expected to understand one another in greater depth, according to some respondents. Yet some black employers have proven themselves to be worse than white employers, according to some of the respondents.

The modern subject re-constructed Ubuntu and removed it from colonial values and shapes the definition of the philosophy of Ubuntu around the individual, not the communal. What this means is that, originally and in the African context, Ubuntu referred to communal living. In this context, elders had a place and were respected appropriately regardless of their class or financial ability. Ubuntu has now shifted to be placed around the individual. Within this context, the individual takes preference over the communal. An individual's class takes preference over an elder. The respondents of this dissertation are victim of this shift in the meaning of Ubuntu. If Ubuntu still centred around communal values, they would be treated with better respect and not be so vulnerable as workers. This does not mean that they would

have to be paid more money, it is simply referring to the fact that the respondents would not only be reduced to the term "ousi", but rather even though the domestic workers clean up after their employers and their families, the manner in which they are addressed should be more respective. The employers who now fall under black middle class and by moving into the city, they have moved away from the homelands, the more they lose the true essence of Ubuntu – and in the African context, they lose family values as well. More black people move into the city, into the setting that is away from communal values. In essence, the African communities have shared values on Ubuntu but those values are where their reasons of viewing Ubuntu converge.

A number of respondents have referred to their employers as "white people trapped in black bodies". They have described their employers to be so far away from black realities that they take a "white stance" on showing familial values towards anyone – especially domestic workers who are not on the same class level as they are and work for them. In the case of the black middle class employers and the respondents' perception of the black middle class employers, the black subject (the employers) tries to prove the importance of his/her being and belonging in a western society to the extent that the concept and the values of the concept which raised them to be black Africans (Ubuntu praxis) has now been re-constructed into a power tool for the western society to put to the black subject once again, that they have something which the black subject does not have such as human rights. The respondents may fall short on all their human rights in the work context but they do not relate in a familial manner with their employers when the employers are part of a system that takes away the respondents' human rights. According to Mpho, "If we were truly considered to be part of the family, our employers would have us registered by now so that we do not have to go through so many challenges every year at the Lesotho-South Africa border to get to work".

The respondents mostly cry when they discuss the atrocities of the border every January when they are expected to come back to work in South Africa. Some women have been arrested. The respondents discuss the experiences that they have encountered while crossing the border to come into South Africa or to go back to Lesotho knowing that their passports have expired. The experiences have also included aggressive treatment from the soldiers at the borders. There have been times that, as *Bohlale* explains, that she has had to hide in large bodies of water or in high grass in order to hide from the soldiers and then when night time comes, she sneaks out of Lesotho and into South Africa. *Thatohatsi* expressed that she needed to cross from South Africa into Lesotho. There came a man who told her that she

should come into his car and she will get her to cross the border and leave her close to her home as he can get. When she got into the car, she explains that there were other people inside. It was at night so people could not see through the dark car. She explains that the people in the car insisted that everyone in the car had to be quiet and literally physically lie low in the car. They were in that position for three hours and then they successfully crossed the border. They are usually given a month to return to Lesotho/be in South Africa, according to the stamps in their passports. However, it is unrealistic for them to go back home on a monthly basis in order to get their passports stamped.

The respondents have resorted to measures such as giving their passports to taxi drivers who regularly drive down to Lesotho. They have to send them to Lesotho with their passports and those passports should be accompanied with money so that the taxi drivers can bribe the border officials to stamp the passports so that the domestic workers are not arrested upon their arrival in Lesotho; this way, their passports will be regarded to have not expired. There have been many occasions where the taxi drivers disappeared with the money and the passports. The passports were found in some cases, and in other cases, new passports had to be acquired. There is a high risk of losing your passport trying to keep your job. Some domestic workers discuss that they have to swim in rivers and hide in bushes to hide from the border police/army – discreetly crossing the border into South Africa. In some instances, they have had to use their relatives' passports to go through the border. The respondents cry as they explain the physical injuries they have sustained through the border ordeal.

> *None of this would happen if our employers registered us and we had a work permit. We would not be going through extra expenses just to stay in our jobs. And we cannot leave because we need the money. We leave their homes in December and they do not check to see if we are safe and at home and encountered no problems at the border. In January when we get back, they pretend to care and dedicate thirty minutes to hearing about the ordeals we have had to go through to get back. They then just say sorry and the New Year begins for us at work* (Bohlale, 2016-08).

Responding to the question whether she ever asks her your employer what the reason is for not having her registered, *Bohlale* noted:

> *"All the time. Her answer is the same as the answer which my previous black middle class employer gave me. She insists that if she has me registered, then I will live in South Africa but work for different people or quit working at her house and now*

someone else will benefit from me being registered under her name. All these employers are the same. They pretend to care when they sit and listen to our stories about our families back at home, or how we became domestic workers. They even sit and listen to us tell them about our challenges at the border and they still do nothing to help us when they have the power to do so. That is not how family treats each other. We are not part of their families" (Bohlale, 2016-08).

5.5. Payment in kind

Most of the interviewed respondents understood very little about what "payment in kind" meant. After the concept was explained to the participant, referring to what Cock mentioned when she referred to payment in kind, the reaction of the respondents boiled down to one statement: "That is the least that our employers can do".

5.5.1. The non-wage benefits received by the respondents

All the women, interestingly, listed their live-in arrangement as a benefit of their jobs – emphasizing that they do not have to pay rent. It is a point that they see as a benefit because domestic workers who are South African have to come in at a particular time in the morning and then leave at a particular time in the afternoon. The travel costs which these domestic workers incur on a daily basis to get to work and get back home are not reimbursed. Therefore, their salary is received with a fixed expense, which, the Basotho domestic workers are exempt from.

It is very interesting that all the women, not interviewed at the same time but rather interviewed on a one-on-one basis, include this particular factor as a benefit and do not necessarily see their living arrangements in their place of employment a requirement. As a researcher, I had to go back and ask how or why they saw their living arrangements as a benefit. The answers were as follows:

Seven of the respondents said that their employers told them that living-in without having to p ay rent is a benefit and not a job requirement. *Thatohatsi* further stated that her employer told her that living in the house is not a right, but a privilege. Any other domestic worker has to sort out her own accommodation. There is no job that provides free accommodation; therefore, the employer is being very generous by opening her home to *Thatohatsi* and allowing her to make it her home.

Reabetsoe is one of the three respondents who did not include the living arrangements as a benefit. Her employers are currently paying school fees for her children. That does not happen often with employers. In *Reabetsoe*'s third year of working for her, she states that she struggled very dearly with her children in terms of supporting them financially. She continuously asked for advances on payment from her employers and eventually had quite a heavy debt with them. Her employer finally asked her what she needed the money for, insisting that she would never be able to pay back all the money she has asked for advances for. *Reabetsoe* explained that she was struggling with financially supporting her children and their school attendance has been suffering the most. It is from this that her employers decided to pay for her children's school fees until they complete matric. Her first child is in grade 6 at a school in the township where her school fees costs R250 a year. Her second child is in grade two and his school fees costs R170 a year.

Reabetsoe insists that this is the greatest benefit that she can think of from her job and as far as she is concerned, it is the best benefit that she could ever have. She is grateful for it and it definitely outweighs any other benefit that she is supposed to have as prescribed by any law.

Khomotso's story is similar to that of *Reabetsoe* but unique in its detail and very close to her heart. *Khomotso* met her employers while she was pregnant. Her husband had already left her and she needed to find a job in order to support the baby as well as her family back at home. When her son was born, her employers adopted her son. There were no official legal documents to indicate the adoption of her son was official, but there was a commitment that for as long as *Khomotso* worked for them, her employers will financially take care of the child. Her employers have stayed committed to this agreement. Her son has been in private schools since pre-school and through primary school. Her son is now in high school and attends a private school. *Khomotso*'s son lives inside the main house with her employers. Her son is provided with an allowance on a monthly basis, clothes and school stationary are bought for him on a monthly basis as well. *Khomotso*'s son is however excluded from benefits such as medical aid cover. When he is sick, he goes to a public or government hospital or clinic.

This may arguably be another method of 'payment in kind'. However, in the case at hand where this dissertation reflects a class differentiation between the maid and the madam, there are a few questions which are relevant to be asked. The respondents who have been interviewed have stated ways in which employers have either helped them or shown a way to

support them. If these employers are able to put the children of their domestic workers through school or pay for the domestic workers to receive private medical care when needed, why can they not pay them more so that the domestic workers themselves may empower themselves and be put in a position to be able to do some of these things for themselves?

The other benefits, which the domestic workers spoke of, were being able to eat the food that the employers buy for them. They insist that the luxury to eat Woolworths food over food bought on the side of the road or Shoprite is a definite benefit. However, six of the respondents said that they were denied the food in the house. This will be discussed further in the chapter on the living conditions of the domestic workers.

5.6. The term 'ousi'

'Ousi' is a term that is used to refer to Basotho domestic workers. The word's direct translation is "sister" is Sesotho. Most people believe this word to be a respectful way of referring to the domestic worker. But there are some domestic workers who are not fond of the term "ousi".

Ousi, according to some of the respondents, has made it easy for domestic workers to be subjects rather than people. She insists that this term, which has changed meaning over time, which makes domestic workers easier to victimize, particularly in their uniform. Furthermore, "ousi" is a general term that refers to all domestic workers; it does not separate the older women from the younger women. To refer to the notion of 'one of the family' once again, if that were true, as one of the respondents clearly stated, then there would be a difference between the women who are young enough to be called "ousi" and those who are old enough to be called "mama". And the manner and level at which respect is given to them. When the respective participant was asked what this meant, she responded by saying:

> *We do not expect them to do our job for us – it is work after all and it is the reason why we are plus it is a way in which we make our money. However, the manner in which the very children of the house talk to us, talk about us or even address us should reflect respect to me as their elder. The manner in which our employers address us or speak to us should be with respect. There are some women who serve them that are older than them. Family, in the African context, tells us that there should be respect given to your elders* (Neo, 2016-08).

Furthermore, some of the domestic workers discuss how their consumption of food is carefully monitored. The monitoring of food ranges. *Katleho* discusses that she is allowed to eat as much bread and eggs as she wants to, but cannot have meat and vegetables without the family. In other words, meat and vegetables can be eaten when the family has them for either lunch or supper. *Neo* explains that she is told that she has to buy her own groceries as she does earn a salary. As a result, the employer comes home each day from work and monitors how much food has been eaten or taken. She then explains that sometimes, the children will come back home from school with friends and they will eat the food. Then when their mother comes back home from work, she assumes *Neo* ate some of the food. When *Neo* explains that the children came home with friends and they all ate the food, she shouts at her and tells her that she must tell her children's friends to not eat the food. "*How does she expect me to have a food conversation with children whom she taught to even monitor me when it comes to the food in their house?*" (Neo, 2016-08*)*.

Conversely, there are domestic workers (also referred to as ousi) who do feel that they are part of the family. Despite the similar treatment that they receive from time to time, they cannot ignore the fact that their employers have assisted them with their children. Two of the respondents cannot out aside that their employers really helped them. One of the respondents is humbled by the fact that her employer adopted her child and gave her child the very same education and opportunities that she gave her children. Another respondent insists that she is humbled by the fact that her employer pays her children's school fees:

> *Family helps each other. Family is supportive and family steps in where we cannot. That is what my employers have done for me. They are my family*. (Khomotso, 2016-08*)*.

Six out of the ten respondents agreed that they do feel that they are part of the family.

- ➔ Two respondents say that this is because their children are financially taken care of by their employers in some way.
- ➔ Four respondents say that this is because even with the food in the house, they are given permission to eat. They do not pay rent, rates, water or electricity and they do not need to buy their own food.

Four out of the ten respondents insist that they do not feel part of the family. Their reason is that they cannot be fooled by the free accommodation. The treatment that they receive as

domestic workers in uniform outweighs the free accommodation by far. They feel like employers and nothing more.

5.7. Stokvels

Stokvels are entered into with the intention to make the financial plan of an individual better. The respondents express that it is the best saving method for them, people who do not have bank accounts and are unable to open bank accounts in South Africa because they are not registered workers.

The stokvel systems work in the following way:

The group of people (of no more than twelve) decide on how much they are willing to pay out on a monthly basis; the respondents in the research pay out R500 on a monthly basis.

At the beginning of each year, each member of the stokvel will decide when he or she wishes to be paid out. It may be because of family commitments that require money or it could be because of another financially consuming priority. With ten people (in this case) in the group, and nine R500s being paid to you on your particular month, you will end up with R4500 for your selected month. The following month, it will be someone else's turn to be paid. But R500 has to come out of each member's pocket for ten months unless it is your month to receive the R500s from other members. The system works because it helps with the saving/banking process for the respondents, as they are unable to have savings accounts at the banks.

5.8. Conclusion

This chapter has reflected the living conditions of the respondents of the dissertation. This chapter has underlined the physical living conditions of the respondents as well as the reflection of the living condition of the respondents based on the respondents' perspectives. This chapter has also looked into payment in kind as well as the other non-wage benefits that are received by the respondents. This chapter has also looked into the role of the stokvels that the respondents are part of.

The matters raised in this chapter are important to the overall objective of the dissertation because it feeds into relevance of the living conditions of the migrant Basotho domestic workers. There are numerous similarities between the respondents of this dissertation and the respondents of *Maids and Madams* in relation to the living conditions. There are significant differences which come up throughout the interviews/findings and thus form an important

part of the overall objective of the dissertation – it brings to task whether or not Cock's *Maids and Madams* is relevant to the living and working conditions of migrant Basotho domestic workers.

CHAPTER SIX:
BASOTHO DOMESTIC WORKERS LIVING IN THE HOMES OF THEIR EMPLOYERS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the previous chapter (chapter five). It analyses the living conditions of the domestic workers based on the findings of the research as well as the existing literature that is underlined in chapter two. This analysis is essential to this dissertation because it fuses what literature has said with what the respondents have said. From this, an answer to the overall dissertation is formed and the dissertation fills the gap within literature concerning domestic workers and domestic service.

6.2. Domestic workers at a disadvantage: the crisis of being undocumented

The respondents are at a disadvantage. They are in South Africa without the necessary documentation. Based on this alone, the respondents experience challenges on a social level already, before they are in a position of work. The problems begin with the confiscation of the respondents' passports and further fester in the living-in arrangements of the domestic workers.

6.2.1. Confiscations of passports

The literature, as put forward in the literature review, expresses that most employers confiscate the migrant domestic workers' passports in order to control their movement and ensure that they do not run away (Fernandez, 2014: 57). This is not what the research has found through the conduction of the interviews. With the exception of one participant, all the other respondents keep their own passports and have full control and possession of their passports. The employers have not confiscated any passports.

The one participant whose passport is confiscated had her passport confiscated by an agent; an illegal migrant domestic worker recruitment agent. She arrived in South Africa through this agent and her passport was confiscated by the agent with the intention to control her movement and prevent her from running away.

The literature is not irrelevant in this aspect. The passports of a significant number of migrant domestic workers are still being confiscated. The difference however, according to the findings of the research, is that the employers are no longer the ones who confiscate the passports but rather the illegal agents now. The participant expresses that the agents now receive them from Lesotho and provide them with a place to stay and food to eat until they find employment. The stay and food is billed up and then make them pay back in cash on a monthly basis. The passports are thus confiscated until the debt set by the agents is settled. This is the new conditions under which passports are now confiscated.

6.2.2. The living-in arrangements of the domestic workers

The living-in arrangement of the domestic workers is an interesting point of discussion. There seems to be minimal change in what literature has stated and what the findings of the research reflect. The literature review has discussed that living-in domestic workers have no private space within the houses which they work in, nor do the domestic workers have any other form of relationships with people who are not their employer or part of the employer's family (Fernandez & de Regt, 2014: 12). The findings of this research reflect that the living conditions at work are not ideal. The privacy is minimal. The respondents reflect that their privacy is better respected in public spaces not so much because there are no people in these public spaces, but because they know nobody and they will not be "performing work". No one will ask them to do anything job-related. It is in the public space where they are people first before they are domestic workers. In public spaces, people say "excuse me" when they bump into them and when people do not apologise for offending them. It is not because their foreheads are stamped "domestic worker". It is when the domestic workers step out of their

employers' homes that they can socialise with people who are not their employers or people who are not related to their employers.

The privacy element, however, is not only lost for the domestic workers. The employers lose an element of their privacy as well. The findings of this research reflect that employers can barely have private arguments without the domestic workers overhearing them. Furthermore, the notion of "if you want a family's business, always ask the maid" is true. The respondents insist that there is nothing that they do not know about their employers and their business. Firstly, this is possible because the employers confide in the respondents (their domestic workers) about everything but also because secondly, everything that does not happen at work happens in their homes. The domestic workers are around the house most of the time and because they are usually seen as invisible when there are houseguests or the employers do not need them for talking about their problems, the domestic workers easily witness the lives of their employers. Some domestic workers communicated that they know and witness more than they would like to.

Literature has not completely provided detail on this phenomenon. It is very interesting because in as much as the domestic workers have minimal privacy, the fact that they are an imperceptible body in the house to a considerable extent, their employers put the living-in domestic workers in a position to invade the employers' privacy both intentionally and unintentionally.

6.3. Conditions in Lesotho that 'pushed' the domestic workers to South Africa

Research shows that Basotho migrant domestic workers are motivated to move to South Africa because of the lack of secure livelihoods in rural areas as well as the poor regional economy (Kiwanuka *et al*,2015: 2). The economy in Lesotho is not strong and based on the findings of the research, the fact that Basotho domestic workers find employment in South Africa is a supreme antidote to their living realities in Lesotho.

However, this is not the sole reason and motivation to move. Most of the respondents reflect that they found themselves in a position to need to work at a young age because of social and cultural catalytic circumstances such as "*Ho shobediswa*[3]". This is a reality that many of the respondents. They were later left by their husbands with children and no option to return to school and improve their education. The cultural expectation of the wife staying home and

[3] Arranged marriage.

performing house chores had to end and the respondents had to find a way to provide financially for their children and the rest of their family. They used the only skills that they would 'sell' (i.e. cleaning and cooking) for the purpose of generating an income for their households. This was not a feasible option in Lesotho because the respondents were underpaid and overworked – hence they moved to South Africa. In South Africa, they are still underpaid and overworked but the payment here does more for the respondents' livelihoods far more than what the payment in Lesotho does.

6.4. **The nature of domestic work**

6.4.1. To be 'one of the family'

The notion of 'one of the family' makes domestic service very uncertain, particularly in the African context. Research has shown that the idea of being 'part of the family' is common in the context of inter-racial employment relationships between a white madam and a black maid. It is a completely different perspective when both the maid and the madam are black.

In 1989, Hansen wrote that the fact that a domestic worker works in the intimate setting of her employers' household might put her in a position to feel like she is part of the family but in reality, she is merely a distant companion. In 2009, Ally noted that, because the job of a domestic worker is intertwined with the private life of the employer, the employer thus tends to distance herself from the domestic worker in order to avoid uncomfortable situations. These two statements do not necessarily contradict each other, but rather Ally provides an explanation for what Hansen stated in 1989: an explanation as to why the domestic worker remains a distant companion. Cock provides that employers do not refrain from trying to make domestic workers feels as though they are 'one of the family' and one of the many ways in which they try to make domestic workers 'one of the family' is through payment-in-kind (Cock, 1989).

The findings of this research support Cock's analysis of the notion of 'one of the family'. There certainly is a significant attempt of trying to make the respondents feel as though they are 'one of the family'. This is recognised through the fact that the employers confide in the domestic workers, the respondents feel that by them staying in the house of their employers is a great gesture and a huge payment-in-kind. They believe that with their salary, they cannot afford a place to stay and this is one of the benefits and a form of payment-in-kind that extend beyond their salary. In two cases (i.e. two of the respondents), the employers have taken it upon themselves to financially take care of their children. Cock notes that payment-in-kind is

a mechanism used by the employer on domestic workers to promote as well as generate personal loyalty and commitment (Cock, 1989).

One of the respondents became financially stranded in the third year of her employment with the current employer. She stated that she struggled intensely with supporting her children financially. She continuously asked for advances on payment from her employers and eventually had quite a heavy debt with them. Her employer finally asked her what she needed the money for, insisting that she would never be able to pay back all the money she has asked for advances for. The respective participant explained that she was struggling with financially supporting her children and their school attendance has been suffering the most. It is from this that her employers decided to pay for her children's school fees until they complete matric. Her first child is in grade 6 at a school in the township where her school fees costs R250 a year. Her second child is in grade 2 and his school fees costs R170 a year.

Another respondent found herself in a position of being financially 'rescued' by her employers. Her employer/s adopted her son at birth. There were no official legal documents to indicate the adoption of her son was official, but there was a commitment that for as long as the respective participant worked for her employers, the employers will financially take care of the child. Her employers have stayed committed to this agreement. Her son has been in private schools since pre-school and through primary school. Her son is now in high school and attends a private school. The respective respondent's son lives inside the main house with her employers; he has his own room just like the son who lives is the employers' child. Her son is provided with an allowance on a monthly basis, and he is bought clothes and school stationary needed for school purposes.

These are evidently strategies that support the notion of 'part of the family'. However, some respondents feel that even though their employers attempt to have the kind of relationship that will deem them part of the family, it does not work because the employers insist on taking a western stance on the concept of family. It differs immensely in a situation where both the employer and the domestic worker are black: there is some cultural expectation if you refer to someone as 'part of your family'.

Ally (2009) further underlines that the notion 'one of the family' belittles domestic work obliging domestic workers to perform more duties out of familial obligation rather than it being part of the employment agreement. This aspect makes the domestic service itself vulnerable. Some of the respondents insist that weekends are their days off but if there are

dishes to be washed or tidying up to be done, it has to be done by the domestic worker. Because it is their days off, it is evident that it is expected to be something that is done as a favour rather than an employment obligation. The depth of the frustration that arises from this kind of employers' expectation arises because the black employer and the black domestic worker relationship comes with particular expectations. There is a certain level of being belittled that the respondents state that they may accept from white employers, but will not accept from black employers.

6.5. Residing and working in the intimate space of family life

The live-in domestic workers work and reside in the intimate space of the family life of the employers. Ally (2009) expresses that the domestic worker's work is fixed within the lives of the employers. The findings of the research reflect the extent to which this is true, which makes it difficult to be excluded from the intimacy of the employer's family.

Five out of the ten respondents have rooms inside of their employers' houses. This signifies the fact that at least half of the respondents live inside the house of the employers as opposed to an outside room. This means that it is very possible that after a long day of work where the employer may have possibly confided in the domestic worker, the domestic worker possibly hears conversations and arguments which take place between the family which she works for. Furthermore, the same domestic workers who have bedrooms inside the houses of their employers possibly share a bathroom inside of the house with some of the family members. As the findings boldly reflect, the respondents who have rooms inside of the house do not have private restrooms. A toilet or restroom is a very intimate setting in that if someone does not live in a particular place, they should rather use a guest toilet. This is a clear indication of the fact that in the case that a guest toilet is not used, there exists a significant invasion of privacy.

Carroll discusses, as reflected in the literature review, that the madams sometimes find themselves with maids who are older than them and who thus assume a motherly or sisterly role; this creates a disempowerment for the employer when it comes to giving instructions. According to Carroll (2014), cultural beliefs shape the nature of the relationship between the maid and the madam.

The findings of this research are very much contradictory to what Carroll has found in her research. The reason for this may be because of the fact that in this research, both the maid and the madam are black. But if this is the sole reason, then Carroll's stance should be

enhanced. Rather, the element of class between the black madam and the black maid affect their employment relationship to the extent that their relationship contradicts Carroll's stance.

The respondents have expressed that the respect element in their relationship is minimal. The respondents believe that the reason why it is so easy for black middle class employers can disrespect domestic workers who are either younger or older than them is that they are all labelled 'ousi'. The term 'ousi' means 'sister' in its most literal term. But it is a term that is used to refer to all Basotho migrant domestic workers. Some respondents have expressed that the term 'ousi' has become problematic over the years because it has taken away the person who is dressed in the uniform. The employers have now used the word 'ousi' to isolate the uniform and the person. They then focus on the uniform and see a domestic worker who is no more than a servant and should thus be treated as one.

Carroll (2014) highlights, as highlighted in the literature review, that African employers seek migrants (who are from Lesotho), immigrants or women who are from the rural areas to be their domestic workers because they are generally perceived as quiet, hard-working, obedient and less likely to want to go home all the time because home is very far.

The treatment, which the respondents receive from their employers, reflects this kind of thinking and attitude. The respondents emphasise that the manner in which their employers speak to them highlights the fact that employers understand them to be, as Carroll (2014) expresses, "quiet, obedient, hard-working, and less likely to want to go home all the time". One of the respondents added to this list, stating that the employers also believe the domestic workers to be stupid and not entitled to basic employment rights. One of the respondents claimed that her employer once said to her:

> *What I like the most about you hard workers from Lesotho is that there will never come a day when you will stand outside of my gate with a cardboard box which has insults written with a black marker because you want a wage increase. You will never bother me with wage increases and that is exactly what will keep you employed in my house* (Shoki, 2016-08).

Whether or not the enforcement of social power is necessary is debatable. The employees who are being referred to in this context are domestic workers – a workforce which is aware of its vulnerability and have limited ways to express their frustration without getting dismissed. This workforce exists in a legal vacuum, and the findings of this research show that most of the respondents have limited knowledge about their rights. And even with that

limited information, they believe that because they are not registered workers, the legislation is not necessarily applicable to them. To a significant extent, they are right. However, most of Fish's argument is reflected in the sub-title of this dissertation: *My Madam: Same race, different class*.

Cock (1989) discusses payment in kind to come in the form of food, old clothing items, or any other 'gifts' that are handed to the domestic workers which are not in the form of cash. Two domestic workers agree to have been paid in kind. These two domestic workers both have employers who financially assist in supporting their children. The other respondents believe that/insist that they too, as domestic workers, go beyond the call of duty for their employers and if there does exists a term, then they "work in kind". Payment in kind simply underlines the hierarchical nature of the relationship between the domestic worker and the employer in that that the employer can give the domestic worker gifts that she cannot return or repay shows the employer's superiority and the subordination of the domestic worker (Cock, 1989: 82).

Payment in kind is a very tricky situation. It is a way of saying that the employer and the employee work on a favour-basis and they expect it to cover up the financial obligation they have to the person who needs to be paid. Perhaps, during the era in which Cock did her research, this was an acceptable phenomenon for one reason or another. However, the migrant Basotho domestic workers who have been interviewed for the purpose of this research insist that they would be okay without the 'extras' to their salary. The payment in kind barely covers the purpose of why they are working in South Africa. The respondents insist that they are working with the purpose of doing better for their families in Lesotho. With the exception of the two respondents whose employers financially assist them with their children, none of the employers pay the respective respondents enough in kind to extend the gratitude to their families in Lesotho. The participants, according to their responses, strongly feel that more than anything, the 'payment in kind' which is referred to should be more of a benefit than payment. *I can easily find a place to stay in some back room in a township. My staying with my employer and her family is a method which works out better for her than it does for me. Yes, I do not pay rent or contribute to electricity and other expenses. But who would cook all meals for her family and clean up after them until after 10pm? Who would make late night tea for them and ensure that they have breakfast ready for them before 7am for when they go to work? My stay with my employers is not payment in kind to me, it is more of a "work in kind" from myself to my employer (*Neo, 2016-08*)*.

6.6. Domestic service located in the cultural context

When domestic work is located in the cultural context, Cock also expresses that a bride is to the hut or house of her mother in law (after her wedding and in the beginning stages of her marriage). She spends more than a year 'cooking' for her mother-in-law and is expected to be humble and diligent (Cock, 1989: 57). Her humility and diligence would be evident in her waking up before everyone else in the house, ensuring a clear sink (clear of dishes), cooking and, what Cock refers to as, "generally acting as a servant in the household" (Cock, 1989: 57). The cultural element and expectation from black employers to not be the same as white employers arises from this background – understanding this from the responses of the particularly young black employers who may be wives in. To a significant extent, the domestic workers seem to see themselves as being paid to do the work of the brides whom they work for. According to Cock's findings, the ideal situation in the cultural context is for a woman to work in the home as opposed to be working outside of her home for wages (Cock, 1989: 58).

6.7. Conclusion

This chapter analysed the living conditions of the migrant, Basotho domestic workers. It underlined the challenges of being an undocumented domestic worker. With the challenges underlined, the challenges looked at the confiscation of passports as well as the reasons that pushed the migrant Basotho domestic workers into South Africa. This chapter analysed the nature of domestic work and the understanding of the respondents being 'part of the family', the impact of domestic workers residing and working in the intimate space of their employers' homes, and domestic work in the cultural context.

The comparison of the literature and the findings have reflected similarities between Cock's findings and the findings of this dissertation. It has also underlined tensions between existing literature and the findings of this dissertation. The issues which have been raised in this chapter contribute to the overall objective of the dissertation, providing an analysis of the living conditions of the migrant, Basotho domestic workers.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
MIGRANT DOMESTIC WORKERS WORKING IN GAUTENG

7.1. Introduction

The main purpose for the respondents to be in Gauteng in the first place is to find employment. Everything else that happens while the respondents are in Gauteng is secondary to their primary goal – to find employment.

Employment in Gauteng comes with an expectation of 'a better life'. There is a broken promise of some sort that many workers intend to fulfil. Each of the respondents admit that the broken promise is exactly that – a broken promise. Most of the respondents came to Gauteng with the hope of earning enough money to make a strong and significant financial difference in their families' lives as well as their own. The respondents express that in Lesotho, there is a belief that life in Gauteng is better and that work in Gauteng provides one with enough money to make their lives better. The respondents insist that their husbands left Lesotho and came to Gauteng to chase this promise and they never returned. Now, the respondents followed suit and they too, chased the promise but when they arrived in Gauteng, the promise was broken.

There is a better life, but it is not for everyone. The respondents witness their employers live this better life and ensure that their children grow up in this good life and maintain it, but that is as far as it goes. The respondents do not receive it.

The quote below underlines the feeling that some of the respondents feel. They feel overworked and they feel that because they are in a position where they are constantly in their employers' space, there is no boundary that separates "work" time from "off" time.

> *I wish that I could live in the Wendy house set up next to the dog house where the family barely goes. That way, I will clock-in at work at 8am like any other normal employee and knock off at 7pm. Between 7:01pm and 7:59am, I should not be bothered – I should be considered 'knocked off'* (Mpho, 2016-08).

The job description of a domestic worker generally includes cleaning and cooking tasks as well as baby-sitting duties should there be children in that particular household. This job description is more in the practical sense more than a theoretical sense. Most of the respondents indicated that they do not have written job descriptions. Some respondents indicated that they have never had job descriptions in their duration of providing domestic service. And all of the respondents indicate that they prefer it when there is not a written job description.

7.2. Recruitment process into domestic work in South Africa

Shoki and *Thatohatsi* heard about their current jobs through domestic workers who work for their employers' friends. When the employers have a social gathering of some sort, they usually confide in each other about their current "help" (as the respondents put it) and then the possibility of seeking better "help". *Shoki* of the respondents hurtfully express that after the employers have discussed the inadequacy of their domestic workers, they approach the domestic worker who happens to be serving them on that particular day and ask them if they can recommend someone. *Shoki* discusses that the employers assume to be making them feel better when they express how South African domestic workers are now lazy and recite their rights when the employers reprimand them. Instead of feeling better, *Shoki* expresses that she felt disrespected and insists that if she had right to recite, she would recite them too because black employers do not know how to treat people who help them.

The employers have a way of reminding the paid "help" that they are being paid after all. *Thatohatsi* expresses that when the employers ask if they can recommend someone to be a full-time living-in domestic worker, they say *"[d]o you perhaps have a sister, cousin, aunt or friend who needs a job and will not mind coming to work for us? It will make a serious financial difference*". Due to the fact that the women usually do know someone who can make the salary work, the domestic workers suggest a domestic worker and the employers tell them to make a plan to ensure that the recommended domestic worker make a plan to come to South Africa to start work as soon as possible.

Some of the migrant domestic workers are recruited through illegal agents. Some migrant domestic workers are recruited through familial relations. Some are recruited through the existing migrant workers in South Africa.

7.3. Job description: Lesotho mothers in our homes as employees

The table below illustrates the reality of the genesis of the workplace of the interviewed Basotho domestic workers. There is only one domestic worker who has a written/documented job description.

Table 7: The respondents' written job descriptions

Number of respondents who have written job descriptions	Number of respondents who have no written job descriptions	Number of respondents who have written job descriptions but do not follow the given job descriptions
1	6	3

Reabetsoe notes that she has a written/documented job description, sternly affirming that "*[m]y employers are very professional and they make it very clear that there is a line I should never think of crossing*".

When asked to elaborate, Reabetsoe noted that she lives with a couple that expressed from the very first day that she is an employee and should thus behave as one. "Behave as one" refers to, as *Reabetsoe* puts it, not asking for favours such as half day, long lunch and tea breaks, or money. She is given a list of duties that need to be done on a particular day and she cannot knock off until those duties are carried out. Times are not necessarily provided for each task, but the tasks provided on a particular day have to be completed on that day.

Table 8: Reabetsoe's daily job description

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
↓ Make breakfast: English breakfast ↓ Take out clothes/outfit for employers to dress up and go to work in and prepare school uniform for children,	↓ Make breakfast, i.e. ensure that there is hot and cold milk available for cereal. Also make porridge (Can be Maltabela porridge,	↓ Make breakfast: English breakfast ↓ Take out clothes/outfit for employers to dress up and go to work in and prepare school uniform for children,

including polishing their shoes. - Ensure all the bedrooms in the house are clean, dusted and tidied up. - Clean the toilets and bathrooms. - Sweep and mop the patio. - Wash the dishes. - Sweep the patio. - Mop and dust the TV room and the dining area. - Clean the kitchen. - Do the laundry, iron the clothes, fold them and have them in the appropriate cupboards before employers and children return home from school/work. Clothes must be ready each morning for work. - Vacuum all the carpets. - Prepare dinner and dish for the people in the house. After this, wash the dishes used during dinner.	Jungle Oats, or White porridge). - Take out clothes/outfit for employers to dress up and go to work in and prepare school uniform for children, including polishing their shoes. - Ensure all the bedrooms in the house are clean, dusted and tidied up. - Clean the toilets and bathrooms. - Sweep and mop the patio. - Wash the dishes. - Sweep the patio. - Mop and dust the TV room and the dining area. - Clean the kitchen. - Sweep the pavement. - Take out the trash. - Clean the trash bin. - Wash carpets in the house. - Clean the garage.	including polishing their shoes. - Ensure all the bedrooms in the house are clean, dusted and tidied up. - Sweep and mop the patio. - Wash the dishes. - Sweep the patio. - Mop and dust the TV room and the dining area. - Clean the kitchen. - Do the laundry, iron the clothes, fold them and have them in the appropriate cupboards before employers and children return home from school/work. Clothes must be ready each morning for work. - Prepare dinner and dish for the people in the house. After this, wash the dishes used during dinner.
THURSDAY - Make/prepare breakfast, i.e. ensure that there is hot and cold milk available for cereal. Also make porridge (Can be Maltabela porridge,	**FRIDAY** - Make breakfast: English breakfast - Take out clothes/outfit for employers to dress up and go to work in and prepare school uniform for children,	**SATURDAY/SUNDAY** - Make/prepare breakfast, i.e. ensure that there is hot and cold milk available for cereal. Also, make porridge (Can be Maltabela porridge,

Jungle Oats, or White porridge). - Take out clothes/outfit for employers to dress up and go to work in and prepare school uniform for children, including polishing their shoes. - Ensure all the bedrooms in the house are clean, dusted and tidied up. - Clean the toilets and bathrooms. - Sweep and mop the patio. - Wash the dishes. - Sweep the patio. - Mop and dust the TV room and the dining area. - Clean the kitchen. - Sweep the pavement. - Take out the trash. - Clean the trash bin. - Vacuum the carpets. - Clean the garage.	including polishing their shoes. - Ensure all the bedrooms in the house are clean, dusted and tidied up. - Sweep and mop the patio. - Wash the dishes. - Sweep the patio. - Mop and dust the TV room and the dining area. - Clean the kitchen. - Do the laundry, iron the clothes, fold them and have them in the appropriate cupboards before employers and children return home from school/work. Clothes must be ready each morning for work. - Prepare dinner and dish for the people in the house. After this, wash the dishes used during dinner. - Vacuum the carpets.	Jungle Oats, or White porridge). - Wash the cars. - Clean the toilets in the house. - Clean the kitchen. - Prepare/make lunch. - Prepare dinner and dish for the people in the house. After this, wash the dishes used during dinner. - On weekends, I may use the dishwasher to wash the dishes. - I work at family functions, helping to cook, clean and wash dishes. These usually fall on a weekend and I should be available for at least 90% of these functions.

Five of the repondents have no written/documented contracts. Most of the domestic workers who have no written contracts believe this to be the best way of working, insisting that they would have a better cleaning schedule than the owner of the house would.

Six out of the ten respondents insist that there is just a mutual understanding that as a cleaner, one cleans the house. According to *Neo*, there is no specific written job description of what should or should not be done on a particular day. While these six domestic workers, are free

to implement a schedule of their own, the house should always be clean and look presentable. *Thatohatsi* made a powerful statement using a tongue-in-cheek tone, yet it pierces through the tone and speaks to the domestic workers who have no written contract of employment or job description or list of duties. She said:

> *How can they give us a list of duties when we learn all the corners of their houses within a week? We, as the people who clean the houses, know the corner of their houses better than the owners of the house. I think they also know that if they give us documented list of duties, they will make our jobs easier because we could easily cheat them out of their money* (Thatohatsi, 2016-08).

With this comment, *Reabetsoe* was contacted again. She is the one domestic worker who has a documented list of tasks and she insists that she follows them. Her comment on *Thatohatsi*'s statement is:

> *She is right, as a domestic worker, you know the house better than the owners of the house. However, it boils down to the honesty of the person. You can still cheat a house without a list of duties and it is easier to "miss a spot" when you have no documented list of duties because when you are reprimanded, you can easily tell your employer that you were not instructed to clean that particular place in the house. Furthermore, when you clean a house for a very long period of time, you begin to genuinely treat it like your own. It bothers you when the children come back school and make a mess. At first you get upset because it is your effort which goes into cleaning the house and it feel as though they are creating a mess over your effort. After sometime you just feel a sense of ownership: my name may not be on the title deed but the house is maintained because of me (*Reabetsoe, 2016-08).

There is room for confusion and assumption when there is minimal or no instructions of how tasks are to be done. *Bontse* stipulates that at first, she did not have a job description. She and her employer and verbally agreed that her job would be to do the laundry three times a week and clean every day. In this particular household, there are two domestic workers: *Bontse* is one of two domestic workers. *Bontse* highlights that there is

> *another lady who helps me because it is such a big house, however, she is a South African and thus has her own house in the township. She comes in the morning and leaves every evening. She does the laundry now and I just clean* (Bontse, 2016-08).

Two years into her employment in this particular household, *Bontse*'s employer's sister gave her a written job description.

> *I felt that she genuinely disrespected me at that point; it was not her place to do that. She is not the one that I have an agreement with therefore there is absolutely nothing that she should be making decisions about when it comes to the terms and conditions of my employment. If my employer was unhappy with my work, she should have told me herself.*

Shoki also does not have a job description. "*I just clean and do laundry and cook. I look after the children and that is really it. I assume that is what is expected of me so that is what I do and the money that I earn is only enough for the tasks which I have stated above.*"

When asked what she means when saying that the money she earns is only enough for the tasks that she mentioned, Shoki noted:

I earn R1800 a month. It is not a lot of money. So, I do the basic things which every domestic worker does as a standard domestic work job description. I do not go beyond the basic domestic work job description because my money does not motivate me to do so. After all, I am here to make money. This is my job. I am not here for anything else.

When asked what she considers to be a task that other domestic workers do not do because the salary is too little, Shoki responded and said,

> *Catering at events hosted by my employers. The domestic worker that I work with is South African and she arrives in the morning and leaves in the evening. She gets paid more than I do and when there are events, she always works and socialises with guests while I have to wash the dishes. Secondly, washing and ironing the clothes of relatives when they visit. The third one is cleaning up after the dogs, wash the dogs weekly and feed them. I also refuse to make the bed of my employers and their children; the other domestic worker does that. Sometimes I feel like I am not working for a black family, they are very lazy. My employer does absolutely nothing. No black mother teaches their daughter or son to be that lazy, especially when married.*

Neo works for a household where the wife is a housewife. She explains that even though she does not have a job description, she has a routine of how she cleans the house. With her madam being at home all the time, she sometimes tells *Neo* on a particular day what it is that she wants *Neo* to do; things which are beyond what *Neo* believes to be her job, such as:

- ➔ buying groceries with her madam
- ➔ driving to the dry clean with her madam and going inside the dry clean shop to either drop off clothes or collect them, and
- ➔ cooking lunch for the gardeners when they are there doing the garden and/or preparing refreshments for them.

7.4. The salary that the respondents earn and the hours that they work

At first, the discussion of the salaries was not easy because the women did not wish to disclose their salaries. After discussing the jobs that they do however, the respondents consistently put emphasis on the amount of money that they got paid and how it is very little compared to the tasks that they have to perform on a daily basis.

Table 9: Payment ranges of the respondents

	Salary Range	**Number of Domestic Workers**
A	R1 000 – R1 999	3/10
B	R2 000 – R2 999	4/10
C	R3 000 – R3 999	3/10

Category A:

Bontse earns R1500, 00 a month. Her day begins at 7am and ends at about 9pm, 10pm latest. When the work day is over, she has to have ensured that there is not a single dish which needs to be washed lying around anywhere in the house.

Thatohatsi earns R1700, 00 a month. *Thatohatsi* underlines that she begins work at 7am, soon after her employers have left for work. She does not include making breakfast for her employers before 7am. And then she works right up until she has cooked dinner and washed up the dinner dishes at 8pm.

Shoki is paid R1800, 00 a month. *Shoki* complains that her wage is very little. She begins work at 7am and knocks off at 7pm after she has cooked supper. She states that she usually

tells the children in the house to wash the dishes but this got her into trouble in the past. However, she argues, if she is expected to work past 7pm, then she should be paid more. As of late however, her employers have knocked on her door regularly at 9pm to make them tea and cake/biscuits. And she has had to wash the tea dishes afterwards. She jokes and says, "*Well I suppose I now officially knock off around 10:30pm*".

Category B:

Mpho earns R2500, 00. She co-works with another live-in domestic worker from Lesotho, *Bohlale*, who also earns R2500, 00. They both have to start work at 5:30am where they have to prepare breakfast for their employers and their children. Their day is then followed by an undocumented schedule of cleaning, cooking and laundry duties shared between the two of them. Their day ends at 10pm. They both concur that the house is very big, and with four children in the house, a domestic worker's job is never done.

Neo is paid R2800, 00 a month. Nikiwe's duties begin when she prepares breakfast for her employers at 5am and ends at 8pm. Her last duty of each day is washing the supper dishes and pots.

Katleho earns R2600, 00 a month. She assumes her duties at 6am and "knocks off" at 9pm. However, she, like many of the other domestic workers, she is sometimes called or the members of the family she works for knock on her door in need of things or my "services" well past 9pm.

Category C:

Khomotso earns R3000, 00 a month. Her day begins at 5:30am and ends at 9pm.

Kgothalo is paid R3500, 00 a month. *Kgothalo* assumes her job duties at 7am and discusses to knock off officially at 11pm when the family goes to bed as well.

Reabetsoe earns the most money out of all the interviewed respondents, she earns R3800, 00 a month. Her day begins at 5am and conclude after 11pm.

These working hours are not only inhumane, but are also unlawful.

None of the respondents receives a pay slip. It is standard employment procedure for employees to receive a pay slip. A pay slip helps and is required for things like taking out a formal and legal loan at the bank, buying a house, or buying a car. The fact that the respondents do not receive a pay slip means that they are unable to do any of these things

listed above. Furthermore, this further adds on to the many factors that make domestic workers go to loan sharks for loans.

The lack of pay slips is a clear sign of the fact that the employees place the respondents in an even more vulnerable position. At this point, there is no documented contract of employment, there are very little, if any, written out job descriptions amongst the respondents, and now there is no pay slip. There is no documented evidence of the respondents working as domestic workers in the houses of their black middle class employers.

Upon the realization of the fact that there is no documented evidence of the employment of the respondents, the researcher went back and telephonically interviewed the respondents again. The intention was to find out if their previous employers had given them any documents that proved their employment, i.e. a contract of employment, a pay slip, and a written job description.

Only three of the respondents ever had job descriptions, contracts of employment, and pay slips. Neo had a contact of employment and a pay slip when she worked on a farm for white employers. Katleho worked in a private-owned company as a cleaner and she too, had a contract of employment, a pay slip, and a written job description. Khomotso had a pay slip and a written contract of employment when she worked as a cook and cleaner at a Halaal fast food shop/restaurant.

The other seven respondents have never had contracts of employment, written job descriptions, and pay slips. What the researcher found to be most interesting is that the respondents who also worked in Chinese shops prior to their domestic work also did not have documented evidence of their employment.

7.5. A thirteenth cheque

The respondents openly and happily spoke about their thirteenth cheque, or lack of, in some instances. Three out of ten of the ten respondents receive a thirteenth cheque every December without fail. However, one of the three respondents explain that she receives R500 more as her thirteenth cheque. The second of the three respondents express that she receives R350 more as her thirteenth cheque. And the third of the three respondents express that she receives R400 more as her thirteenth cheque.

All of the women explain that the money is not enough for a 'great Christmas' at home in Lesotho or even buying stationary for their children to start the next academic year, but they

try to make it work as far as they can, putting an emphasis on the fact that it is better than nothing. Four of the ten respondents do not receive a thirteenth cheque at all.

Two of the ten respondents noted that they do receive a thirteenth cheque, but, it is inconsistent. Some years, they receive a thirteenth cheque and other years, the thirteenth cheque does not come at all. One of the two respondents do not receive the same amount of money, it differs but ranges between R500 to R1000. The second of the two respondents say that when she does receive her thirteenth cheque, it is always R1200. One of the ten respondents receive a thirteenth cheque every year without fail on the month of her birthday. She receives double her salary.

7.6. Leave

The longest period of leave which the domestic workers have is the December break. This is when the respondents are able to go home to Lesotho to spend time with their families. On average, the respondents leave their places of work after the 13th of December and then return within the first week of January the following year.

Some of the domestic workers highlighted that in the days that they take off due to urgent family-related matters, are not paid for. In fact, in some cases, the money that would have earned on that particular day is deducted from that month's salary. In order for them to receive pay, they have to formally request time off in advance to give the employers time to find an interim replacement or perhaps the domestic workers themselves would find an interim replacement.

The amount of leave given to these employees does not comply with the provisions of the BCEA. That is, much of their employment conditions are unlawful. More than their employment conditions being unlawful, it speaks back to the claims that have been made about Ubuntu. The treatment that the black middle class employers have given to their domestic workers does not speak to the principles and values of Ubuntu. The employers come across as if they not only disrespect domestic service but they also disrespect the people who perform domestic service. One of the claims that were made by the respondents was that the employers do not realise that the domestic worker and the employer are helping each other. The domestic worker helps the employer maintain her household while the employer works in the formal labour market. The employer helps the domestic worker by paying her.

However, the employers treat the domestic workers as if the employers are doing the domestic workers a favour by giving them a job to clean their homes for payment. These kinds of working conditions prove that.

Table 10: The table below indicates the number of the participants who receive leave

LEAVE	Number of respondents who have taken/can take this particular leave	Number of respondents who cannot take this leave	Number of respondents who have never been in a position to take this particular leave therefore are unsure if they can or cannot take it	Number of respondents who can or have taken the leave but are not paid when they are aware	Take December holidays as leave and this is all they get in a year
Maternity Leave	1	2	7	0	0
Paid Leave	3	2	5	0	0
Unpaid Leave					
Family Responsibility Leave	6	0	4	0	0

7.7. Deduction from wages

The deductions from their wages by the employers vary. Two of the domestic workers discussed that their employers deducted money for the food that they ate in the house. They explain that they are allowed to eat meals with the family but there is a fixed amount of money which their employers deduct from their salary for food. The employers claimed that when the domestic workers eat their food, then it is the employers who incur the costs. When asked why they do not make their own groceries, both the women insist that it works out

cheaper and they get to eat more if they eat the food in the house and just have a few hundreds of Rand deducted. Groceries these days, according to one of the domestic workers, cost at least R1000.

The second deduction is from holiday trips. When the employers go on holiday with their children, the domestic workers have to go with them. One of the unwritten job descriptions of working for a black family is that you also become a full-time nanny. The domestic workers then go to these holiday destinations and take care of the children when they go to all their holiday activities while their parents (i.e. the employers) enjoy their holiday. However, as they go on these holidays, money is deducted from their salary because it is considered a luxury and a holiday at the expense of the employers. The deduction is said to be due to the costs of the food eaten on the holiday, and the activities that the domestic workers has to be at (in order to take care of the children). This deduction does not take place every month, only when the family and the domestic worker have been on holiday during that particular month. The domestic workers involved highlight that the deduction is never more than R800.

7.7.1. Medical bills

In the event that the domestic worker gets ill or injured at work, she is taken to a private hospital and the employer will pay for the medical bills when necessary. One of the respondents explains that she was terribly ill and was thus taken to the hospital. Her employers then gave her the bill which they had to pay for her and told her that it would come out of her salary. She had to cover that with two of her salaries cheque. The respective respondent complained to the researcher, emphasizing how she does not understand why they did not let her just go to a public hospital which she could afford.

Khomotso was recruited through an agent. From the manner in which she describes the agent, it sounds to me like it is illegal. She explains that the agent takes them in as they enter South Africa. They live with these agents who take them in until they find employment; the agent finds the employment for them. Upon their arrival, the passports of the domestic workers are confiscated. When they find employment, the new employers are given the passport. The domestic workers then have to pay off the money for rent which they stayed at the agent's house and then also pay to get their passport back. *Khomotso's* employers deduct money from her salary to pay the agent. *Khomotso* has to pay R1000 a month. She is unsure of when the debt will be paid off in full, and from what her bosses have explained, neither do they.

A deduction which may not come from the employers directly, but is directly paid for monthly like a debit order: the deduction from loan sharks. The amount for this deduction varies from one month to another, depending on the amount of money which has been loaned.

7.8. Injuries, Health and Safety

Health and safety is an important aspect of work. It is important in domestic service to ensure that the health and safety of the domestic workers are protected. There should be procedures put in place to ensure precautionary measures for the health and safety of the domestic workers.

Kgothalo's affected hands

Kgothalo works with chemicals on a daily basis, as most women do in the domestic work profession. She does not make use of cleaning gloves which will protect her from any damage that can potentially be caused by the respective chemicals.

Her hands started being affected a few years ago and, her skin became dry. At first, she thought that it was an issue which hand cream could be resolved. After some time, however, she began to notice that her skin was peeling off. At this stage, every time she put her hands in the water she used to clean the house, water which contained chemicals from detergents and other products which they use, her hands would burn.

Kgothalo alerted her employers that this was happening and they gave her cream which was bought over the counter at a pharmacy. She carried on working and the cream did not work. She ended up taking her own money to buy cleaning gloves which she now uses when she washes the dishes or washes the floors, walls or ceilings.

Katleho's knee injury

Katleho noted that she sustained a knee injury in her teenage years when she fell while going to fetch water from "ko nokeng". *Ko nokeng* is a source of water which is specifically for human consumption. It is usually distant from residential areas in homelands and young girls need to climb a mountain and go down the mountain in order to get to this place and then climb the mountain again and go down it again to get home. This is a daily chore for young girls in Lesotho. *Katleho* knee injury came from this and thus making it difficult for her to

kneel down. When one has to scrub the floors, it is important that one does it kneeling down; it is believed that this is how the floors will be effectively cleaned.

When *Katleho* made this known to her employers, their resolution to the issue was to buy her cushions for her knees. The knee cushions assist for her when she kneels down and make sure that her knees do not make direct contact with the tile. According to *Katleho*, these cushions are very comfortable and they do make the daily process of cleaning the floors easier.

Shoki's Arthritis

Shoki has a medical issue of arthritis that she believes to have got while working as a domestic worker. She expresses that the work she does is so intense and means at all times that she is working with water, that the arthritis came from this.
She explains that every time it is cold, she struggles to work effectively because of the pain in her bones as well as the swelling that at times occurs.

Shoki emphasizes that her employers know about her arthritis. In fact, she noted that it is her employers who suspected that she has arthritis and took her to a doctor to get medical attention. *Shoki* struggles the most to work in the winter season on perhaps on any other days when it is cold. Her employers then tell her that every time it is cold, she should put on a thick layer of band-aid around her knees, ankles and wrists. *Shoki* then giggles as she discusses this, and further saying that it does not work because the Band-Aid gets wet around my wrists, therefore gets cold and causes the pain in any case.

Neo had experiences that she considers to be unnatural. Neo noted that as a black person, who is working in a black household, there are evil spirits that may surround a particular place and therefore lead to unnatural events taking place. In her words:

> *"I am naturally a fit person who does not have any problems with health or my physical well-being. When I started working for my employers, I heard rumours from other domestic workers in that particular neighbourhood that the women who is one of my employers is known for using witchcraft. But due to the fact that I am from a homeland where witchcraft is not foreign, I know how to protect myself from it.*
> *The first time I noticed something sinister when I first collapsed in the house. Until this day, I do not know what had happened".*

This may have been one medical reason or another, perhaps dehydration. But Neo is convinced that the incident is related to witchcraft. She continues,

> *"Two weeks after that, I was hanging wet laundry on the washing line and I saw a huge snake pacing past the area I was hanging my laundry. I was so shocked, but being from Lesotho, I knew how to deal with snakes. I then phoned my employer to tell them what was happening, she told me that she would phone someone who is trained to work with snakes so that that person can come and remove the snake and then told me that I should make sure that the dogs do not go anywhere near the snake. I was livid. How can she care more about the dogs than she did about me and what I could have potentially been going through?*
>
> *While I was ironing the clothes of my employers and their children, I tried to reach out for some hangers which I had intentionally put there so that the hangers would be close by as I finish with the clothes which needed ironing. I moved towards the door, the floor was polished and therefore slippery and I slipped and fell. The door handle got held of my left breast and it tore from my nipple to the beginning of my breast under my armpit. After this injury, I had to sit my employees down and tell them about my suspicions. The woman denied it (she was the only one I spoke to) and emphasized that all the incidents were natural and a coincidence. I did not expect her to confirm what I thought or my suspicions; no person who has ever used witchcraft ever admitted to it. I just let her know that I was aware of what was happening and I just wanted her to know that I did not want any of the things happening in spirit affect my well-being. I put an emphasis on the fact that I am only in that house to work. I am in South Africa to work. I do not want to be affected by anything else that she was doing."*

It is very interesting that Neo has not left room to be open-minded about these events. If one evaluates these incidents using the knowledge of the respondents that they would rather work for white employers, one cannot help but question whether or not the same reaction to the above stated incidents would have been unquestionably related to witchcraft if they happened in white employers' households. The element of witchcraft or belief in witchcraft within the black community (which incorporates both the employer and the domestic worker in this regard) impacts the attitude of the domestic workers towards their black middle class employers. Finally, Neo concluded by saying,

> *"I went home and consulted a traditional healer, seeking protection from whatever is happening. He has given me something to protect myself with and it is working thus far. And I have not told my employer that these are the measures which I have taken."*

The point of this section is to reflect the perception of the domestic workers and what they believe is ignored by their employers. The above stated quote underlines the depth of the neglect that the respondents feel. As black people, the element of witchcraft can be both familiar and hostile. On the one hand, the respondents expect black employers, regardless of their class, to understand that the element of witchcraft cannot be ignored. On the other hand, if the employers do not believe in witchcraft then they believe the domestic workers to be paranoid. Either way, this is an interesting and significant part of the employment relationship between the black maid and the black madam.

7.9. The difference between working in black and white households

There may be various listed flaws about white employers which spiral from the circle of racial inequality between black and white people in South Africa, but there are domestic workers who have deemed white employers to be far better than black middle class employers. The reasons for this may vary but the general consensus between the respondents who have worked for white employers before is that the leading reason why white employers are better employers than black employers is because the payment of their salaries are always on time. To quote *Kgothalo*:

> *White employers know that we are here to work and nothing else. They may have their flaws and they may treat us in a way that we do not appreciate, but when it comes to our payment, it is always on time and it is never short – not even by ten cents* (Kgothalo, 2016-08).

7.9.1. Professionalism in the 'madams' household

Professionalism may be difficult to apply in the context of domestic work. The line between professional and personal is often blurred in a black household. The chores are not always clear and are usually adjusted depending on a particular situation. For example, *Bontse* explains that when her employers' family come over or they have to go somewhere, the children of extended family and some friends are all brought to the house and she has to babysit them. She further complains that 9/10 times, she is not made aware that this will

happen. She is not told ahead of time. Therefore, if she happens to have plans then she has to cancel them in order to babysit; and she is not paid extra for working on a Saturday (these spontaneous visits and babysitting activities usually happen over the weekend).

White employers are upfront about what they expect from a domestic worker. According to *Kgothalo*, the workload may be heavy and there may be a schedule that dictates what should be done and when, but the fact is that white employers inform the domestic worker about this fact from the outset.

Many domestic workers, *Kgothalo* included, complain that the animals of white employers need to be treated as if they are better than the domestic workers. *Kgothalo*, after a brief complaint, then chuckles and says, "[*b*]*ut then again, one will never understand the relationship between a white person and his/her pet*". *Thatohatsi* supports this notion as she expresses that in white households, there are tasks and/or chores that are specifically allocated to the care of pets. These tasks include:

- ➔ cooking for the pets
- ➔ washing the pets on a weekly basis
- ➔ taking the pets for a walk on a daily basis; particularly the dogs.

Thatohatsi noted that in the household which she worked at as a live-in domestic worker, there were visible and uncomfortable racial issues. She explains that her employers were nice people and on that basis, there is a possibility that they did not mean to exclude her from the house or the family on racial grounds. They may have meant it to be a professional boundary, which needed to be created but from the receiving end, it felt racial. *Thatohatsi* explains that she was not allowed to live inside the house with her employers and her family, and thus lived in an outside room and used an outside toilet only which was not attached to the outside room. And one of the main rule was that she was not allowed to use any of the toilets which were inside of her house; she was only supposed to keep them clean.

The other rules centred on the fact that *Thatohatsi* was not allowed to ask for advances on her pay and she was not allowed to have visitors visit her at her place of work; i.e., the place where she resided. Furthermore, no parcels or mail were to be delivered for her at work.

Kgothalo stated that white employers may have flaws in implementing a professional boundary between the domestic worker and the employer, but they also maintained their

professionalism when it came to issues of payment. She explained that, as the domestic worker, she was paid extra money when she was asked to serve at a party or at an event that her employers would host. Furthermore, her employers would let her know when their friends were having parties or events and needed some help, making sure that she, would be paid for the extra "gig". This money, according to *Kgothalo*, made an incredible difference. She further states that some events paid her more than she made in a month as a working domestic worker. As a result, she has kept the contact details of the people she has served at their parties and still serves for them as their events take place during weekends when she does not need to be at work.

7.10. The expectations of the respondents from their black middle class employers

The respondents concurred that they expect better treatment from black employers. But in some cases, some have found that black employers are the worst when it comes to their treatment of domestic workers.

> *My employer once said to me that the reason why she prefers to hire migrant domestic workers such as myself and other domestic workers from Zimbabwe is because we are here illegally. Therefore, domestic workers such as myself will never stand at her gate with place cards demanding better pay* (Neo, 2016-08).

The people who the respondents work for may be middle class now, however, somewhere generations before them, they have women who were domestic workers with no rights. In other words, they may have family members (older than what they are) who are domestic workers or have been domestic workers before. These family members were in the position which their domestic workers are in. According to three of the respondents, their employers still have mothers who are domestic workers. *Shoki* explains that her current employer's mother is a domestic worker. *Shoki*'s employer complains to *Shoki* regularly about the treatment that her mother is given in the household where she works and insists on a daily basis that the mother should quit as *Shoki*'s employer can afford to support her financially. With the way that *Shoki*'s employer's mother is treated, *Shoki* noted that she would expect her employer to know to treat her well or perhaps be empathetic towards her. The respondents insisted that they expected a significant level of empathy towards their way of life from their employers and this expectation is based on the shared/common values that they have as African people, despite their class differences.

Although there is an employer-employee relationship between the employers and the domestic workers, the communication channels between the employer and the domestic worker could be said to be easier as compared to a white household.

> *If my employer can easily come and share her problems with me and expect me to understand her work grievances to the extent that I am expected to understand why my salary is late; then I too need to have a good and easier communication channel to discuss my work grievances with my employer. When I bring this to the attention of my employer, I come across as though I am ungrateful or I am expecting too many favours. People like us, domestic workers, cannot afford to not get paid* (Neo, 2016-08*)*.

The respondents further stipulate that for some odd reason, black employers do not acknowledge the fact that they too have families and responsibilities.

> *We are here to work and receive an income just like our employers go to work go receive payment. When their payday arrives, they receive their money and no excuses. When payday arrives for us, we also expect money, not excuses. Furthermore, they do not seem to understand that we too need to see our families and spend time with them, yet as domestic workers, we get minimal time for that* (Mpho, 2016-08*)*.

To what extent do the respondents possess even the most basic knowledge of the laws that are applicable to them as migrant domestic workers? The respondents listen to Lesedi FM a lot during the day. Most of the domestic workers have a radio and therefore listen to them. The respondents discuss that Lesedi FM tends to discuss the rights and legislation that pertains to domestic work. In addition to the information that they receive from listening to Lesedi FM, they have few channels of researching their rights. Some domestic workers express that they are not registered. They here these rights and legislation being discuss on radio, but because they are not registered, they are not sure if those rights are inclusive of them too. Some respondents casually laughed-off the question about their rights as domestic workers and said: *"Aren't rights for South African domestic workers?"*

The number of domestic workers who are aware of their rights are only three. One of the domestic workers does not know about her rights as a domestic worker. And seven of the respondents state that they somewhat know about their rights as a domestic worker but do not know them clearly enough.

7.11. Conclusion

This chapter has stated the findings of the working conditions of the respondents. It has stated the findings of the recruitment process into domestic work in South Africa and the status of job descriptions of the respondents. It has looked into the salaries of the domestic workers and the working hours of the respondents. The other factors pertaining to the working conditions of the participants included leave, deductions of wages, injuries, health and safety, and the differences between working for black employers and working for white employers. It also looked into the expectations of the respondents from their black middle class employers.

These issues raised in this chapter are important as they are an intricate part of answering the overall objective of the dissertation. It speaks to the working conditions of the migrant, Basotho domestic workers in 2016.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
WORKING IN GAUTENG AS A MIGRANT, BASOTHO DOMESTIC WORKER

8.1. Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the chapter seven where the findings of the working conditions of the respondents are stated. This chapter analyses the working conditions of the respondents based on the findings of the researcher as well as the research that has been done concerning the working conditions of domestic workers.

This chapter of the dissertation is important to the overall objective of the dissertation. It provides and analysis of the working conditions of domestic workers and is able to underline the differences between the working conditions of the respondents of this dissertation and the working conditions of Cock's respondents in *Maids and Madams.* This chapter will then be able to identify similarities and tensions in literature compared to the findings of this dissertation, thus providing an essential aspect of the overall objective of the dissertation.

8.2. Black women and domestic work

The literature suggests that domestic work is the most common form of wage labour for black women and the single largest source of employment for women (Delport, 1995: 9). Prior to the current domestic work positions of the respondents, the jobs that most of the respondents worked in were not domestic work. The jobs that the respondents had included saleswomen in clothing and food shops.

Marais & van Wyk (2015) argue that domestic work is, apart from being a highly feminised sector, characterised by black women who come from impoverished backgrounds and have limited exposure to formal education. The findings of this research reinforce this claim.

Four respondents only have a grade eight qualification and could not continue with their studies. One of the respondents only studied up to grade nine. Five respondents studied up to grade ten. None of the respondents has a matric qualification.

Most of the women come from rural areas in Lesotho. Those who have moved out of the homelands have settled in townships – small townships where the life that is lived in that particular township is not far off from the life which they lived in the rural areas.

Furthermore, most of the women went through the cultural practice of *ho shobediswa*. Their families were not in a financial position to pay for their children to come back from those families that took their daughters. This is a clear sign of their financial vulnerability. It also reflects their impoverished backgrounds. Their limited education is evident in the findings of the research. Therefore, they do have limited options with respect to job opportunities and thus resorted to domestic work.

Cock found that domestic workers perceive themselves as 'slaves' (Cock, 1989: 27). The domestic workers, according to Cock, are extremely insecure and lack fundamental workers' rights and work for long hours at extremely low rates (Cock, 1989: 27). This is relevant in the context of this study of migrant Basotho domestic workers. The findings on their working conditions reflect the extent to which this group of women is insecure as a workforce. Furthermore, the fact that the migrant Basotho domestic workers (the respondents in this research) are not documented means that they exist in a legal vacuum as Cock's sample in 1989 did. Therefore, the fact that they work long hours for low rates is a similarity shared between my respondents and those of Cock's study: "*The longest hours were usually worked by live-in servants*" (Cock, 1989: 42). The terminology used, i.e. "servant", may be outdated but this particular phenomenon still exists amongst the sample/ respondents of this research, experienced similarly long working hours.

The powerlessness and vulnerability of black women within the institution of domestic service, what Cock refers to as ultra-exploitability, derives from the discrimination to which both blacks and women are subject in South Africa (Cock, 1989: 9). In other words, the issues, which were faced by domestic workers who were interviewed during this research, were generated by a political system that did not operate in the interests of the domestic workers. The ultra-exploitability of black women derived from two sets of forces, namely: a system of racial domination as well as a system of sexual domination (Cock. 1989: 10). This is a matter of class exploitation. In the case of migrant Basotho domestic workers in 2016 who are working for black middle-class employers, class is much more a pertinent factor than race.

8.3. The challenges of domestic workers being undocumented

Machinya (2016) argues that undocumented migrant workers engage a sense of 'illegality', which criminalises these individuals and thus grants legal legitimacy to discrimination as well as the deliberate exclusion of the undocumented migrant workers. The sample of this research consists of female, Basotho migrants who are undocumented. Each of their experiences speaks to the notion of 'illegality' as expressed by Machinya.

In the event that the passports are not stamped on time via the strategies of the taxi drivers, there are incidents which happen at the border. The respondents mostly cry when they discuss the atrocities of the border every January when they are expected to come back to work in South Africa. Some women have been arrested. The respondents discuss the experiences which they have encountered while crossing the border to come into South Africa or to go back to Lesotho knowing that their passports have expired. The experiences have also included aggressive treatment from the soldiers at the borders. There have been times when one of the respondents had to hide in large bodies of water or in high grass in order to hide from the soldiers, and then when night came, she sneaked out of Lesotho and into South Africa. Another participant said that she needed to cross from South Africa into Lesotho. There came a man who told her that she should come into his car and he will get her to cross the border and leave her close to her home. When she got into the car, she explains that there were other people inside. It was at night so people could not see into the car. She explains that the people in the car insisted that everyone had to be quiet and literally lie low in the car.

8.4. Employers' preference for migrant domestic workers

Machinya (2016) has expressed, as noted in the literature review, that employers seem to be portrayed as having a general preference for undocumented migrant workers. Machinya (2016) has written that employers prefer undocumented migrant workers because their "illegal status" does not give them many work options, thus making them a workforce that is cheap, hardworking and obedient compared to South African workers. The number of employed migrant Basotho domestic workers reflects the preference that Machinya speaks about.

Molefe (2009) underlined he fact that Basotho women who are uneducated and are mostly familiar with household chores have had to resort to paid domestic work outside of Lesotho because Lesotho lacked job opportunities – the available job opportunities in Lesotho pay

low wages. All of the respondents agree that they moved to South Africa because the jobs which they had in Lesotho paid them low wages. Although the wages which they are paid in South Africa are low, the respondents put forward that the low wages which they are paid in South Africa are higher than the wages which they are paid in Lesotho. They findings reflect that the respondents speak of a reality that financially, they are in better jobs.

One of the respondents, as the findings reflect, three out of the ten participants have worked in Chinese clothing shops which were/are located in Lesotho. Apart from working clothing stores, the respondents have worked as either cooks or cleaners. One of the respondents has worked as a cook and a cleaner in an Indian-owned halal fast-food shop.

It is very interesting that the respondents feel that their current jobs are better than what they have had, financially speaking. It is understandable – the respondents seem to have salaries which are higher than the required minimum wage. To the respondents, it may seem like it is not a lot of money but it is more than what the department of labour believe to be adequate for domestic service.

8.5. Recruitment of migrant domestic workers

Kiwanuka *et al* have highlighted that recruitment usually takes place through the medium of word of mouth and employment takes place in the form of a verbal agreement. The respondents' spoke to this statement. Each of the respondents got their current jobs through what they describe as "connections". The phrase "word of mouth" does not necessarily mean that the job is advertised by telling one person and hoping that someone will apply – particularly in the context of the respondents of this research. The respondents noted that word of mouth "connections" work in the following way:

Two of the respondents heard about their current jobs through domestic workers who work for their employers' friends. When the employers have a social gathering of some sort, they usually confide in each other about their current "help" (as the respondents put it) and then the possibility of seeking better "help". One of the respondents hurtfully expressed that after the employers have discussed the inadequacy of their domestic helpers, they approach the domestic worker who happens to be serving them on that particular day and ask them if she can recommend someone. The respective participant expresses that when they ask if they can recommend someone to be a full-time living-in domestic worker, they say "*do you perhaps have a sister, cousin, aunt or friend who needs a job and will not mind coming to work for us? It will make a serious financial difference*". Due to the fact that the women usually do

know someone who can make the salary work, the domestic workers suggest a domestic worker and the employers tell them to make a plan to ensure that the recommended domestic worker comes to South Africa to start work as soon as possible.

The job requirements may be "vague" as stipulated by Kiwanuka *et al*. The findings of this research reflect job requirements which are very specific: the job applicants have to be able to perform house cooking and cleaning chores. As far as their job descriptions are concerned, the findings reflect that job descriptions range from very specific to open-ended.

One of the respondents has a detailed schedule of what tasks should be done on particular days. This schedule details the time of the beginning of her day right up to the time of the end of her working day. Other respondents do not have a detailed schedule of their tasks; however, they are told what to do on a daily basis and when certain activities need to be done. One of the respondents, at times, has to go grocery shopping with her employer or take dry-cleaning in or out for her employer and her employer's family. More than job requirements and job descriptions being vague, job descriptions are open-ended because regardless of the agreed upon arrangement of duties, employers still add on extra tasks. This is probably why most of the employers do not have written job descriptions.

Kiwanuka *et al* state that foreign-born workers are not entitled to unemployment benefits unless they have permanent resident status or refugee status. None of the respondents is documented. None of the respondents have permanent residence status or refugee status. Based on what Kiwanuka *et a*l have stated, the respondents of this research are not entitled to any benefits. Perhaps this is why employers prefer to employ migrant domestic workers and thus refer to them as hard working, quiet and obedient. According to the statement made by Kiwanuka *et al*, the migrant domestic workers have no other choice but to be what they are characterised as because at any given moment, they can be forced to leave the South Africa. Furthermore, they are not entitled to any benefits.

When the respondents refer to their employers, they refer to the women, the madams: the mistress. This entire research dissertation has referred to the employer – speaking to the woman/mistress or employers – speaking to the women/mistresses. The respondents rarely speak about the husbands or the male employers in the households which they work in. It may be because generally speaking, female domestic workers interact more with the female employers more than they do with the male employers. In the case of this research, the respondents vaguely stated that they do not interact with the male employers. They did not

provide a reason for this. However, it is evident that the interaction with the female employers is more comfortable for the respondents. King (2007) has stated that: "*As the mistress is the 'other' to the master, the domestic worker is the 'other' to the mistress: the relationships are founded in power inequalities and they in turn feed and maintain the power differential*". Fernandez & de Regt (2014) cited in Hakesworth (2007) noted that the public sphere has been identified as a male or masculine dominated sphere while the private sphere of the home is exclusively identified to be the female sphere.

8.6. A legal vacuum

Cock (1989) underlined that domestic workers under the apartheid system existed in a legal vacuum; she describes a legal vacuum to be a situation where there are no laws which address certain circumstances. The findings of this research highlight the fact that the Basotho migrant domestic workers, particularly the respondents of the research, are in the same circumstances. Very little of South African law applies to undocumented migrant domestic workers. Kiwanuka *et al* have actually stated that, as previously highlighted and as mentioned in the literature review, the undocumented migrant workers (i.e. migrant workers who are not registered) are not entitled to benefits. This keeps the migrant workers such the respondents of this research in a vulnerable position and open to exploitation.

Cock (1989) further states that it is the failure of the protective legislature which causes the result of exploitative practices on the undocumented migrant domestic workers by the employers. The legacy of the above statement by Cock is apparent and still exists in the working conditions of the respondents. As it seems, Cock's sample of respondents and my sample of respondents may be different, but their circumstances and working conditions are the same. The job descriptions of the participants of this research are open-ended, as previously stated, and this is a reflection of the fact that the employers themselves have open-ended control over the domestic workers. In other words, because there is no set job description for most of the respondents, the employers are able to ask them to do whatever it is that they want them to do pertaining to the tasks that the employers are unable to do themselves in the household and the respondents cannot say no. All the requests that the employers request of them can be seen to be part of their jobs.

The development and aim of the union of domestic workers, as Ally puts forward, was and is still to bring improvements in the relationship which exists between workers and employers in order to be able to negotiate for better working conditions. Based on the vulnerable

position of the respondents, their existence in a legal vacuum and the fact that because they are not registered workers then they are not entitled to any benefits, they are evidently exempt from the benefit of the union. Furthermore, the findings of the research have indicated that the respondents have other financial obligations which they prioritise over trade unions.

The law provides for safe working conditions for the any employee in their place of work. It is difficult to monitor or be accountable for anything that happens in a private household.

There is not much literature that on the working conditions of undocumented domestic workers in South African households. However, there seems to be considerable violations from the employers when it comes to the health and safety of the domestic workers. The findings of this research have also reflected for example, that in the event that a domestic worker has to be medically treated for an injury occurred in the workplace and during work hours, the employers expect them to refund the medical payment and initiate this expectation through the process of deductions in the respondents' wages.

Cock provides a discussion on the issue of wages. She notes that the respondents of her research stated their wages barely provided for a decent living and the respondents were too scared to lose their jobs and therefore did not ask for an increase (Cock, 1989: 29). Furthermore, there seemed to be no bargaining over wages when the domestic workers were employed – the wages of the domestic workers are entirely determined by the employer (Cock, 1989: 29).

Not much has changed in terms of circumstances when the above stated situation is compared to the situation that the migrant Basotho domestic workers currently face. The similarities are very close and Cock's argument prevails in the vulnerable position of migrant Basotho domestic workers: "*this reflects the domestic workers' atomized, vulnerable position as workers" (*Cock, 1989: 30). Cock shows that domestic workers who are live-in domestic workers work the longest hours (Cock, 1989: 36). This is no difference to what the respondents have stated about their working hours. And the respondents mentioned the exact tasks which Cock (1989: 36) said were done by live-in domestic workers: domestic workers are considered to be available in the evenings to cook, wash up, baby sit, serve snacks when her employers return from an evening out or perhaps serve them coffee. Some domestic workers simply state they never knock off. This contains the domestic worker in a legal vacuum.

8.3.2. Practice of Power and being 'One of the family'

Ally (2009) has stated that employers use the intimate nature of paid domestic work as a practice of power in that the phrase and/or ideology 'like-one-of-the-family' becomes a tool of control to manipulate the domestic worker. This communicates, once again, with the notion of the employers having open-ended power over the domestic workers.

The notion of 'like-one-of-the-family' implies an expectation of what is, in the work sense, overtime, should rather be seen as a chore being performed for the favour and benefit of the family at large. The findings of the research reflected that the working mandatory hours of the respondents exceed the required working mandatory conditions for living-in domestic workers. However, there seems to be a strategic manner of control to get maximum work at a minimum rate through the use of the notion of 'like-one-of-the-family'. There are instances when the employers come across as if they are trying to get the domestic workers to work harder and not complain, almost make it seem as if the domestic workers are doing their employers a favour. And there are instances where it seems as if the employers are using 'one-of-the-family' as a strategy of some sort; a strategy that does not have a clear line between what is professionally expected and what is personally expected from the domestic worker by the employer. If the employers treat the domestic workers as if they are 'one of the family' through giving them old clothes and perhaps food to take home in December, the employers foster a relationship with their domestic workers that comes across as if the employers do more than just pay them with money. This makes the domestic workers to not feel as if working for their employers is just work. It is, to an extent, helping a family with chores in the house – particularly when they have to cook and wash dishes during the weekend when they are supposed to 'off'.

The employers provide the domestic workers with a place to stay and in some cases, food (covering all meals of the day), and, in two cases in this research, take financial responsibility for the children of their domestic workers. This may come across as a favour done for the domestic workers and an extension or indication that the employers regard the domestic workers to be part of the family. However, this does come with the expectation of working hard during working hours as well as after working hours. There is an expectation of a significant extent that the payment in kind and other strategies of making the respondents feel like 'part of the family' will be returned with cleaning and cooking being an employment obligation as well as an obligation of the domestic worker towards the employer and her family.

The interviewed Basotho migrant domestic workers have highlighted that they can barely afford a decent life with the money which they earn as domestic workers. Their wages are above the required minimum wage; however, this is a workforce which still has to subsidise their labour through loan sharks and stokvels. The respondents insist that the stokvel money helps them a great ordeal and the respondents are thus able to do more things in the month which the stokvel money is paid to them. Loan sharks leave the respondents in greater debt and, as the they have noted that loan shark loans are their highest deductions. But these are the methods which the respondents subsidise their wages and furthermore, these are the alternative methods which the respondents engage in to get money for their families.

8.7. Conclusion

This chapter has looked into black women and domestic work. It has underlined the challenges of domestic workers being undocumented as well as the employers' preference for migrant domestic workers. This chapter has looked at the recruitment of migrant domestic workers and the legal vacuum that the domestic workers exist in.

This chapter, under the above stated topics that have been discussed, has analysed existing research on domestic work with the findings of this dissertations. There have been significant similarities that have reflected and spoken to the nature of domestic work. These similarities have also been found between Cock's study, *Maids and Madams,* and the findings of this dissertation. However, there are similarities that also exist between existing research and the findings of this dissertation. This indicates changes in the working conditions of domestic workers that have taken place in domestic service between 1987 when Cock did her study, *Maids and Madams,* and 2016 when the researcher of this dissertation did her dissertation.

The analysis of the working conditions is an important chapter in this dissertation. It is critical in analysing the working conditions of domestic workers based on the findings as well as the existing literature that pertains to domestic work. It is significant to the overall objective of the dissertation.

CHAPTER NINE:
BORN AND BRED IN LESOTHO AND MAKING A LIVING IN GAUTENG

9.1. Introduction

Generally speaking, in black families, menial cleaning and cooking tasks are generally given to people in the family who either do not work or are seen to be doing the least respectable job. The people referred to in the opening sentence above contribute the least money in the house when there are family functions or ancestral rituals. The connotation or message behind this kind of activity deliberately excludes the purpose of domestic work. It is highly relevant for the link between menial cleaning and cooking tasks and unemployed family members in black families to be brought into this context where the "madam" and the "maid" are both black. The cultural context of domestic work is understood by both the "maid" and the "madam". Therefore, it is possible that the treatment of domestic service (based on above discussed context) is directly reflected in the manner which the domestic workers are treated in black middle-class households. The "culture" of black middle-class people treating domestic workers in a manner which depicts that domestic workers are beneath them stems from what domestic tasks represent. Domestic tasks represent the job that is done in the house by the person or people who do not make a "financial difference" in the house. The status of the people who perform domestic tasks is low. In the employment context, the middle-class employers treat domestic workers as they would treat an unemployed relative.

The domestic workers interviewed are live-in domestic workers. This is a reflection of the choices that they have in terms of job opportunities because, as married women with children, it is not easy to pack up your life and leave your family behind to seek work in another country. One of the main reasons that people hire domestic workers in the first place is so that they can have "family time" with their families after work (in some cases). The respondents of this research give up their "family time" and assume a job that provides their respective employers and the employers' families with that "family time". The nature of domestic service is precarious.

This chapter provides an extensive discussion on the findings of the research. There are some issues in the findings of this research that contradict the literature and others that agree with literature.

9.2. Women in domestic service

The literature review reflected that domestic service is care and nurture orientated. The findings of the research show that the tasks involved in domestic service require a high level of care, confidentiality, and willingness to understand a private home to be a workspace.

Confidentiality: It has been portrayed numerous times throughout this dissertation that domestic workers perform their jobs in the private space of their employers. Domestic workers are in the position to overhear private arguments and conversations. Many employers confide in their domestic workers about their issues; issues which may be work-related or family-related. Domestic workers interact with their employers in a manner which provides a level of counselling, support and care within the defined and established boundaries of their profession regardless of their true emotional reactions at that particular moment of work. Domestic workers are not permitted to discuss the issues which occur in their place of work. This is not a written rule. However, in the event that domestic workers discuss the information which they gather in their employers' homes (i.e. at work), they may get fired. Naturally, many domestic workers discuss or 'gossip' upon themselves the issues and lifestyles of their employers. More often than not, the matters discussed do not get back to the employers. Confidentiality is an unwritten yet necessary job requirement for domestic service.

Willingness to understand a private home to be a workspace: the workplace of the domestic worker is the private home of his/her domestic worker. Therefore, their work centres on social reproductive labour.

Studies expose the link between domestic service (and the required care to understand the career) and women. Care is socially and culturally associated with women. There have been various studies that have exposed the link between the woman and the care characteristic.

In a cultural context, when there are cultural ceremonies or any other form of family gatherings, women generally are expected to perform tasks that are identical to the tasks of domestic service. These tasks include cooking, cleaning and preparations that involve décor

(when necessary) while men do outdoor-related tasks. When there are, children present at any function, women are expected to take care of them.

In 2016, women are entering various profession due to women receiving educational opportunities at an exponential rate. However, a large number of women are uneducated and single parents (as the findings have shown). Most women, particularly in African homes, are taught house chores from a very young age. What we witness in domestic work is women using their acquired knowledge and abilities (altered through African culture) and sell these as their labour services in order to make a profit.

The research findings reflect the relationship between the black middle class employer and the black domestic worker who is from the rural areas. The domestic workers, in this context, represent the vulnerability of the people who have to perform the most chores during family occasions or generally in the house. The black middle class employers understand this context and understand what it is to be a domestic worker and how people who earn low wages are generally treated in African families. The findings of this research reflect that very same treatment from the employers to the respondents within the employment context (where they are their employers) and within a class context (where they are in a better financial position than the respondents). The black middle class employers treat the respondents (their domestic workers) like black families treat their unemployed relatives who live with them. The difference is that the domestic workers are paid and the unemployed relatives are just kept busy. What this means for the research is that the employers are not entirely unaware of the living and conditions that they create for their domestic workers. The black middle class employers are aware of the role that they play in the vulnerability of domestic service. In relation to the overall objective of the overall dissertation, the employers are a mitigating factor to the vulnerable nature of domestic service.

Payment in kind and the notion/concept "like-one-of-the-family", as Ally (2009) puts it, an undermining tactic of domestic service. The payment that the domestic workers receive should be able to sustain them enough for them to purchase their own clothes and other things that the employers pass on to them as gifts or payment in kind. Payment in kind and being "one-of-the-family" ranges from passing on hand-me-down clothes (from the employer/employer's family to the domestic workers) to taking financial responsibility and adopting the children of the domestic workers. This is another cultural alert: This is another activity which happens in African households. Old clothes are usually passed down and

excess food is given to the people in the family who have the least paying job or who are unemployed. These are strategies to keep the domestic workers loyal and forever grateful to their employers. The reactions of the respondents reflect that this strategy works. The two respondents whose children are being taken care of financially by their employers are grateful and feel that their employers are doing more than they should. If the employers can afford to put their domestic workers' children through school or financially adopt the children of their domestic workers, why can they not pay their domestic workers more money so that the domestic workers themselves can afford to financially take care of their own children? There is minimal difference between the manner in which domestic workers are treated by their black middle class employers and the manner in which black African families treat unemployed relatives. They do things for them financially, which puts in a superior position to their family members/domestic workers. Perhaps this is why domestic workers feel that white employers are better than black employers: white people are removed from the cultural implications of what cleaning and cooking chores actually mean in the African context.

Zukiswa Wanner, in her book *The Madams*, discusses the concept of bourgeois guilt. Bourgeois guilt is explained, by Wanner, as exploiting another human being. She further discusses the difficulty of hiring a domestic worker She expresses her difficulty in lashing out at a black person and felt the resolution to it was to hire a white domestic worker.

Some aspects of the literature underlined that African employers experience struggles with calling their domestic workers "maids". It is this struggle that leads African employers to refer to their domestic workers as "ousi" (which means sister when directly translated from seSotho), "sisi" (which means sister when directly translated from isiZulu or isiXhosa), or "auntie" (which means aunt when directly translated from any Nguni language). These terms may arguably be intended to reflect that the domestic workers have become 'one-of-the-family'. However, casual conversations with black middle class families who have domestic workers will indicate how this terminology has now acquired a new contextual meaning. Casual conversations with children from black middle class families who have domestic workers revealed that, because "ousi", "sisi", and "auntie" are terms that are used to refer to domestic workers, they use different terms to refer to their sisters and aunts. This change in the contextual meaning of the terms not only highlights how African households look down on domestic service, but also that the black middle class families do not really feel that the domestic workers are 'one-of-the-family'.

9.3. The challenges of not being documented

The respondents of this research are all undocumented; i.e. not registered. They have limited protection of the law and, according to Kiwanuka *et al* (2015), the respondents are not legally entitled to any benefits. The undocumented Basotho migrant domestic workers are in a similarly vulnerable position to Cock's respondents under the apartheid system. They exist in a legal vacuum. The difference is that Cock's sample of respondents existed in a legal vacuum because they were black; the undocumented Basotho migrant domestic workers exist in legal vacuum because they are not South African. This has exposed the undocumented Basotho migrant domestic workers to even greater vulnerability and greater of being taken advantage of. There are three aspects that speak to this vulnerability raised under the heading of not being a registered migrant domestic worker: the recruitment process, the confiscation of passports, and the idea of 'a better life'.

9.4. The recruitment process

The recruitment process is through a strategy of word of mouth. It has been explained by the respondents that the employers usually ask for recommendations of domestic workers from the migrant Basotho domestic workers, highlighting the fact that they are hiring the domestic workers to help them. In other words, one employer may ask from a friend's domestic worker for a recommendation of a domestic worker. Furthermore, when the employers ask for this recommendation, they underline the fact that they are looking to "help" someone, not looking to hire help for themselves. This aspect that highlights the vulnerability of the respondents. There are now people who have made a business out of the vulnerability of the migrant Basotho domestic workers – an illegal placement of undocumented migrant domestic workers.

The living conditions that the domestic workers are subject to when they are still in the informal "custody" of the agents are very restricted. The domestic workers are unable to go the tuck shop which may be around the corner. They are told to stay within the boundaries the yard of their illegal agent in Midrand (in the case of one of the respondents of this research). There is an element of smuggling. The domestic workers are collected from the Lesotho/South Africa border by the agents and taken to Midrand until they find work. While they are there, the domestic workers clean the house of the illegal agent so that they do not stay there for free, and use this as a method to see how well the domestic workers can perform cleaning and cooking chores. What does this mean for the Basotho migrant domestic

workers or for the migrant domestic workers in general who continuously come into South Africa and remain undocumented, thereby existing in a legal vacuum?

This particular phenomenon highlights the growth of the vulnerability of undocumented domestic workers. It further highlights how the growth in the vulnerability of migrant workers is exploited to the point where it has been turned into an illegal business of smuggling human beings. These illegal agents display the characteristics of organised criminals. The characteristics include putting domestic workers on display, highlighting their strengths and weaknesses, and selling them to the highest bidder or the most willing customer who is ready to purchase an undocumented domestic worker. There is not a lot of clarity as to how many illegal agencies for migrant domestic workers are currently operating in South Africa. However, the respondents of the research stated that people took them in and gave them a home and place to stay until they found jobs. Once the respondents had found employment, they had to pay back the people who took them in until they have settled their debt in full. This payment may take up to five years to pay back. Other methods of repayment include mashonisa/loan shark assistance and/or stokvel assistance. It is quite evident that there is some kind of economic sense that keeps this kind of organised crime going and it has certainly raised the question of "profits versus human rights" in the criminal economy of globalisation. The only people who can put a stop to these kinds of operations are the migrant domestic workers, but they need these kinds of operations when they enter into South Africa to look for jobs because of their vulnerability, which is caused by their lack of South African citizenship. This extreme vulnerability is being exploited at the recruitment level.

9.5. Confiscation of passports

Research has shown that the employers of the domestic workers confiscate the passports of the migrant domestic workers with the intention to control their movement and prevent them from running away. The findings of this research have expressed otherwise. None of respondents' employers confiscated their passports. There evidently is a change in this dynamic and a clear indication of the fact that employers use other methods to control the movement of the domestic workers.

The first method, especially for the living-in domestic workers (i.e. the respondents of this research), is the amount of work which is required from them. The fact that there is no clear "clock-in" time and "knock off" time (with the exception of one participant) implies that the domestic worker has to be available most of the time for as long as they are in South Africa.

The second method is payment-in-kind. When the employer does what appears to be more than what they should be doing for the domestic, they strengthen loyalty and commitment from the domestic worker. The domestic worker will feel the need to stay and be grateful to the employer. There is no clear evidence of whether or not these methods are strategic or whether or not the employers are consciously and deliberately making use of the above stated methods. There is a strong likelihood that the above stated methods are unintended consequences of the employers' actions.

The third method the wages that the employers pay their domestic workers. It is arguable because there are two ways to look at this phenomenon. The first way to look at it is that the payment of wages to the domestic workers is higher than the required minimum wage, but it is still not enough for the domestic workers to maintain what they insist is a decent lifestyle. This way, the wages paid to them keep them in a position where they constantly wait for the next payday so that they receive the money. In other words, the more they need the money, the less likely it is that they will want to stop working, i.e. they will always be in need of a job. The above stated comments are widely noted. For example, Marx noted that all workers are "wage slaves". Conversely, the other argument is that they have left jobs which they felt paid them too little, hence they are working in their current jobs. However, the movement from one job to another is restricted by their lack of opportunities because of their limited educational background.

What is evident now is that the illegal agents who keep the passports of the domestic workers. A respondent, who was recruited through one of the agents explains that her passport was confiscated on the day of her arrival at the place where she stayed until she was hired. Now that she is hired, she has not been given her passport back because she has pay off the debt that incurred while staying at the agent's house (for her use of water, electricity and food). She also has to pay and agent's-recruitment fee. She will receive her passport once she has settled her debt. Every month, money is deducted from her salary where her employer pays the agent directly and then gives the participant what is left of the salary every month. In other words, the above spoken of respondent receives R2000 of her wages when the total of her wage (before deductions) is R3000.

A confiscated passport implies that the respective respondent cannot leave South Africa and at the same time, she is in South Africa unlawfully and is not a registered employee. This is the reality for many domestic workers who are victims of this system. The confiscation of

passports is no longer performed by the employers, but rather by the illegal agents; i.e. it still exists under different conditions.

This means that there is an access of migrant domestic workers coming into South Africa to do domestic work. There are more of them than what is actually needed in South African households. In the economic sense, there is more supply of migrant domestic workers than there is a demand for them. However, there is a high demand for them because of the state of their vulnerability. The factors that aim to equalise the demand and the supply of the migrant domestic workers unfortunately include the organised crime which is arising around the issue, and the abuse of the domestic workers. This perhaps may be a fourth method of control of the domestic workers. There are so many of them now that the employers know that they can get migrant domestic workers easily and through more than one channel.

9.6. The idea of a 'better life'

From the times of mining in Gauteng when people left their homelands or rural areas (even in areas in South Africa which are outside of Gauteng), their families had an expectation of the kind of economic difference that would be made by the people who have left to work in Gauteng. That mentality still exists in many African families in the homelands or rural areas. One can stretch this argument and argue that the reason why the migrant workers flock to South Africa to perform domestic work under the conditions of a legal vacuum is that they expect the better life that they believed Gauteng would provide. The homelands and rural areas produce the 'obedient, quiet and hard-working workforce' that is referred to in this dissertation. But, when the workforce reaches the place that is meant to provide them with a better life, they are met with tensions.

Domestic work performed by undocumented migrant domestic workers is at a point where, as this dissertation has reflected, it is designed (by the social system) to be a tool of excluding the domestic workers. The work that they perform is precarious, insecure, and does not promote citizenship for the respective people. The respondents of the research do not work or live in physically precarious working conditions; but in the sociological sense, they have precarious working conditions. The basic necessities of life such as water, electricity, and other basic needs are commodified; i.e. we pay to be citizens. Is this the answer to why they have to settle debts with agents? Is this why living with their employers is seen as a form of payment-in-kind and therefore, in return, not all work performed is compensated? Only the work which is performed within the required hours of work are compensated and perhaps a

bit of overtime even though it is not part of a verbal or written on agreement. Are the migrant domestic workers indirectly paying to be social citizens? There is a broken nexus between work (particularly domestic work performed by undocumented migrant workers) and citizenship (Barchiesi, 2011).

In this context, just because one is employed, it does not mean that one will have access to full citizenship. The respondents of the research support their families with their wages. Family, in their context, includes children, spouse, parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles. There is a high possibility that all of these people benefit or are supported on the wages given to the respondents. This is why the respondents resort to loan sharks and stokvels. This workforce augments its wages through loan sharks. This means that they are a working poor; i.e. employment is not delivering what it is supposed to deliver in their lives – making their lifestyles better. The rise of the organised crime businesses around the issue of undocumented workers in South Africa reflects a permanent predicament of insecurity that defines the labour system the participants of this research fall under.

Loan sharks are a sad reality for Basotho domestic workers – particularly the spoken of respondents. They need to subsidize their wages they because are too low. When they pay their loans back, the loans have to be paid back with interest. The frustration of low wages comes from the endless debts of the respective respondents. They may not protest, but they do feel the financial pressure for supporting family at home and also supporting themselves. One of the respondents expressed that when you work in Gauteng, people in Lesotho automatically believe that you have money. Sadly, that is how most of the domestic workers and mineworkers whom she knows, chose to work in South Africa, Gauteng. She claims that there is a stigma that comes with working in Gauteng, and that stigma dictates that you can afford to support family and yourself. As a black person who grew up in the rural outskirts of any place, there is pressure put on you to work and make your family feel that there is one more grown up person in the house who is bringing in an income. Furthermore, you either build a back room or extend your parents' house. Times change and people move more towards the industrialization of a particular place; the extending of homes moves away from traditional rondavels to square houses. These houses or back rooms need to be furnished, on top of everything and everyone else you have to support.

One of the respondents noted that nowadays you have furniture shops doing door sales or employers bring friends, who work in furniture shops or sell furniture to domestic workers. What may seem reasonable at that point in time puts them in greater debt in the end. Each

month on payday, the collectors are there to collect their money for the furniture items purchased on credit. This is a significant amount of money that has to go out before they have even sent money home in Lesotho. This is one of many reasons why and how the respondents end up resorting to loan sharks to assist them to get through the month financially.

The respondents felt that the 'better life' was a broken promise to them; they understand by witnessing their employers living this life. And this goes back to the shortcomings of the notion of being 'part-of-the-family'. How many of the employers have been to the areas where their domestic workers come from? How many employers can truly say that they have seen for themselves the lives that their domestic workers live when they are in Lesotho? The domestic workers, particularly the living-in domestic workers, know the lives of their black middle class employers. They clean their houses, and walk around their neighbourhoods when the chance arises. They see the schools that their employers' children go to and they long for that life. That becomes the good life for them. They may have a good life in their homelands or rural areas, but once they have seen how 'successful black people' live, something begins to feel wrong with the life that they have been living. Poverty and deprivation are relative concepts.

9.7. Living and working in the house of the employer

Domestic workers are at work. How much privacy is generally given in an ordinary workplace on a daily basis? The workplace is a place where, for as long as you are there, you are available for consultation or to perform your duties. Live-in domestic workers live and work at their place of work. The line between personal and professional is thin because if focus is placed on the fact that being work means constantly being available, when does the domestic worker "knock-off" from work? Perhaps the point of discussion should focus on the time that domestic worker's room is her place of work and at what time is it her home or private room to sleep and rest.

Tensions arise when the employer falls back on the exclamation "*this is my house!*". The domestic worker has to respect the house as the employer's home first before she recognises the house as her workplace.

The black middle class woman outsources her cooking and cleaning duties to the domestic worker and pays the domestic worker for it – hence, the work takes place in the house. The domestic workers expect black employers to understand this notion. The respondents

highlight that they expect the kind of treatment given them to by black employers from white employers; but not black employers. The respondents noted that black employers, middle class or not, should understand domestic service better. They should understand the role of domestic chores in any African household. They should understand the underlying meanings behind them and they should have a level of empathy because there is a high possibility that someone in their family has been in the position where they had to perform domestic chores; either for money or because they were the unemployed relative living with relatives that all had a job. Umakoti (an African bride), the housewife, the single black middle class working woman: they may engage in cleaning and cooking chores, fulfilling duties that are socially and culturally expected of them. The difference between them and the domestic workers is that they can outsource the dirty work – the aspects of their duties that they wish not to do for as long as they can afford someone else to do it (domestic worker). The domestic worker cannot outsource any of her tasks – she has to do all of them. The inability to outsource tasks applies to all jobs that involve doing something for someone else, but the focus, in this context, is on the black middle class employer and the black domestic: they are the same race (and therefore possibly being from the same 'black African' cultural background) but are of a different class.

The difference between living inside the house or having a room outside of the house is that when the domestic worker's room is outside, she is not as exposed to the running around and arguments of the employer and her family when she has 'knocked off'. She is able to appreciate some 'space' from the main house, the employer, and the employer's family. The outside room, however, is still part of the employer's house and therefore the domestic workers' presence does not affect the freedom of movement of the employer. Even if the domestic worker's room is outside, the employer and her family walk in and out of the room as they please.

There is a constant feel, for the domestic worker, of being at the office constantly: when one is at the office, even when it is after hours, they are regarded as available for work. The living arrangement of the domestic worker living-in with her employer takes on a concept of "constantly being at the office". The only time that the respondents do not work is when they are at home in Lesotho – that is when they are officially unavailable to work.

It is very important to dissect the statement made by an employer to one of the respondents. The statement indicated that the employer has a preference for undocumented migrant

workers because they will never protest for higher wages. The statement is problematic conversely allows a platform to assume that firstly, employers do not register the migrant domestic workers because they are best employable when they are vulnerable and exist in a legal vacuum. The second assumption is that the employers are aware of the labour laws regarding foreign workers yet they choose to take a vulnerable workforce and minimise the amount of money that leaves the house while the employer extracts as much labour as possible out of the domestic worker. And thirdly, the employers enforce the elements of class, hierarchy, and power that they have compared to the undocumented migrant domestic workers.

9.8. New brides in 2016 and domestic workers

A lot has changed since the times of brides not working for wages but rather working within the home. Even the domestic workers are women who are working for wages. Granted, in some households, it still stands that the domestic work should be a bridal duty as opposed to a form of employment. However, we cannot ignore the fact that the expansion of the black middle class is significantly influenced by black women being in the workforce. Many of the respondents shared their stories about the factors that have pushed them into employment.

One may argue that domestic work is a significant form of job creation. And it is still an open question to be understood what it is about domestic work that makes the job so vulnerable and thus making domestic workers vulnerable. Even though South African law has attempted to minimise exploitation and abuse in domestic service operating in South Africa, domestic service operating in South Africa is still vulnerable in its nature. The presence of a domestic worker does not always mean that the "wife" or "makoti" (daughter-in-law) in the house does not perform any household chores. The manner in which the two women experience the work involved in the household chores is different. The "madam" is able to outsource what she believes to be 'the dirty work' and pay someone else to do it – i.e. the hired domestic worker. Cock (1989) provided contextual reasons why domestic work may be seen as such a vulnerable job, discussing what it means in the army and within the cultural context. In a nutshell, domestic in the army was a form of punishment. Domestic work in the cultural context is reserved for children or the disabled. Cock (1989) has pointed out that the chores involved in domestic work are usually reserved for people as a way to punish them or perhaps for children who cannot do any more than tidy up a place (Cock, 1989). However, we do

need to take into consideration the profile of the women who are domestic workers and not forget that these women have very few options of work if any at all.

In the context of this dissertation, where the employers and the domestic workers are of the same race (both are black) but differ in class, the vulnerability of the job can perhaps be heightened. The profile of the domestic worker itself is vulnerable. She has limited and minimal education therefore putting a limit on the job opportunities she may have. The kinds of job opportunities she has is menial work, which is easily open to exploitation. All the respondents had jobs prior to their current jobs, but they left because they were exploited; i.e. they produced more than what they paid for. The previously stated sentence provides a sense where all workers are seen to be exploited, no matter how much their salaries are. However, the depth of the exploitation referred to is of the nature where the respondents could barely afford to provide basic needs for themselves as well as their families. The respondents emphasised that the most highlighted reason that they left their previous jobs and ended up in their current jobs is that they made very little money and could not afford life at the rate which they were paid.

The black employer of the domestic worker is different. She is educated. She probably has job or is a housewife. She too may be exploited at work in that she works harder or produces more than what she is paid for, generating surplus value, however, she can afford a decent life, can even afford a domestic worker. However, she also falls under what the fees-must-fall protestors have labelled as "the missing middle". She earns a decent salary that locates her in the middle class. Therefore, when her domestic worker requests a raise in her salary or pleads for an advancement on her pay, the employer exclaims that she has no money. She too is an employee in a company where she has industrial relations-related work issues and at times strikes or engages in other forms of work-related protests because she is frustrated by her working conditions.

However, the employer's job is regarded as respectable because there are professionals and formal channels which are put in place that can be followed when she has grievance. Her domestic worker, by contrast, does not have same platforms to communicate her grievances. The employer has an entire human resources management division, which is in place to ensure her productivity and job satisfaction in the workplace. The same structures are not put in place for her Mosotho domestic worker. It is unrealistic to expect extensive procedures and human resource departments in a household. The point is that there has to be a medium or

channel of communication that is not intimidating for the domestic worker. In order for there to be an improvement in domestic service or some kind of satisfaction, there needs to be communication taking place between the employer and the domestic worker. The communication should be professional and about the work performed by the domestic worker; it should be bigger than the employer confiding in the domestic worker about personal issues. The communication channels, regarding work, between the employer and the domestic worker should move past the aesthetic labour required from the domestic worker.

9.9. Conclusion

Chapter nine has underlined significant topics that have a fundamental contribution to the overall objective of the dissertation. This chapter has provided a discussion on women in domestic service, the challenges that undocumented domestic workers are faced with, and the recruitment process. Each of these stated topics are important to the overall objective of the dissertation as they are fundamental to the working conditions of migrant, Basotho domestic workers.

The chapter also provides a discussion on the idea of 'a better life', confiscation of passports, and new brides in 2016 and their domestic workers. Each of these stated topics are important to the overall objective of the dissertation as they are fundamental to the living conditions of migrant, Basotho domestic workers. This chapter finally provides a discussion on the living and working conditions of the domestic workers in their employers' houses.

CHAPTER TEN:

CONCLUSION

Braverman argues that control in the workplace is a reflection of the power disparities in the wider society; essentially managerial power is located within the deeper structures of economic domination that underpin its use and legitimacy (cited in Klerck, 2011: 135). This speaks directly to what the dissertation has underlined and discussed. The relationship between the black domestic workers and the black middle class employer is a power relation that is beyond employer-employee: it is the status that the two different parties hold in society based on their class and regardless of their race. This system is part of a bigger machine and with this being mentioned, the antagonistic relationship in the post-modern workplace has not changed. The state itself acknowledges and continuously amends laws in the Labour Relations Act and the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. In the case of domestic workers, the BCEA, along with Sectoral Determination 7, aims to protect them. The protection for workers which is evident in these laws, acknowledges that employment relationships are antagonistic. However, an undocumented migrant domestic worker is excluded from this protection to a significant effect.

Domestic service meets clients within the private space of the household: the customer/clients of the domestic workers' services are both their employers and the employers' visitors. One of the respondents underlined that the employers tend to discuss their domestic workers when they meet at gatherings. The respective domestic worker highlighted that it is the feedback given at those gatherings from family or friends that will determine whether a domestic worker will be fired or needs extra assistance. The customer (employers' friends and family) is part of the observations/surveillance; the customer has become the new supervisor in an unofficial way. The interviewed migrant Basotho domestic workers find themselves in a difficult position because their undocumented status has made them subject to uncontested unfair dismissals or warnings arising because of what the external surveillance has said in their feedback regarding the domestic workers' chores. Because they do not have money to afford lawyers who can help them with matters of their jobs regarding the law, the employers further treat them as indispensable. There are significantly large numbers of domestic workers who are undocumented Lesotho migrants; there are many more domestic workers to

choose from should the employer be dissatisfied with the domestic workers' job. Basotho domestic workers usually make referrals to more Basotho domestic workers when people request domestic workers. Therefore, they are a mitigating factor to the large number of undocumented Basotho domestic workers in South Africa.

When customers comment, or complain, they are part of the surveillance on the employees (in the private space of the house of the employer, comment on the cleanliness and maintenance of the house), i.e. customer feedback is part of the labour process. This is how labour then shifts to the aesthetic aspect and emotional management of labour.

Domestic workers have to master the management of their feelings in a way that is positive for the comfort of their employers and the employers' family and friends. They may be in a job but the employers treat their domestic workers as if they are doing them a favour by paying them for cleaning their homes. The logical explanation for this may be the discussed factors, which make domestic service vulnerable, or it may be because of the class difference between the – "maid" – and the black middle class – "madam". This class difference also exists in the African culture in that the unemployed relative who lives with employed family members has to be the one who keeps the house clean. In this context, it may be a duty where "it is the least that he/she can do". However, in the workplace, it cannot be a favour; – it is a job.

Household work is strategized in such a way that the available labour within a household, rather than that available to just an individual, is the genesis of the work that takes place inside of a house (Pahl cited in Grint, 1998: 30). This speaks to the open-ended job descriptions of domestic workers. Nine out of the ten respondents in this research do not have job descriptions and thus have open-ended tasks which supports Grint's argument. The open-ended tasks are reflected in employers having open-ended control over their domestic workers.

Work is, bluntly speaking, a process where an employer buys the employees' labour power. When the employer buys the employees' labour power, the intention is to ensure that the labour power is productive. Control is designed to get workers to co-operate. Control is the procedure instilled in which the employer generates maximum labour power from the employee. Control aims to ensure that there is minimal resistance from the employees. Literature has written on participation schemes. An employer being open to employee participation is a gamble. The reality is that (despite what literature has said to be the

advantages of participation schemes) it is something that they do not want to do and they do not want every decision that they make to be scrutinised by workers. Managers want to keep their managerial prerogative as wide and as much as possible; workers do not need to be making decisions beyond the point of what they need to. This is because employers feel a necessity to control their employees.

In the context of domestic service, there are no formal channels for employee participation. There may be a union for domestic workers now, but the respondents are not part of the union. It is easy for employers to control the domestic workers in this context.

An interesting question raised by one of the respondents was: "how much do employers know about their domestic workers? And how often do employers go and genuinely see how they live in Lesotho?" It instantly brought me back to Donald Wood's book, *Asking for Trouble,* where he depicts Steve Biko's life and the powerful question comes to life: Under the apartheid system, how many white people went into the township (besides the police)? How many employers under the apartheid system (the time in which Cock wrote) went into the homes and realities of the domestic workers who cleaned their houses? The domestic workers then and the domestic workers now exist under the same fate: they live in the space of their employers. They see their lives and work in their suburbs. They observe the schools that their employers' children attend from the streets. They witness the 'good life', but they live on the periphery of it.

The points which have been discussed above apply to poor people. No matter how bad it may seem for the respondents, the unemployed are worse off. The point is, however, should the people who are regarded to be employed experience the exact same realities of the unemployed? People get jobs to be alleviated from such consequences. The vulnerability of domestic service is to the extent that there is little difference between the respective employed people and the unemployed.

This dissertation concludes that Jacklyn Cock's book, *Maids and Madams,* is significant to the living and working conditions of the undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers. Jacklyn Cock (1989) wrote about domestic workers who existed in a legal vacuum and the nature of their job was vulnerable because of their race under apartheid South Africa. Undocumented migrant Basotho domestic workers exist in a legal vacuum and the nature of their job is vulnerable because of their citizenship status in South Africa.

This dissertation has understood the living and working conditions of the migrant, Basotho domestic workers through various topics discussed from chapter one to chapter nine. This dissertation has made use of existing literature, using Cock (1989) as primary literature.

Based on the findings of this dissertation, domestic service is a vulnerable aspect of work. Based on Cock's findings as well as the findings of this research, it is evident that domestic service is entered into by a vulnerable group of people on the margins of existing political, economic, and social systems.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1

CONSENT LETTER

(ORIGINAL VERSION: IN SESOTHO)

MY MADAM: SAME RACE, DIFFERENT CLASS

Ke utlwisisa hore patlisiso thuto "*My Madam: Same Race, Different Class*" e ikemiseditse ho utlwisisa maemo a ho phela le ho sebetsa ha basebetsi ba malapeng.

Ke utlwisisa hore ka ho nka karolo patlisisong ena, ho bolela hore ke tlo arolelana tsebo yaka ho tweleng molemo thuto ena. Ke dumela hori lesedi leo ke tla fanang ka lona nakong ya kgatiso ya dipotsiso/dipotso le ka sebediswa ke mmatlisi ho hlahisa patlisiso thuto ena.

Ke hlokomela le ho utlwisisa hore lebitso le fosahetseng le tla sebediswa ho ntshirelletsa.

Ke hlokomela hore kena le tokelo yah ho se nke karolo ho thuto ena ha ke batla. Ka hoo ke dumela hon ka karolo ho patlisiso thuto ena ntle le kgatello ya letho.

Sign:

Date:

APPENDIX 2

CONSENT LETTER

(TRANSLATED VERSION: IN ENGLISH)

MY MADAM: SAME RACE, DIFFERENT CLASS

I understand that the research thesis, *"My Madam: Same Race, Different Class"* aims to understand the living and working conditions of domestic workers.

I understand that being a participant in this research means that I will share my experiences for the benefit of the content. I consent that the information which I give on record during the interview may be used by the researcher t produce content for the thesis.

I am aware that my identity will be protected through the use of a pseudo name.

I am aware that I have a right to refuse to be part of this research. With this, I consent that I am taking part in the research on my own free will.

Sign:

Date:

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. **Basic Details**
   1.1. How old are you?
   1.2. Gender
   1.3. What is your highest level of education?
   1.4. Population group
   1.5. What is your home language?
   1.6. What other languages are you able speak and how well can you communicate in these other languages?
   1.7. Are you married?

2. **To explore, in detail, the working and living conditions of Basotho domestic workers in their places of work.**
   1.1. Do you have a job description?
   1.2. What tasks/duties do your employers request for you to do which you believe is unreasonable?
   1.3. At what point does your job overlap with your personal life?
   1.4. Please discuss how the live-in arrangement works/does not work for you?
   1.5. Discuss the beginning of your employment relationship with your employer.
   1.6. If there are children in the house and you have to work quite closely with them, what measures are put in place to ensure that you do not catch their stomach bugs or any other illnesses which children are highly likely to bring home from school – and are known to be contagious?
   1.7. Do you feel like you are one of the family in this household?
   1.8. How often does your employer confide in you?
   1.9. How often do you confide in your employer?
   1.10. What are your working hours?
   1.11. How much do you earn?
   1.12. What benefits do you receive excluding your salary?

1.13. Explain your day to me from the moment you wake up right up to the moment you go to sleep?

1.14. Do you have deduction from your wages?

1.15. What your living conditions at hi Everyone?

1.16. Why did you come to South Africa to work?

1.17. Do you get leave? Paid and/or unpaid leave?

1.18. Do you receive a payslip?

3. **To compare and contrast the working conditions of the Basotho domestic workers in Gauteng with that which Cock found from domestic workers working in the Eastern Cape.**

3.1.Have you ever worked for white employers before?

3.2.If yes, please discuss the differences which you experienced/noticed in living and working conditions when you worked for white families and for when you work/ed for black families.

3.3.Do you expect a different professional treatment from black employers than you would from white employers? Why? Why not?

3.4.Are you a registered employee?

3.5.Do you have a basic knowledge of the laws which are applicable to you as a migrant domestic worker?

3.6.How often do you go home to your family?

3.7.Have you really found a better life here than you had back home in Lesotho?

3.8.What are your working hours?

3.9.Have you ever been injured or got ill at work? If yes, what procedures were taken by your employer in order for you to get well?

3.10. What safety measures are taken in order to make sure that you do not get injured at work?

3.11. Do you have a contract of employment or any form of documentation regarding the terms and conditions of your employment?

4. **To understand what it is in the nature of domestic work that makes domestic work associated with vulnerable work and poor working conditions.**

4.1.How many people in your family are/or have been domestic workers?

4.2.Do you have any males in your family who have been domestic workers?

4.3.Why did you specifically choose to become a domestic worker in South Africa?

4.4.Have you had any other job besides domestic work before?

4.5. If yes, how do the working conditions of that job differ from the working conditions which you have experienced in domestic work?

4.6. Does your salary cater for your basic needs?

4.7. What are your challenges, professionally, working in South Africa in the domestic work profession, and not being South African?

4.8. How long have you been doing this job?

4.9. What do you like about your job?

4.10. What do you have about your job?

4.11. Time to yourself: should there be a time where an employer does not have time to rely on your services.

APPENDIX 4

WASKOM: DISH USED TO BATH