

https://dspace.org/

"Domestic workers' social networks and the formation of political subjectivities : a socio-spatial perspective

Khunou, Kelebogile Francina

2017
https://hdl.handle.net/10539/23919
Khunou, Kelebogile Francina (2017) "Domestic workers' social networks and the formation of political subjectivities: a socio-spatial perspective, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, <https://hdl.handle.net/10539/23919>

Downloaded from a DSpace repository. https://dspace.org/



University of the Witwatersrand

School of Social Sciences

Department of Political Studies

"Domestic Workers' Social Networks and the Formation of Political Subjectivities: A Socio-Spatial Perspective"

Master's Dissertation submitted by

Kelebogile Khunou (382897)

Supervised by: Dr Julian Brown

March 2017

The financial assistance of the National Research Foundation (NRF) towards this research is hereby acknowledged. Opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author and are not necessarily attributed to the NRF.

Declaration

I declare that this dissertation is my own, unaided work. It is being submitted for the Degree Master's of Arts by Research at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other University.

_____

(Signature of candidate)

_____ Day of _____ 20_____ in _____

Abstract

Despite their long history of organising, South African domestic workers are deprived of a platform to organise due to the post-apartheid state positioning itself as the primary articulator, representative, and protector of domestic workers' collective interests and the resultant displacement of the domestic workers' union in these roles. Even at its peak, the union struggled to rally domestic workers around its cause. The shift from "live-in" domestic work to "live-out" domestic work provides workers with greater personal freedom and less isolation from friends and family; allows them to gain some control over their working conditions and; challenges the "atomised" nature of domestic work as domestic workers interact quite frequently with each other in spaces such as taxis and buses, taxi ranks and street corners as they go about travelling to and from work every day.

Domestic workers' engagement in the everyday practice of commuting to work and the spaces where domestic workers regularly interact with each other allow for the appearance of social networks where grievances can be shared and rallied around; mutual support is given and; information regarding work can be obtained. Significantly, these social networks are integral to the formation of collective identities and the building of political subjectivities of domestic workers, who as a group are deprived of a platform to organise.

Furthermore a fuller conception of political action needs to be adopted. Domestic workers, who are without resources and the leadership of a vital union, find themselves in a position of political marginalization; yet participate in everyday forms of resistance. These coupled with their engagement in everyday life, constitute the invisible face of political mobilization. The social networks that have appeared show promise, however they are under-developed and have not yet been formalised in a way that organised action can ensue. As such it is possible that organisational impetus will have to come from the efforts of middle class actors belonging to NGOs, activists and government agencies as has been experienced in other parts of the globe.

In loving memory of my grandmother, Seabi Modise, who worked tirelessly for decades in the “kitchens” of Houghton, Johannesburg.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all the people who contributed in some way to the work presented in this dissertation. Above all, I would like to thank my parents, Lesego and Boyce, and my siblings, Kabelo and Kamogelo for their unequivocal love and support throughout.

This dissertation would not have been possible without the help and patience of my supervisor, Dr Julian Brown, who provided me with direction and *always* had the books I needed in his library.

To all my friends, for their constant encouragement and for enthusiastically engaging in discussions about the rights of domestic workers with me- thank you all!

And lastly, a very special thank you to the domestic workers of Rustenburg, whose insights and stories, inspired this work.

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables 8

Chapter 1: Domestic Workers' Social Networks and the Formation of Political Subjectivities: A Socio-Spatial Perspective 9

1.1 Introduction to the Study 9

1.2 Research Questions 12

1.3 Theoretical Framework 12

1.4 Significance of the Study 14

1.5 Literature Review 15

1.6 Research Methodology 21

1.7 Ethical Considerations 22

1.8 Conclusion 23

Chapter 2: Sociological Profile of the Domestic Workers 25

2.1 Introduction 25

2.2 The Domestic Workers of Rustenburg 27

2.3 Conclusion 33

Chapter 3: Occupational Characteristics and Transformations of Domestic Service 35

3.1 Introduction 35

3.2 From Servants to Workers: A Historical Perspective 36

3.3 The Challenges of Domestic Service 37

3.4 Organising Domestic Workers 43

3.5 Occupational Transformations: The Shift from Live-in to Live-out Work 48

3.6 Conclusion 51

Chapter 4: "Spaces and Places" 53

4.1 Introduction 53

4.2 History of Rustenburg 55

4.3 Rustenburg from a Socio-Spatial Perspective 57

4.4 Discussion: The Politics of "Space and Place" 63

4.5 Conclusion 64

Chapter 5: Domestic Workers and Everyday Life 65

5.1 Introduction 65

5.2 The Critique of Everyday Life 66

5.3 Everyday Lives of Domestic Workers 69
5.4 Domestic Workers and their Social Networks 73
5.5 Conclusion 84
Chapter 6: Everyday Life and the Formation of Political Subjectivities 86
6.1 Introduction 86
6.2 The Emergence of a Political Subjectivity 88
6.3 The Political Subjectivity of Domestic Workers in Rustenburg 89
6.4 Everyday Life and the Emergence of Political Subjectivities 96
6.5 Conclusion 100
Chapter 7: Conclusions 102
Findings 103
Bibliography 107
Appendix 116
Interview Schedule 116
Participant Information Sheet 119
Other 123

List of Figures and Tables

Figure 4.1: Map of Rustenburg in 1991.....57

Figure 4.2: Aerial view of Rustenburg and surrounding townships and villages.....58

Figure 4.3 Street in a village outside Rustenburg.....60

Figure 4.4: Street in Cashan Rustenburg.....63

Figure 4.5: Rustenburg City Centre, near taxi rank.....64

Table 4.1: Key statistics of Rustenburg, Boitekong, Lethabong and Meriting.....62

Chapter 1: Domestic Workers' Social Networks and the Formation of Political Subjectivities: A Socio-Spatial Perspective

1.1 Introduction to the Study

Employing more than one million people, domestic work constitutes one of the largest sources of employment for black women in South Africa (Cock 1980: 5; Du Preez et al 2010: 365). Engaged in labour such as household work, child and elderly care, and personal assistance, as an occupational group domestic workers are one of the most vulnerable groups in society, positioned at three lines along which social inequality is generated, class, race and gender. During the apartheid era, domestic workers were subject to "ultra-exploitation" and were deprived of specific legal protection, membership of an effective worker organisation and effective bargaining power, and denied any acknowledgment of the dignity of their labour (Cock 1980). In the post-apartheid period, the state introduced several interventions aimed at integrating the sector into labour legislation and improving the working conditions of domestic workers. The success of these interventions is limited due to indifference or resistance from employers in their private households (Du Toit 2011; Fish 2006).

The domestic workers of South Africa have a rich history of collective action, employing unionisation as a strategy to demand political inclusion and better working conditions. The South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU) was established in 1986 and is considered the most successful unionising effort by domestic workers. Through marches, petitions and protests, the union fought for inclusion in labour legislation and for the passage of a national minimum wage (Ally 2008: 3). Even with this success, the union found it difficult to rally workers around its cause- at the peak of its popularity SADWU only had approximately 85 000 members, less than ten percent of the domestic worker population (Ally 2008). Ironically, it was in the democratic climate of post-apartheid South Africa that the nation's only union for domestic workers collapsed due to financial difficulties and leadership disputes.

Years later within a favourable political environment a successor union, the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU) was launched in 2001. Just a year later the government introduced Sectoral Determination 7, recognising domestic workers as

political agents. However, instead of an activation of the domestic workers' political organising through the availability of the state institutions to support their political activities, there was instead a dramatic "collective demobilisation" (Ally 2010). In comparison to its predecessor, SADSAWU lacked vitality and in 2004 membership records revealed a total union membership of no more than 9000 domestic workers nationally (Ally: 154). In 2011 the union was deregistered by the Department of Labour. The union's challenges in organising domestic workers lay in the "atomised" nature of domestic work or the scattering of domestic workers in employer residences, and the lack of a communal "shop floor" to air grievances, build moral support or rally around injustices (Du Preez 2010: 397; Jacobs et al. 2013). Further, in the post-apartheid period the labour friendly state displaced the union by positioning itself as the primary articulator, representative and protector of domestic workers' collective interests (Ally 2008: 2).

The occupation experienced a transformation from the 1970s, where a shift from "live-in" domestic work- where workers reside in the households of their employers, to "live-out" domestic work- where workers commute daily to work, gradually took place. Live-out work is advantageous as it provides workers with greater personal freedom and less isolation from friends and family. As such workers are typically less dependent on and subordinated by their employers than in live-in work (Dill 1988: 35). Moreover, domestic workers gain some control over their working conditions- they are able to work for multiple employers and limit their working hours; they are able to establish outcome-based relations with employers and attempt to professionalise their work (Du Preez et al: 399). Live-out work challenges the "atomised" nature of domestic work as domestic workers interact quite frequently with each other in spaces such as taxis and buses, taxi ranks and street corners as they go about travelling to and from work every day. It is extremely rare to find a domestic worker who does not use public transport to travel to work.

This study argues that domestic workers' engagement in the everyday practice of commuting to work and the spaces such as taxis and buses, taxi ranks, and street corners where domestic workers regularly interact with each other allow for the appearance of social networks where grievances can be shared and rallied around; mutual support is given and; information regarding

work can be obtained. Significantly, these social networks are integral to the formation of collective identities and the building of political subjectivities of domestic workers, who as a group are deprived of a platform to organise.

By adopting a fuller conception of political action however we see that domestic workers, who are without resources and the leadership of a vital union, and find themselves in a position of political marginalization, participate in everyday forms of resistance. These coupled with their engagement in everyday life, constitute the invisible face of political mobilization. The study further argues that while these social networks show promise, they are under-developed and have not yet been formalised in a way that organised action can ensue. Moreover, due to the preoccupation with the struggle for survival and security which dominate the everyday lives of domestic workers and that their form of work is under-recognised, the likelihood of self-organisation is low and it is possible that organisational impetus will have to come from the efforts of middle class actors belonging to NGOs, activists and government agencies as has been experienced in other parts of the globe.

Background

This study is based on my Honours long essay, titled "The Politics of Domestic Labour in Post-Apartheid South Africa", which aimed to investigate the continuities and discontinuities regarding the exploitation of domestic workers in the post-apartheid dispensation, in particular, the impact of new labour legislation in the working conditions of domestic workers and the changing relationships of power between workers and their employers in the everyday. The study was conducted in 2013, in the suburbs of Cashan and Safari Gardens and is simply referred to as "the 2013 study" in this dissertation. The essay argues that although the introduction of new labour legislation has improved some aspects of the working conditions of domestic workers, a more comprehensive understanding of the domestic employment relationship is necessary for labour legislation to be effective. Furthermore it suggests that theories of everyday life and popular resistance can help us to understand how political subjectivities may be forming in the workplace and other spaces of collective engagement, in ways that have not been anticipated in legislation and formal unionisation.

This nascent capacity for the formation of a political subjectivity in spaces where domestic workers interacted with one another, perceptible in the conversations held with the domestic workers the 2013 study, forms the starting point for my Master's dissertation.

1.2 Research questions

The research question is: **What is the role of the social networks in which domestic workers regularly interact in forming and shaping their political subjectivities?**

The following subsidiary questions guided the study:

1. Where are some of the spaces, outside of the workplace, where domestic workers interact with each other in everyday life?
2. Are their interactions in these spaces haphazard or do they occur regularly?
3. What are the issues discussed in these spaces? What information is shared?
4. What everyday practices facilitate the development of a political subjectivity or participation in political action?
5. Are there elements of continuity between everyday life and potential political action?
6. Can the formation of political subjectivities be perceived in these networks?
7. Does the condition of urbanity, intense interaction among diverse people in close contact, have an impact on the formation of political subjectivities of domestic workers?

1.3 Theoretical Framework

The concepts of "everyday life" and "space" comprise the elements of the theoretical framework for the dissertation.

In sociology, Everyday Life is an object of research which has increasingly come into its own (Kalekin-Fishman 2011:1). Several theorists in the humanities have used the concept of everyday life in their theories but ignored it as a theme. We find this concept in the works of Rousseau (2007[1762]), Durkheim (1984[1893]) and Marx (1975[1844]). For Rousseau his conceptualisation of the social contract and his vision of the good society were based on the idea that the family, embedded in everyday life was the natural form of social organisation;

Durkheim explains the division of labour, the forms of religious life and the effects of anomie in terms of everyday life with examples from relations in families and communities and; Marx explained that the working conditions demanded of the capitalist system were evil because there is a 'loss of self' which destroys ties of family and friends, leaving people with concerns like eating, drinking and procreating, aspects of everyday life which are not fully human (Kalekin-Fishman 2011:1).

The works of Henri Lefebvre and Michel De Certeau, who both analysed everyday life from a Marxist perspective, are fundamental to this discussion. Lefebvre (1987) defines everyday life as the invisible remains of the day left over once the special, identified and specific acts are discarded. De Certeau on the other hand focuses on how people interpret and make their own the world around them. The study of the everyday is fundamentally a study of the relationships between structures of power and every day, subjugated individuals. Despite the repressive aspects of modern society, there exists an element of creative resistance to those structures enacted by ordinary people in the everyday (De Certeau 1984; Scott 1976; Scott 1985; Bayat 2010). The theory of everyday life is embedded throughout the dissertation, as the everyday interactions between domestic workers, outside of their employer's households, in spaces like street corners, in buses and taxis and at bus and taxi terminals, are essential in determining the potential for the emergence of political subjectivities amongst domestic workers.

The research was carried out using the socio-spatial perspective, the second element of the framework. The role and meaning of space and spatial processes for human action have been a subject of many scholars in the humanities and social sciences including Henri Lefebvre (1991;1974), David Harvey (1982; 1989a; 1989b; 1996), Anthony Giddens (1984), Michel Foucault (1986) and Edward Soja (1989; 1996). It has also been used in research on contentious politics for example by Doug McAdam, Sidney Tarrow and Charles Tilly in their 2001 book *Dynamics of Contention* (Martin & Miller, 2003). Beginning with the central geographic concepts of space, place and scale, the spatial perspective can produce more revealing understandings of how people perceive, shape and act upon grievances and opportunities (Martin & Miller, 2003: 143). Furthermore this perspective helps researchers see the relationship between the spatial constitution of daily life and collective identity formation.

In the aforementioned *Dynamics of Contention* (2001), the authors call for new approaches to the study of contention as existing approaches leave many of the processes of contention unexamined and under theorised. The study of contentious politics stands to benefit from the spatial constitution and context of social, political and economic processes and the ways in which these processes are spatially experienced and contested (Martin & Miller 2013: 143).
The city has been the place in which hegemonic power relations have been contested in urbanised societies, making broad claims for rights and justice, building and mobilising solidarities amongst diverse groups and people (Miller & Nicholls 2013: 452).

Employing the spatial perspective into ethnographic research involved the configuration of community space and documenting where interactions of interest occur. Additionally it involves understanding the daily travel and activity patterns of the individuals, in this case- domestic workers and how their direct experience of the environment could potentially influence their perceptions of themselves as political subjects.

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study and its use of the spatial perspective to examine the interactions of domestic workers in their social networks is significant for several reasons. First, while there has been a recent proliferation of scholarship on domestic service in South Africa covering an array of subjects as: aspects of apartheid-era domestic servitude, the role of post-apartheid state and the inclusion of domestic workers in labour legislation, relationships of power between "madams" and "maids" and, domestic workers and their family networks; hitherto the focus has largely been on how domestic workers relate to the state and their employers. This study is one of a few which examines the relationships and interactions between the domestic workers themselves revealing a gap in the body of knowledge on domestic service in South Africa. Furthermore the subject of the formation of political subjectivities of domestic workers is also absent. This specific subject is important given the current situation of domestic workers, where they are still subject to unfair working conditions even with their inclusion in labour legislation, and the difficulties involved in organising domestic workers in

unions. The study of social networks and the formation of political subjectivities may provide an indication of the potential for future collective action by domestic workers.

Second, the study contributes to the application of spatial analysis on the study of domestic service, a theory not commonly applied, and builds on the work of Rebecca Ginsburg, who through an architectural lens introduced the world to the maid's backyard room and explored through oral histories the micro-politics of the apartheid domestic space. Third, this study is significant as it is one of few conducted by a researcher who speaks the home language of the respondents. Certainly, language barriers can be effectively sidestepped by using research assistants and translators. Speaking the home language of the majority of the respondents has several advantages in interacting with potential interviewees and serves to make the research richer.

1.5 Literature Review

The research seeks to explore the potential for the formation of the political subjectivities of domestic workers through their engagement with practices of everyday life. Three broad themes will animate the research: the experience of domestic workers in South African cities; theories of "the everyday" and resistance; and ideas of "space" and "place".

In her groundbreaking study "Maids and Madams", Jacklyn Cock (1980) described domestic workers as among the most exploited groups in a society already marked by extreme inequality. Domestic workers, she wrote, "are situated at the convergence of three lines along which social inequality is generated- class, race, sex" (Cock 1980: 5). As an occupational group, are subject to "ultra-exploitation" evidenced by the denial of favourable working conditions and the deprivation of a negotiated wage, reasonable working hours, and a family and social life. Furthermore they are also subject to disrespectful treatment and denied any acknowledgement of the dignity of their labour and are without specific legal protection, membership of an effective worker organisation and effective bargaining power (6).

Another influential study about domestic labour in apartheid South Africa is Rebecca Ginsburg's (2011) *At Home with Apartheid* which is worth highlighting because of its use of the spatial perspective. *At Home* provides a detailed account of the experiences of domestic

workers between the 1960s and 1970s, who worked and lived in the Northern suburbs of Johannesburg. The author looks at the racialised spatial geographies of apartheid South Africa zoning in on the micro-politics between domestic worker and employer in the space of white domesticity. The "backyard room" designated for domestic workers is exposed, located behind but apart from the main house- a spatial manifestation of relationships of domination in domestic service (Ally 2013). These rooms, described by Ginsburg (2011: 5) as "a small and very particular hell", were "cold, leaky and drafty" (58). Through her architectural background, we are able to see multiple landscapes- coexisting, sometimes competing modes of engagement with a single site (4). Often subjected to dehumanizing conditions and isolated from their families, domestic workers engaged in subtle forms of resistance, which served to subvert the authority of employers, and helped the domestic workers to regain their sense of dignity, for example resting on their employer's bed, taking baths in their tubs and hosting guests in their backyard rooms. This latter point also was a subversion apartheid urban control.

Although relations between domestic workers and their employers differ, the relationship is characterised by unequal power relations (Ally 2010; Anderson 2010; Cock 1980), and without certain protections domestic workers are vulnerable to exploitation. However more and more the nationally assumed image of domestic workers as victims of historical processes of oppression is being challenged (Philips 2011). Domestic workers are described as agents whose self-definition is the sum total of their life experiences. Philips departs from the bulk of the literature, which focuses on the working lives of domestic workers (Ally 2010; Cock 1980; Gordon 1980 &; King 2007), and looks at social networks and family life. Other authors who explore this part of the lives of domestic workers are Bozzoli and Nkotsoe (1991) in *Women of Phokeng* and Deborah Gaitskell (1983), whose work operates at the level of ideology and politics, as she explores aspects of family and social life like the cultivation of the desire for a nuclear family in the lives of African women, specifically domestic workers.

Contrary to popular analyses that saw a lack of state protection for workers as an absence, contemporary authors argue that there is in fact a long history of state intervention and control in the sector and argues that a complex legal network of state regulation, generated a unique

calculus of dependency and exploitation for domestic workers (Ally 2010). Post-apartheid, the state continues to be influential in the lives of domestic workers and the inclusion of domestic workers in labour legislation was a significant development. However the question of to what degree these rights and protections have been translated into reality and what measures have been put in place to ensure that employers comply arises (Bamu 2013; Du Preez et al. 2010; Jacobs et al. 2013). The extensive efforts of the state to formalise, regulate and protect the rights of domestic workers are recognised and have brought about some improvement in certain aspects of domestic service.

The unionisation of domestic workers and their subsequent demobilisation in the post apartheid era shows the various ways the state has appropriated the role of union in the lives of domestic workers (Ally 2010). The demobilisation and lack of organisation that characterises domestic work has a disempowering effect on individual domestic workers, as well as the collective (Vanqa-Mgijima et al 2013). The fact that domestic workers have largely failed to organise themselves may be linked to a general absence of empowering factors in the places where they work. One of the factors is the scattering of workers among numerous employer homes (Boris & Nadasen 2008: 413). The "atomisation" of domestic workers and the lack of a communal "shop floor" to air grievances, build moral support or rally around injustices and the enforcement of laws regulating domestic labour makes it difficult for domestic workers to organise collectively (Du Preez: 397; Jacobs et al 2013). As such unions for domestic workers have found it difficult to rally workers around their cause. The South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU), the most successful unionising effort by domestic workers in South African history, only had approximately 85,000 members out of over one million domestic workers nationwide- which is less than ten percent of the domestic worker population (Ally 2008).

Notwithstanding this, peasant and resistance studies have argued that oppression and resistance are in constant flux, and that the historical record and archives, doggedly centred on the state's interests, focus on historic events such as organised rebellions and collective action, largely overlooking the subtle but powerful resistance techniques used by subordinate classes in the everyday (Scott 1985). Everyday acts such as "foot-dragging, dissimulations, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, poaching, arson,

sabotage, surreptitious assault and murder, and anonymous threats" are all forms of resistance used by subordinate groups due to their being hard to detect or notice (Scott 1985). Added to these are the hidden and public transcripts that both the powerful and powerless display (Scott 1985). Prospects for the mobilisation of domestic workers lie not in collective action that punctures everyday routine, but potentially in the everyday.

The works of Henri Lefebvre and Michel De Certeau are fundamental to any discussion on the study of the everyday. Lefebvre's *Everyday Life in the Modern World* brought to the surface the patterns of everyday life that were generally ignored in academic study. In one of his most important contributions to the theory of everyday life, *The Critique of Everyday Life* (1974) Lefebvre defines the everyday as everything left once work is removed (Elden 2004: 111) or the invisible remains of the day, left over once the special, identified and specific acts are discarded (Lefebvre 1987). De Certeau on the other hand focuses on how people interpret and make their own the world around them. In *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) he discusses how strategic and tactical behaviour can be used to influence different areas of society from the personal to the commercial, and the effects this has on everyday life. The study of the everyday is fundamentally a study of the relationships between structures of power and every day, subjugated individuals. Despite the repressive aspects of modern society, there exists an element of creative resistance to those structures enacted by ordinary people in the everyday (De Certeau 1984; Scott 1976; Scott 1985). Authors Javier Auyero (2004) and Julie-Ann Boudreau et al (2009) explore the continuities between everyday life, routine politics and contentious action in a more contemporary setting. Analysing the everyday may bring out the extraordinary in the ordinary. In fact Lefebvre holds that "it is the everyday that carries the greatest weight. While power occupies the space which it generates, the everyday is the very soil on which the great architectures of politics and society rise up" (Elden 2004: 120).

Connected to the study of the everyday are the ideas of "space" and "place" explored by several authors (Lefebvre 1974; Massey 1994; Tuan 1977). Lefebvre departs from metaphysical and ideological considerations of the meaning of space to its experience in the everyday life of home and city. Similarly, Yi-Fu Tuan examines "space" and "place" from the experiential perspective: that is the experiences of the subject in space. Drawing on the work

of Chantal Mouffe and Teresa de Laurentis, Doreen Massey (1994) conceptualises space and place in daily and political life and explores the concept of the construction of political subjects in terms of place from a feminist perspective. A more concrete analysis of space, place and everyday life is offered by Asef Bayat (2013) in the chapter "Street Politics and the Political Street" from *Life as Politics*. The author looks at the spatiality of discontents, how particular spatial forms shape, galvanise and accommodate insurgent sentiments and solidarities. In his study of the Iranian revolution and the streets as sites of resistance, he argues that revolutions possess an inescapable spatial dimension. In addition to thinking about why revolutions occur and who participates in them, Bayat asserts we should also think about *where* they actually take place. In a personal reflection the author recalls how he and his friends would rush to the streets to collect news, demonstrate, obtain literature and participate in discussions. Thus beyond mere physicality the streets of discontent hold a distinct sociality- where solidarity is communicated, discontent extended and news spread beyond the immediate surroundings. Connected to the streets are the bus, taxi, train terminals which transfer not only people but news and knowledge. Interestingly, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994: 60) studied the social networks of domestic workers in the San Francisco Bay area and observed how through network interactions the women were able teach one another how to negotiate pay, how to placate employers and how to get the job done in the most expedient manner. This knowledge allows them to exert more leverage in their interactions with employers. This study of social networks however does not go on to link the interactions in these spaces to political action.

Boudreau and her co-authors in "Taking the bus daily and demonstrating on Sunday" (2009) marry the concepts of the everyday and "space and place". The authors suggest that there is much continuity between everyday life and political events; that urban political struggles are intimately related to everyday life. Following the biographies of domestic workers based in Los Angeles, the authors explore the links between daily routines, the formation of a political subjectivity and the decision to engage in political action (Boudreau et al 2009: 338). In their case study, commuting to and from work allowed the domestic workers to "appropriate" the streets and everyday acts such as taking the bus constituted the invisible face of political action. The spatial perspective therefore sheds light on the connections between daily life

experiences and broader social, political and economic processes (Martin & Miller 2003: 143).

Many scholars of the humanities and social sciences have tackled the subject of the role and meaning of space and spatial processes for human action (Lefebvre 1974; Harvey 1982, 1989a, 1989b, 1996; Giddens 1984; Foucault 1986; Soja 1989, 1996). These authors view "the social' and "the spatial" as inseparable. Like time, space is not a mere "container" of activism; it constitutes and structures relationships and networks and; situates social and cultural life including repertoires of contention amongst other things (Martin & Miller 2003: 145). As Bayat stated, "The street is the physical place where collective dissent may be both expressed and produced". The Los Angeles case study by Boudreau et al (2009) shows how the streets can be used by domestic workers to form a collective subjectivity. The study therefore will use spatial analysis to explore the potential for the building of a political subjectivity amongst domestic workers in a South African context.

The concept of political subjectivity explains how a single person or a group of actors is brought into a position to stake claims, to have a voice and to be recognisable by authorities (Krause & Schramm 2011: 115). Thus the concept helps us to understand how people relate to governance and authorities (115). In *Disagreement* (1999) Ranciere is concerned with the formation of a political subjectivity that is meaningful to each and every member of "the people". He defines politics as an "extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing" which is defined as the law or order of bodies that defines a party's share or the lack of it (Ranciere 1999:29). Politics is nothing but the appearance of the people, the construction of a scene on which the people occur as a political subjectivity. This occurs when there is a "miscount" during the distribution of the common, and a distinction between "speaking beings" and those who are not acknowledged as speaking beings (Arsenjuk 2007: 4). Politics exists when "those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account" (Ranciere: 27). Politics constructs a scene in which the existence of a wrong is verified and *subjectivized*, that is, through giving name to "the part of those who have no part", the people, the proletariat, the women or the workers, who constitute the political subjectivity which is the subject of a wrong (Arsenjuk: 4). Finally, Ranciere believes that this must culminate in a disagreement, a provisional confrontation between those who believe that

all speaking beings are equal as speaking beings and those who do not (Ranciere: 49). Therefore for authors such as Arendt, Ranciere and Badiou, the subject develops an understanding of itself as a political subject only by executing decisive political action or making decisive political interventions. From this viewpoint, political agency therefore comes to define political subjectivity and the subject defines agency through her intervention.

1.6 Research Methodology

Research Overview: The research seeks to explore the potential for the formation of the political subjectivities of domestic workers through their engagement with practices of everyday life. That is, exploring the spaces and places where domestic workers interact, air grievances, build moral support or rally around injustices. Introducing the spatial perspective into ethnographic research involves understanding the daily activity patterns, including travel, of individuals and how their direct experience of the environment, neighbourhood or other spatial contexts influences their perceptions and the formation of political subjectivities.

Research Design: The study used a qualitative research method which allows for the interpretation of patterns from data into reasoned explanation of experiences. This method is suitable for the nature of the research as it concerns itself with describing actions of respondents and attempting to understand them rather than explaining human behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 270). Furthermore, the study made use of both primary and secondary data. The primary data was collected through field work over a three month period, further explained below; and the secondary data consists of literature on domestic workers, ideas of space and place, theories of the everyday and political subjectivities from books, reports, publications, internet sources, electronic journals and journal articles.

Purposive rather than random sampling was employed on the basis that the subjects selected have relevance to the research topic rather than for their representativeness or with the intention of making generalisations. Because the study is focused on social networks, defined as specific types of relations linking a defined set of people, organisations or communities (Schensul et al 1999: 1); the domestic workers were approached as they congregated at a specific street corners, on their way to taxi or buses stops, in taxis and buses and any other space or place where they interact on a daily basis. The process of identifying potential

respondents began with approaching specific individuals who acted as entry points into the network and thus producing a "snowball" effect. Thirty domestic workers, one security guard and one gardener participated in the study.

Both group and individuals were conducted, using a semi-structured interview questionnaire which was presented to the participants. This approach allows for flexibility while ensuring a high degree of comparability between one interview and another. After the initial round of interviews, the presentation of the questionnaire to the respondents was discarded to allow for a more natural flow of the conversation. The questions from the questionnaire were used in the conversations, although not in the same order. A significant portion of the data was obtained through continuous direct observation of the domestic workers in various spaces-street corners, taxi ranks, taxis, buses, shopping centres and homes; and spatial mapping was used to describe the activity spaces of domestic workers by showing the locations of activity sites other than their homes. The dissertation also includes short narratives in a few chapters, adapted from the conversations with domestic workers.

Research Site: The research was conducted in Rustenburg, North West. The town has a population of 549 575 people. The suburbs, Cashan, Protea Park and Safari Gardens are inhabited by predominantly middle to upper class, English or Afrikaans speaking families. However there has been a recent increase in Black middle class families living in the area. There are three main reasons for the choice to conduct the study in Rustenburg: 1) I was born and raised in Rustenburg and therefore familiar with the area and its transport networks; 2) I speak Setswana, the dominant language spoken in area and; 3) I have established contacts with domestic workers employed in Cashan and Safari Gardens through my work in a previous study from 2013.

1.7 Ethical Considerations

As my research involves "human subjects" some ethical issues arise.

Harm: Although the research is not likely to cause physical or psychological harm, or put the participants in legal jeopardy; interviews have the potential to have a negative effect on their work and incomes. For example some employers may not be happy about their employees participating in a study which might paint their interactions in a negative light. Because of the

focus on the interactions of domestic workers in the public spaces they frequent, this risk was averted, but I was conscious at all times to avoid respondents' working environment. More importantly the participation of domestic workers in this study and the tracking and mapping of their travel and activity patterns has the potential to violate their privacy and confidentiality or put them at risk. The nature of the study was conveyed to the participants; their confidentiality and anonymity assured and informed consent statements were explained to and signed by all respondents. As a safety measure, **false names are used in all notes, drafts and in the final dissertation**, especially where daily routines, travel routes and home addresses are used.

Privacy, anonymity and confidentiality: the privacy of the participants was violated only to the minimum degree necessary for research purposes. The information gathered during the research process is stored in a password protected computer and in an online data base, Drop Box. **In the final report and dissertation, the identities of the participants are protected through the use of fictitious names and addresses**. A collection of the data will be kept in the case further research on the topic is conducted; however it is likely that the research will be destroyed after a few years.

1.8 Conclusion

Domestic workers are among one of the most vulnerable groups in society, positioned at three lines along which social inequality is generated- class, race and gender. Although both men and women can do the tasks required by this work, domestic work is extremely feminised and in South Africa is the largest source of employment for black women. Much has been written about the unfavourable working conditions of domestic workers, and the limitations placed on the implementation of political interventions due to indifference or resistance of employers in their private homes. The intimate relationship between worker and employer too has been studied, and is generally characterised by inequality. The home then, continues to be a "theatre of public combat" (Nadasen 2016).

The foregoing paragraphs introduced the research topic, "the role of the social networks in which domestic workers regularly interact in forming and shaping their political subjectivities" which is a significant departure from scholarship on domestic service as its

focus lies in the relationships between the domestic workers themselves. The study is underpinned by the theories of everyday life and the theories around the concepts of "space and place" which offer a unique analysis of domestic service. A literature review encompassing the themes of domestic service in South Africa, everyday life, space and place and, political subjectivities was offered. This was followed by sections explaining the methodological approach and ethical considerations of the study.

The following five chapters unpack the many themes touched on in this introductory chapter. Chapter three looks at the occupational characteristics of domestic work, highlighting the challenges experienced by domestic workers that militate against the recognition of domestic work as waged labour. The difficulties in organising domestic workers are also looked at. The occupational transformation from live-in to live-out work is then explored. Chapter four delves deep into the subject of space and place, and analyses the spatial experience of domestic workers as they travel in and around Rustenburg. The fifth chapter looks at domestic workers' engagement with the practices of everyday life. The concepts and subjects explored in chapters two through five contribute significantly to our understanding of the formation of the political subjectivities of domestic workers, which is the subject of the sixth chapter.

However we begin first with chapter two, which introduces the protagonists of the study, highlighting their sociological features followed by a discussion on "education" which was frequently brought up in conversation with the domestic workers employed in the leafy suburbs of Rustenburg.

Chapter 2: Sociological Profile of the Domestic Workers

2.1 Introduction

Every morning at 5am a goods train roars past the edge of Phetogo* village, waking up the residents with its rumbling and ringing. Josephine only wakes up half an hour later and prepares the water for her bath. Like thousands of others in Phetogo, she lives in a small shack in her landlord's backyard. This has become a popular way for those who own land to make an extra income. Her morning routine before work is short as all of her four children have left home. As she makes her way to catch a taxi, she walks past huge plots with houses and shacks, smoke from their kitchens and backyards filling the otherwise fresh morning air. The village is surrounded by a few hills and bushveld and there is a river nearby. The majority of the residents are Setswana speaking although a significant part of the population is made up of other language speakers, having settled in Phetogo in the 1960s when a platinum mine opened close to the village. The mines continue to attract migrant workers from all over South Africa and it is in fact the reason why Josephine and her miner husband settled there.

Josephine marches past the old Lutheran church and in a few minutes arrives at the makeshift taxi rank: an open field adjacent to the chief's house and directly opposite "Piet's tavern" which is frequented by many in the village especially at month end. The taxis take passengers to the neighbouring villages or into the city. She pays R11 to the taxi conductor and off the taxi goes, past vast sunflower and maize fields, then past the informal settlement that is steadily growing in size year after year, then past the massive mine shafts and dumps, and finally through the industrial areas of the city and into the central business district. The trip takes a mere 20 minutes.

Once in the CBD, the taxi drives along Nelson Mandela drive, past the statue of Paul Kruger affectionately known as "Oom Paul" in front of the Town Hall and hurtles towards the taxi rank. The taxi rank in town is large and full of activity. There are sounds of taxis driving in and out of the rank hooting at jay-walking pedestrians, hawkers calling out to potential customers, music blaring from a few of the stalls, taxi marshals yelling out destinations of various taxis. Walking through it one comes

> across all sorts of smells: car fumes, cooking oil, petrol leaking from vehicles, urine, body odour from the workers and smoke from the small fires made in the dump nearby. There are different kinds of people too: school children carrying heavy backpacks skipping over litter and small pools of water; men and women clutching their bags close to their bodies; taxi and bus drivers on smoke breaks. The experience of walking through the taxi rank is an assault on the senses.
>
> Josephine trudges from the north to the south of the rank to catch a taxi to the suburbs. She pays R8. In the early mornings the taxis and buses to Cashan and Safari Gardens are filled with domestic workers. Many have come to know each other. The taxi takes off heading south west, avoiding the congested CBD and into the suburbs. They drive in streets lined with trees and pass schools with large cricket ovals and grand auditoriums. Still close to the centre of town, the houses are modest and fit neatly in their small yards. After several minutes, in Protea Park, Safari Gardens and Cashan, the houses become bigger and more expensive. Josephine hops off at her stop at a small shopping complex and breathing in the fresh, clean morning air walks through the leafy suburbs towards her employer's home.

This short account of Josephine's early morning journey to work is representative of the experience of many domestic workers employed in households in Rustenburg's wealthy suburbs. Like Josephine, the majority of domestic workers come from townships and villages surrounding Rustenburg, although some come from as far as Hartebeesfontein, 145 kilometres away. They come to engage in household work: cleaning, washing, ironing, cooking, and looking after young children and the elderly. They return home in the afternoons and evenings to be with their families.

Domestic workers in South Africa are among the most exploited groups in a society already characterised by extreme inequality. As an occupational group domestic workers are subject to "ultra-exploitation" evidenced by the denial of favourable working conditions and the deprivation of a negotiated wage, reasonable working hours, and a family and social life (Cock 1980: 5). Although political interventions to improve the working conditions of domestic workers have been introduced in the post-apartheid era, most notably in 2001, the

amelioration of their working conditions has been limited largely due to non-compliance by employers in observing labour policy (Du Toit 2011: 224).

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the thirty women who participated in the study, the potential protagonists of the movement of domestic workers in Rustenburg. All thirty respondents were black women, consistent with popular literature on domestic work which states that this work is traditionally and almost universally considered as "naturally" part of women's sphere, as well as the fact that domestic service constitutes one of the largest sources of employment for black women in South Africa (Cock 1980; Du Preez et al 2010: 365; Gaitskell et al 1983). While chapter five explores the conversations between domestic workers quite extensively, the conversations in this chapter serve to highlight the sociological features of the domestic workers, namely their age, home language, dependents and aspects of their work such as salaries and transport costs. The chapter closes with a discussion on the education the workers themselves had received, and the education they hoped their children and dependents would achieve, a topic which was frequently brought up during conversations. Fictitious names are used throughout the dissertation.

2.2 The Domestic Workers of Rustenburg

Cashan, Protea Park and Safari Gardens are Rustenburg's most affluent neighbourhoods. Three roads lead through them: Helen Joseph Drive, Arend Road and Cuckoo Avenue. On weekday afternoons, groups of domestic workers wait at street corners and on the sides of roads lined with well-kept lawns and high walls for a bus or taxi that will transport them to the taxi rank located in the centre of town. From midday onwards, domestic workers trickle onto the streets usually in pairs, holding up umbrellas to shield themselves from the scorching sun. After 4pm, throngs of domestic workers can be seen walking hurriedly, anxious to get home before dark. Walking among them, one encounters diverse personalities, becomes privy to their discourses and catches glimpses into their personal lives.

The initial stage of the study was spent quietly observing domestic workers at a street corner on Cuckoo road in Cashan that served as a bus and taxi stop. The bus only makes two rounds on this road, in the morning around 7am and in the afternoon around 3pm. Every weekday in the hour before the bus arrives, a sizable group of domestic workers forms. The interactions of

this group of workers reflected those of other groups of workers observed at subsequent stages of the study: on some days the workers engage in friendly banter, sharing stories and bursting into laughter. On other days their silence is only interrupted by polite greetings and the blaring honk of the taxi driver trawling for customers. At month-end the corner is a lonely place, as many workers travel into the city to do shopping and run errands.

I approached over forty women in these groups, and was able to convince thirty to participate in this study. The ages of the participants of the study who all work in different parts of Cashan, Protea Park and Safari Gardens ranged between 25 years and 59 years. The majority fell between ages 40 and 59. All the conversations were in Setswana. As Setswana is the dominant language in Rustenburg, almost all respondents spoke it as a home language. Only three of the respondents spoke other languages namely IsiNdebele, Sesotho and Xitsonga.

As all the domestic workers come from the outskirts of Rustenburg and some even farther, they spend a significant portion of their days walking to catch a bus or taxi, waiting for transport to leave the taxi rank for the suburbs and vice versa. Twenty-two respondents estimated the amount of time it takes them to get to work every morning. Only 2 of them spend 30 minutes or less travelling between home and work; more than half of the workers spend between half an hour and an hour travelling and 8 of the respondents spend more than an hour getting to work every morning. This period of waiting constitutes a significant part of domestic workers daily routine. *Where* they wait, *who* they wait with, *what* they do while waiting become important questions which will be addressed in subsequent chapters.

Some of the women were smartly dressed: wearing lipstick, hair combed neatly, the smell of their perfume wafting in the air, uniforms tucked away in carry bags. Among domestic workers wearing uniform is unpopular, as it "publicises their position which is regarded as low in the social order" (Ntombela 2009: 133). Dress, it has been argued, is not neutral or value-free; meanings pertaining to dress are mediated by the status assigned to a job (135). Unlike nurses or pilots the work of domestic workers is not held in high esteem (136). Further, the fact that most domestic workers are not consulted about whether or not they should wear a uniform, or on the selection and design of the uniform, is a form of depersonalisation of the workers (137). Moreover, domestic workers are infantilised-

employers select and buy their adult employees uniforms without consulting them, the same way they do for young children. This is an indication of the unequal power relations between workers and their employers, which are exacerbated by race, gender and social class (137).

Salaries

With the majority of the women bearing the sole responsibility of providing for their families, it is unsurprising that money and salaries feature frequently in conversations among domestic workers. When asked, *"What do you talk about with the other workers while waiting for the taxi or bus?"* the following responses were received:

> "Work, salaries and treatment by our employers"- Aniki
>
> "We complain about work and money. There is nothing else, we complain only about money"-Gontse
>
> "We talk about the fact that these white people must pay us. When it is time for an increase, they should give us an increase. That is it. So that we too can live a life of dignity"- Nthabiseng

Although the subject of salaries was not delved into deeply with this group of respondents, information gathered in a previous study conducted in 2013, with a sample of domestic workers from the same area, provides a rough estimation of the salary an average domestic worker from Rustenburg receives. In the 2013 study the salaries ranged between R600 and R3950 per month, however the average worker earned between R1000 and R2000 per month. Interestingly, live-out work affords domestic workers opportunities to earn more money per month by working for more than one household and increasing the number of work days per week. For instance the respondent who received only R600 per month worked only one day a week for one household while the respondent who received R3950 worked for three different households. Overall 14 out of 15 of the respondents received salaries above minimum wage, which stood at R1146.51 per month for workers working 27 hours or less per week and R1618.37 for those working more than 27 hours per week, for "Area B" within which Rustenburg falls under (Department of Labour, 2013). From 1 December 2016, domestic worker minimum wage increased to R1562.21 for those working less than 27 hours per week

and R2205.16 per month for those working more than 27 per week (Department of Labour, 2016).

Notwithstanding this, low pay for domestic workers is a global phenomenon and can be attributed to many factors including unequal bargaining power and the perception that the skills required to perform domestic work, like cooking, cleaning and caring for children are traditionally viewed as "naturally" part of a women's work (Gama & Willemse 2014: 727). Given that the living wage, the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs, currently stands at R7222,50 per month for individuals and R10800 per month for families in South Africa, the domestic workers constant calls for higher wages is warranted (Wage Indicator Foundation 2017).

Transport costs

Connected to salaries, another great source of anxiety was transport costs. Twenty-eight of the thirty respondents in the 2016 study reported that they commuted from Rustenburg's surrounding townships and villages to their places of work by public transport. Of the 28 commuters, 17 use the public municipal bus; 9 travel by taxi and 2 use both modes of transport. Most of the respondents came from villages and townships close to town, travelling between 15 and 30 kilometres to places like Phokeng, Photsaneng and Tsitsing. There were small groups hailing from the same areas: 5 came from Boitekong, 5km away from Rustenburg; 4 from Meriting, 11km away; 2 from Kanana, 12km away and 4 lived in Lethabong in Hartebeesfontein, a striking 145 km away from Rustenburg. Also worth mentioning are the distances travelled by 3 other respondents, who came from Phatsima, 45 km away; Sandfontein, 60 km away and; Mabeskraal, 83kms away from Rustenburg.

The everyday travel between Rustenburg and the townships on the outskirts uses up a significant portion of the domestic workers' salaries. Their journey consists of at least two parts: the bus/taxi ride from their homes to the taxi rank in the centre of the town; and from the taxi rank to the suburbs. This means that each phase of travel will cost a separate fee. For example: Pauline travels from her home in Phokeng to her workplace in Cashan five days a

week. She pays R11 for a taxi to the taxi rank in town and takes a bus into the suburbs which costs an additional R8. Thus Pauline spends R38 on transport each day and R760 each month.

Education Levels

Despite the introduction of legislation in the early 2000s intended to improve their welfare many domestic workers still experience exploitation and relatively poor living conditions, brought on by a general lack of education, poor salaries and huge transport and accommodation costs (Ginsburg 2000). The topic of education, that of both the workers themselves and the education that they hoped their children and dependents would achieve, was frequently brought up in conversation with the respondents. Many workers alluded to the idea that their being domestic workers was due to the fact that they were unable to complete their studies or receive further training. The majority of the respondents have attended school and progressed beyond the 3rd grade. One did not have the opportunity to attend school at all. Two respondents failed to provide their education information. A few of the domestic workers had further training after leaving school: two have level 1 teaching certificates for crèche; one has a house-keeping certificate; one is a trained tailor; one has received training in catering and home-based care and; one worker is in possession of a nursing diploma.

Due to an inferior educational system under apartheid and the apartheid city structure black people, particularly women, have historically been deprived of education and economic opportunities which confined them to lower-paying unskilled jobs with women mostly being attracted to jobs entailing domestic work in white households (Gama & Willemse 2014: 721). Still, the troubled economy of the post-apartheid era which has resulted in a slow growth of the formal economy, the liquidation of many companies, retrenchment of many workers and a steadily high unemployment rate; has forced many to enter the informal economy to find employment opportunities (722). The informal economy is all work that is outside state regulation (Kanbur 2009). More specifically, Statistics South Africa defines those who work in the informal economy as "employees not registered for income tax and who work in establishments that employ less than 5 persons..." In their 2014 study, Gama and Willemse found that even though everyone is afforded the right to basic education, including basic adult education and further education, the formal sector had more workers with an education level

higher than Grade 12, as compared with domestic workers and others employed in the informal sector (729). The North West had the highest incidence of domestic workers with no schooling (730).

One worker reflects: *"I completed standard 5 in 1977 with first class; I was very smart at school. I wasn't able to go further because I didn't have a mother. There was money- my father worked but my mother had passed away long ago. A mother is like a lawyer, children get everything because of the mother. My father wanted to take me to school and he found me a place to stay but my step-mother protested, she didn't want me to go to school because I wasn't her child. She didn't understand that when a person is educated she gains so much."*- Josephine

Another shared, *"I wanted to be a nurse but unfortunately I did not get that opportunity, that is why today I am growing old as domestic worker"*- Mavis

Their aspirations for their children's education were high. Many stressed the importance of education for their children. When asked whether they would like it if their children became domestic workers only one worker gave an affirmative reply. Josephine said, "Yes! Work is work, hundred Rands are the same; it doesn't matter where they come from". The rest had the following to say:

> "I would not want it. It is heavy and there is no money"- Gontse
>
> "I'd 'cancel' her. No, I want her to be educated, they must not walk in my footsteps"- Seipati
>
> "I tell my 9 year old, 'my child, get educated so that you don't end up like your mother'. I didn't intend on ending up like this, it was because I lost my parents" – Group interview with Leah, Esther, Nkisa and Francinah
>
> "No, that will not work out because we domestic workers are mistreated. That little bit we get we spend on our children's education so that they can progress and not go back to where we are. When we were growing up we walked to school our mothers had no jobs. Now, it will be difficult for us to accept our children working as domestic

workers- it's better for them to find other work"- Group interview with Oumakie, Tabitha, Bethany and Dikeledi

"I would not want my children to be domestic workers because it is heavy work. You wake up in the morning to go to work at another person's house. It is not simple. I persevere because I am struggling. It's like you don't have a future. As black people we struggle and that is why I would not want my children to be domestic workers"- Neo

"We want our children to progress not to end up like us. We want them to be able to stand up on their own two feet"- Group interview with Leah, Esther, Nkisa and Francinah

2.3 Conclusion

In summary, this chapter introduced the thirty women who participated in the study and who through conversations provided a glimpse into their lives as domestic workers employed in the suburbs of Rustenburg. They belong to one of the most vulnerable groups in society, positioned at three lines along which social inequality is generated- class, race and gender. Although both men and women can do the tasks required by this work, domestic work is extremely feminised and in South Africa is the largest source of employment for black women. Even with the rights to basic education afforded to South Africans, the education levels amongst domestic workers remain relatively low compared to other occupations and economic sectors. A general lack of education coupled with huge transport costs amongst others, leaves domestic workers living in relatively poor conditions.

Certainly, much has been written about the unfavourable working conditions of domestic workers, and the limitations placed on the implementation of political interventions to alleviate their situation due to indifference or resistance of employers in their private homes. The intimate relationship between worker and employer too has been studied and perceptions about domestic workers as passive in relation to their employers, discredited. Indeed, through numerous conversations and interactions, the participants of the study demonstrated silent

forms of resistance used by groups or individuals to resist without directly confronting the dominant like gossiping about their employers and disdainfully comparing aspects of their working conditions like salaries, which serve to subvert the authority of their employers.

This study however seeks to take the discourse on domestic workers out of the home, which continues to be “a theatre of public combat” and into the streets by exploring the relationships between the domestic workers themselves.

Chapter 3: Occupational Characteristics and Transformations of Domestic Service

3.1 Introduction

As an occupational group domestic workers are exploited, evidenced by unfavourable working conditions like poor salaries, long hours, disrespectful treatment and denial of any acknowledgment of the dignity of their labour (Cock 1980). It is not surprising that domestic work is undervalued since the occupation has its origins in slavery. Regarding endeavours to improve their working conditions, domestic workers as a collective are historically viewed as "unorganisable" (Boris & Nadasen 2008: 413). Nevertheless collective action is vital in enabling domestic workers to access social protections and to use their collective voice to achieve changes in the wider institutional environment that affects their livelihood and work. While the overarching aim of the study is to examine the interactions between domestic workers as they socialise amongst themselves and the potential for collective action in these networks, this chapter explores the reasons why more established approaches to organising, such as unionising, have not been successful.

First, the occupational challenges experienced by domestic workers that militate against the recognition of domestic work as waged labour are considered. These challenges include the prevalence of the view that their work exists outside the boundaries of legitimate labour; the blurring of the line between workplace and home and; race, gender and class inequalities between domestic workers and their employers. Second, the chapter examines domestic worker organising in South Africa over the last few decades, the challenges entailed in unionising efforts and the role of the post-apartheid state in the demobilisation and de-politicisation of the union. Lastly, the chapter will look at a transformation in the occupation, the shift from live-in to live-out work. Live-out work defies the "atomised" nature of domestic service and importantly, presents domestic workers with an opportunity that was not always made available to them, at least to this degree: to gather together quite frequently, in spaces like bus and taxi stops and street corners during their commutes to and from work. Latent in these spaces, the dissertation will later argue, is the potential for the building of a common political identity and a platform for domestic workers to organise.

These subjects of the formation of political subjectivities and subsequent collective action will be explored in forthcoming chapters. The chapter will begin with a historical overview of domestic service in South Africa.

3.2 From Servants to Workers: A Historical Perspective

Domestic service in South Africa began in the mid to late eighteenth century with slaves performing household work (Ally 2010: 24). Towards the end of the century, however, the work transformed to a form of wage labour characterised by semi-feudal relations. Thereafter the sector underwent several transformations and demographic shifts: in the early to mid-nineteenth century, those performing domestic work were more likely to be white women because of the influx of English settlers and European immigrant workers in the Cape; in the late nineteenth century there was another shift and domestic workers were more likely to be black men and women; in the early twentieth century black women became predominant in paid domestic work. All the while, these changes were connected to the patterns of capitalist development as well as the influences of the state which played a significant role in managing the raced and gendered character of domestic labour throughout this period (Ally 2010: 24-28).

The introduction of political apartheid in 1948 erected new barriers and strengthened existing norms in the sector. The conditions of apartheid-era domestic service have been written about by numerous scholars like Jacklyn Cock (1980), Deborah Gaitskell (1983) Sue Gordon (1985) and Hickson and Strous (1993); who described domestic workers as one the most exploited groups in a society. Domestic labour was then, as it is now, a major feature of the economic structure of South Africa with up to 76% of white families having at least one domestic worker in their employment in 1993 (Hickson & Strous 1993: 109). During this period, this work was described as the nexus of "triple oppression" (Gaitskell et al 1983: 86) defined by the denial of favourable working conditions and the deprivation of a negotiated wage, reasonable working hours, and a family and social life (Cock 1980: 5). They were also subject to disrespectful treatment and denied any acknowledgement of the dignity of their labour and are without specific legal protection, membership of an effective worker organisation and effective bargaining power (Cock 1980: 6).

Three decades have elapsed since Cock's ground-breaking study. With the end of apartheid, the new political regime took her critiques into account. The state formalised domestic work in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act in 1994 as a protected sector within the legislative framework (Fish 2006: 116) and has since introduced a range of interventions aimed at ameliorating the working conditions of domestic workers in South Africa. Sectoral Determination 7 was introduced in 2002 to regulate the minimum wage, working hours, leave days and termination rules, and the compulsory Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) for domestic workers (Department of Labour 2002). The successes and limitations of these interventions will be discussed in a later section in this chapter.

3.3 The Challenges of Domestic Service

The Nature of Domestic Service

Some of the challenges experienced by domestic workers pertaining to their working conditions and treatment stem from the attitude that domestic work lies outside the boundaries of legitimate labour and is not "real" work. What distinguishes domestic work is not in being "the worst job of all" but in that it is not regarded as real work (Ally 2009: 3; Du Preez et al 2010: 396). While domestic work's location in the private realm, a place of leisure not work, adds to this outlook; this widely held attitude is largely attributed to the view that this work is an extension of a woman's natural role. Hence, even though the tasks required by this type of work can be performed by both women and men, today in many parts of the world including South Africa, the overwhelming majority of domestic workers are women. Gaitskell and her colleagues put forward three reasons for the view that domestic work is women's work. Firstly, the tasks performed by domestic workers like cooking, cleaning, and caring for children or the elderly are traditionally and almost universally viewed as "naturally" part of women's sphere (Gaitskell et al 1983: 87). Secondly, it is assumed that these tasks are "normally" performed in the household. Thirdly, the "personal service" aspect of such labour resonates with the ideology of woman as wife (Ibid.). The supervision of domestic workers by white "madams" further reinforces the expectation that this type of work is essentially part of the woman's sphere (Gaitskell et al 1983: 88). Furthermore, housework is considered

unskilled labour because it requires no training, degrees or licences and because it is traditionally assumed that any women can do it (Dill 1988: 34).

The Workplace as Intimate Spaces of Family Life

In addition, domestic work disturbs the social and cultural separation of home and workplace. Given the nature of domestic work and the fact that work takes place in the employer's home, a certain degree of intimacy is inescapable (Ally 2010; Archer 2011; Du Preez et al 2010). Domestic workers make beds, wash bed sheets and underwear, answer telephone calls, and overhear arguments in the home. They are intimately connected to the families they work for and are privy to personal information about them. This intimate relationship "confuses and complicates the conceptual divide between family and work, custom and contract, affection and duty, home and the world" (Qayum & Ray 2003: 1).

Two employers in Archer's study about domestic workers, employers and food provision had the following to say about their relationships with their domestic workers:

> "They're in your house; they've looked after your kids. It's very intimate. They know what's inside your drawers, you know. They know everything about you, they've watched you get rid of men, get new men, fight with your child... breastfeed for goodness sake! She's touched my boobs while breastfeeding. That's the sort of intimacy. I mean not even my husband did that!"- Mirelle, an employer, 7 March, 2006 (in Archer 2011: 72)

> "She sees me when... you know, she's washed my underwear! You know, she knows when Andrew and I have had sex, probably"- Irene, an employer, 29 April, 2006 (in Archer 2011: 72)

Ally (97) argues however that this forced intimacy between domestic worker and family is ambiguous-the domestic worker exists in "the liminal spaces between work and family". While domestic workers share an intimate relationship with their employers, it can be characterised by deep discomfort which employers manage through various forms of social distancing often through dehumanising practices (98). Furthermore employers can use intimacy to mask the relationship as one of waged work and the dramatic inequalities in the

domestic employment relationship through metaphors of kinship that suggest equality. This produces what Bakan and Stasiulis (1997) call a "dialectic of intimacy and distance" in which closeness and familiarity coexist with estrangement and dehumanisation (Ally: 98). These ambiguities of intimacy are among the more potent sources of exploitations of paid domestic work, structuring its unique architecture of dependence and exploitation (98).

Due to the intimate nature of domestic work employers tend to describe their workers as "part of the family". However it is always important to recognise that there is a power relation between domestic worker and employer. The notion of the domestic worker as a "part of the family" can be used as a strategy to manage the complex personal and power relations around domestic work (Anderson 2001: 31; Parrenas 2001: 187). Maternal practices like handing down old clothes or giving of gifts can serve to conceal the real power relations that are at work which often lead to confusion and exploitation. The lines between paid work and personal servitude are blurred, bringing into play deference and additional labour from domestic workers and reinforcing inequality (Ally: 99). Miles (1999: 207) found that the disadvantages of being treated as one of the family far outweigh the advantages- the wages tended to be lower and erratically paid on the basis that the domestic worker would "understand" the employer's financial situation. The "part of the family" myth constructs, deepens and reproduces the hierarchies of power between domestic workers and their employers and is further supplemented by another term predominantly used by black employers, "helper" (Ally: 99). Again these terms mask the relationship as one of waged labour and disallow domestic workers from asserting themselves within the relationship as waged labourers (99).

Unequal Relationships with Employers

Domestic workers are located at the intersection of multiple forms of social disadvantage namely disadvantage on the basis of race, class and gender. These three lines along which inequality is generated can serve as sources of exploitation in the domestic employment relationship. The domestic employment relationship has been described as a microcosm of the existing patterns of racial inequality that reflect distinctly unequal relations between employer and employee based on their race and class positions (Fish 2006: 108). Fish (2006: 108)

argues that domestic work institutionalises severely asymmetrical relations between employers and domestic workers, serving to uphold apartheid's macro-system of racial stratification through daily interactions at the intimate micro-level.

In the conversations with domestic workers in the study, it was not uncommon to hear them refer to employers as "the white people" and some referred to their jobs as "the kitchens". One worker, in response to a question of what advice they would give me as a worker starting out one stated,

> "As domestic workers we work for white people who have abused our parents, our grandparents and so on. So now, there are a few who are better, they still have apartheid but they are better. If you are lucky you will work for one like this. Work for them and make sure you get along..." - Group interview with Leah, Esther, Nkisa and Francinah

Employers wield considerable economic power over domestic workers. They have in their arsenal, especially in the absence of a written contract, the threat of instant dismissal and the power to decrease wages, which significantly places domestic workers in a vulnerable position. High unemployment levels also contribute to this vulnerability. Powerlessness in the face of discriminatory laws, low wages, long working hours in unsatisfactory conditions, and racist employers adversely affects the self-esteem and feelings of self worth of domestic workers (Hickson & Strous 1993: 113).

One of the workers who participated in the study, Aniki, eloquently expressed her thoughts about the current situation of domestic workers,

> "...The problem is that domestic workers have made themselves feel small. They do not see their work as real and so their employers also look down on them because they do not use pens or whatever in their work. That is why people believe that domestic workers will never stand up for themselves. But I would strike (laughs). We have many problems and some of us keep these issues in our hearts"

When asked, "What kinds of problems?" she went on,

> "Problems like basic treatment and salaries. You can find an old woman working all day and earning R50 per day. It's a problem. Sometimes you don't stand up for yourself, especially if a white person found you marketing on the street- because you are desperate you take the offer and you start working for them. And then once you've started working you don't talk to them about registration or pay, you don't negotiate. And after working for the employer for the longest time you find that you do not have open communication with them. Other employers 'run away' with your salary- there is no trust there!" - Aniki

In a previous study conducted in the same area in 2013, when asked, *"How is your relationship with your employer*?" many replied that it is *"just fine"* and stated that they were happy with their working conditions. One stated, *"I am happy as a domestic worker; we don't clash. When there's a mistake we talk about it. But we don't meet like that often- we have a good relationship"* (Interview 3). Another, *"I feel free because there is no man in the house; it is just a woman and her three children"* (Interview 11). For the majority of the respondents however, their relationship with their employer was less than cordial.

In the current study, after explaining at length some of her problems relating to her work, when asked whether she discusses these problems with her employer one worker replied,

> "I've seen that these are not the type of people I can talk to. They don't have time for others. My child lost his new shoes at school in February. On Monday I go to them to borrow money, they say '*we paid you, what do you do with your money*?' Do you see these are not the type of people you can talk to? With them you are always wrong."- Nteseng

Another worker suggested the following approach to facilitate relationships with employers,

> "My advice is that you should try to read their mind to see if you would get along. Another thing to do test them, say you have family problems and need to go home, just to see her reaction. If you have problems share them with her to see if she will help you and advice you. That is how I communicate with my employer"- Tshepang

Increasingly, more and more domestic workers are working for employers of different races. The following are responses from domestic workers who had worked for both White and employers of other races, namely Black Africans and Coloureds. The second response affirms King's statement that class inequalities can serve as a source of exploitation,

> "The black family I used to work for used to help me; they used to buy my children clothes. Black people are better to work for, they can feel your pain; they think 'What would God say if I denied this person food?' It's as if these people (white people) do not have God"- Nteseng

> "The family I worked for previously was a coloured family. I did not like it. It was a 12 room house- I cleaned cooked and all sorts of things and the money was not enough. We fought and then I quit. I told the wife that I cannot work weekends because I do not get paid for that time, plus the money I was already getting was too little. She then said that this is her house and that I must do what she says. I said to her *'no I will not work on weekends if you do not pay me'*. Then she called me a *'low gat'* after that I was so upset I put my hands on her and her mother had to separate us. After that I asked for my money and they told me to wait for the husband. When he got home, he found my bags packed. I asked him for my money, left and never looked back"- Tshepang

Dilata (2008: 90) argues that generally, the relationship that black employers have with their domestic worker is not that different from the relationship between white employers and their domestic workers. The same inequalities and domination domestic workers have always been exposed to, were reproduced in relations between black employers and their domestic workers (90-91). Black employers have a need to create an equal relationship with their domestic workers and thus in the beginning their relationship is usually informal and not established as an employment relationship. This makes it harder for employers to establish boundaries and in some cases assert their role as employers. Similarly as discussed in a foregoing paragraph, domestic workers who are treated as "part of the family" have difficulty asserting their roles as waged labourers.

The difficulties experienced by domestic workers mainly come from the attitude that their work does not constitute "real" work, but rather women's work in their "natural" roles as mothers, wives and caregivers. Thus, domestic work assumes a gendered nature. Its location in the private realm sets up an intimate relationship between employer and employee which is ambiguous, and can become a source of exploitation. The inequalities in the domestic employment relationship along the lines of race, gender and class, worsen domestic workers' situation. Although the post-apartheid state recognises domestic workers as waged labourers, even protecting them in labour legislation like the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Sectoral Determination 7, the many challenges that domestic workers face in their work lives are due to the resistance or indifference of employers, whose perceptions of domestic work contribute to its undervalued and under-recognised status.

3.4 Organising Domestic Workers

The Unionisation of Domestic Workers

The domestic workers of South Africa have a rich history of collective action to improve their poor working conditions. While the previous sections explored the aspects of their work that have militated against the recognition of domestic work as waged labour, this section will consider the attempts made by domestic workers to assert the waged labour nature of the work through unionisation and other collective endeavours.

Domestic workers were amongst the first from the newly formed working class in the 1970s (or even earlier) to organise themselves, into criminal gangs like *Amalaita* and *Izigebengu* initially and later into unions like the Domestic Servants League (Ally 2008: 3; Budlender 2016: 7). Although these initial unionisation efforts were limited and not sustained, they paved the way for the South African Domestic Workers Union (SADWU) which was established in 1986 and considered the most successful unionising effort by domestic workers in South African history (Ally: 3). The result of the merger of five different unions, SADWU is described as "vital" and "vibrant" and in a few years of its formation, attained great feats like its launch of a Legislation Campaign, demanding that the Department of Manpower extend protective labour legislation for domestic workers and for the passage of a national minimum wage (5).They supported their demands through marches, petitions and protests (5).

However, by the early 1990s SADWU was facing serious financial and organisational challenges. As the union entered into the democratic era, it lost its vitality. Boasting a membership base of 85 000 at its peak, by 1994 paid membership had dropped to about 14 000 (Budlender 2013: 9). In 1996, SADWU dissolved, yielding to financial difficulties and leadership disputes (Ally: 5). Ally argues that the decline in membership of SADWU was not entirely unpredictable as the union gained strength in the context of declining wages and working conditions and a hostile state (7). Thus unionisation was a crucial strategy for domestic workers to demand political inclusion and better working conditions.

The South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU) was launched in 2000, building upon former leadership alliances within SADWU (Fish: 121). In the democratic dispensation, the articulation of gender rights in the constitution was a powerful platform for SADSAWU leaders to address some of the issues of domestic workers (121). However, the union has struggled to rally workers around its cause and attract membership- within their first year SADSAWU opened six regional offices and had a membership of approximately 11 000 and in 2004 membership records revealed a total union membership of no more than 9000 domestic workers nationally (Ally 2010: 154). Even at the peak of its popularity during apartheid SADWU only had approximately 85,000 members out of over one million domestic workers nationwide- less than ten percent (Ally 2008). SADSAWU, in comparison to its predecessor, lacks vitality and suffers from an aging leadership which has been unable to build the organisational strength of the union because of a weak membership base (Ally 2008: 7). In 2011 the union was deregistered by the Department of Labour. Although the it is still active, its deregistration limits its efficacy as a lobbying power for domestic workers, for instance it cannot refer member's disputes to the CCMA, and is prohibited from forming a bargaining council at a national level for domestic workers' rights (Jacobs et al 2013: 10).

The challenges of unionising domestic workers may lie in the informal characteristics of the work, even though it is protected and regulated by the state. Kanbur (2009) explains that while being informal means to be outside of state regulation, informality takes different forms. For example workers may be part of a formal establishment but one that is not complying with formal regulations; others may be in establishments that choose to be

informal in order to avoid regulation; or may be in establishments that are wholly outside the purview of regulation (Kanbur 2009). Domestic workers, it seems, fall under the former category, as the majority of employers do not comply with state regulation regarding domestic work. Exploring this further may shed light on the challenges of unionising domestic workers.

There are a few challenges that informal sector workers present to conventional models of workers' organisations: workers' organisations tend to articulate their strategies, forms and modes of organising around well defined work places, tasks and employers, and around a model of the worker as a breadwinner man; whereas informal sector workers may have physically dispersed workplaces, a wide range of tasks, no identifiable employer and increasingly are women (Kabeer et al 2013: 1). In fact Silver (2003) argues that the capacity of trade unions to defend the interests of their membership rests on both structural and associational power. The structural power is derived from the strategic location occupied by privileged sections of the male working class within the capitalist economic system. As a result of location, collective strategies like the closed shop, collective bargaining, and the threat of strike action- were effective in winning gains for their membership (Kabeer et al: 3). These gains then in turn strengthened the organisational capacity of the unions, since they could rely on the loyalty and financial backing of their membership (Ibid.). Therefore the trade union model has failed to reach out to the vast majority of workers, both male and female, in the informal economy which is characterised by ease of entry, low earnings and the absence of a clear cut employer-employee relationship (Ibid.). As a result less than 10 percent of workers and considerably lower percentages of women workers were members of trade unions in most developing countries (4). The organisational challenge of the informal economy is further exacerbated in cultures where women are brought up to be docile, and where their lives may be controlled to a large extent by the decisions of dominant family members. Their upbringing thus gives them little courage to stand up to powerful actors in the public sphere (6).

The above is in agreement with the discourse on South African domestic workers, with several authors arguing that the "atomisation" or the scattering of domestic workers in employer residences and the lack of a communal "shop floor" to air grievances, build moral support or rally around injustices and the enforcement of laws regulating domestic labour

makes it difficult for domestic workers to organise collectively (Du Preez: 397; Jacobs et al 2013). This dispersed, disaggregated structure of domestic work inhibits the emergence of collective identity and collective interests (Kabeer et al: 4).

Notwithstanding these challenges, SADSAWU has made progress in improving the working conditions of domestic workers. Unemployment insurance is one of the most important social security initiatives in South Africa given the high unemployment rate, which currently stands at 26.5% (Statistics South Africa 2017). The union was able to secure domestic workers' access to the national Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) providing a safety net for domestic workers during periods of unemployment, by aligning themselves with a coalition organised by the Commission on Gender Equality, known as Gender Monitoring and Advocacy Coalition for the Unemployment Insurance Fund (GMAC-UIF) in 2001 (Fish:123).

The Role of the State

In a post-apartheid context however, many of the union's demands had been achieved under the aegis of a labour friendly post-apartheid state committed to protecting domestic workers (Ally: 7). The post-apartheid state included the requirement of work contracts for domestic workers in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, which was the first Act to formalise domestic work as a protected sector within the legislative framework in 1996 (Fish: 116). Furthermore the state introduced Sectoral Determination 7 in 2002, recognising domestic workers as political agents, giving them the same rights afforded to other workers, introducing a minimum wage, prescribing the use of work contracts and state-legislated annual salary increases (Ally: 2).

While SADSAWU's accomplishment regarding UIF demonstrates the union's role as an agent for change, Ally argues that it also exposes how the positioning of the state as the representative of worker's interests has displaced the union (14). Even in this unique case where one agency of the state launched a campaign to petition another agency, it was still the governmental commission (the Commission for Gender Equality) in the coalition that positioned itself as the representatives of the interests of the domestic workers and invited the union for domestic workers to join (Ibid.). Thus there has been a shift in the relationship between the state and organised labour in the democratic era. The post-apartheid state's commitment to transforming

the exploitative and oppressive relations within paid domestic work has led to the demobilisation and de-politicisation of the union (Ally: 2). Through the trope of 'vulnerability' issuing from a protective impulse, the state has positioned itself as "the primary articulator, representative, and protector of domestic workers' collective interests" (Ibid.). This has displaced the union in these roles, and has been facilitated both by the limitations of the union's historical and current organisational capacity, as well as the symbolic and practical utilities to the union of functioning as an auxiliary to the state. This parallels demobilisation in other organised sectors of society, especially the labour movement (7-8).

Respondent's Membership in Unions

Studies have shown that domestic workers may have lost faith in unions. Participants in Ally's 2010 study stated that they would rather spend wages on insurance policies providing private legal assistance than on union fees. Other studies report that domestic workers feared angering employers by openly declaring affiliation with a union. Geographically isolated from one another and without a union, the capacity for an active politics of domestic labour that challenges the class hierarchies and inequalities at the root of paid domestic work has been muted.

In the current study 22 of the respondents commented on the subject of trade unions. Of the 22 none were members of the union and only 2 had even heard of SADSAWU. Despite this several indicated that they would be interested in joining the union:

> "What can we do? Maybe I should join? I'm old now"- Nteseng
>
> "Yes, sometimes you can help others, you know different things, and others tell you about how to work, so you can communicate with others"- Rumbidzai
>
> "Well I don't know what it is about but if someone explains to me maybe I would join them"- Aniki

Only three of the workers plainly said that they would not join a union for domestic workers. Josephine explained that she had no problems with her employers*, "They pay me on time, and*

they even increase my pay without me having asked". Another who had been told about the union said, *"I have heard of them yes, they came to the civic centre talking about the union..."* When asked if she joined to union she replied, *"No, because I do not see its use. When I first started working I worked at Rainbow Chicken for 10 years. I joined a union but still got retrenched. When they were striking, I never joined because in my department I was the only one and I was a cleaner, working one shift. And I still got retrenched"* (Zeporah).

For SADSAWU declining union membership is in part a reflection of the efficacy of a democratic state (8). With the availability of important state agencies like the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA) actively committed to enforcing their rights, there is no incentive for a domestic worker to join a union. Domestic workers would rather spend wages on insurance policies providing private legal assistance than on union fees.

3.5 Occupational Transformations: The Shift from Live-in to Live-out Work

While the majority of workers are live-out workers, that is they live in their own residence and travel to work daily, this was not always the case. Live-in domestic work where workers reside in the household of their employer, was the predominant form during apartheid, and was the archetypal image of oppressive work relations. In 1993 Hickson and Strous described the living arrangements made for domestic workers,

> "Accommodation provided for live-in domestics is generally a small, cheerless room in the back garden, often without hot water and many times without toilet facilities or electricity. Food given to such employees is often leftovers or 'servant's meat' and, as does old clothing, frequently contributes to payment in kind. Wages paid are extremely low, justified on the basis that because board and lodging are provided, any real cash is simply pocket money. This practice of payment in kind may fulfil an ideological function of inducing feelings of gratitude and faithfulness in the employee and feelings of superiority and benevolent generosity in the donor" (Hickson & Strous 1993: 110).

Several authors use a carceral metaphor when describing live-in domestic work, with Cock having likened it to a "total institution", Bujra calling it a "mode of incarceration" and Parrenas stating that live-in domestic workers see their employer's home as a prison (Bujra

2000; Cock 1980 & Parrenas 2001 in Ally 2010: 46). However more than anything, live-in domestic work is oppressive because it denies the domestic worker the independence of maintaining her own family- the workers were separated from their children and spouses by the "no visitors" rule usually enforced by employers. This isolation makes live-in domestics vulnerable to being manipulated by employers' personalistic appeals to family ideology, to see themselves "like one of the family" (Hondagneu-Sotelo: 52). Furthermore the spatial engineering of apartheid and implementation of pass laws meant that the workers were based in urban white cities, while their children were left behind in the homelands (Phillips: 38).

In South Africa the transition from live-in to live-out domestic work began in the 1970s and was facilitated and intensified in the 1980s and 1990s by the loosening and eventual removal of the labour and residential controls of the apartheid regime (Ally: 44). In the global arena the transition could have occurred even as early as the period between 1870 and 1920 in the United States according to historian David Katzman (Dill 1988: 35). This shift from domestic workers residing in the household of their employer to them living in their own residence has been discussed by several authors at length (Cock 1980; Wrigley 1991; Romero 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 2006). Live-out work has several advantages for workers. It provides greater personal freedom and less isolation from friends and family. As such workers are typically less dependent on and subordinated by their employers than in live-in work (Dill 1988: 35). Domestic workers gain some control over their working conditions- they are able to work for multiple employers and limit their working hours. They are able to establish outcome-based relations with employers and attempt to professionalise their work (Du Preez et al.: 399). The drawback is that the daily lives of live-out domestic workers are often strenuous as they try to juggle their own family commitments and the responsibilities attached to their employers' households (Anderson 2000: 46).

In the study only two of the respondents were live in workers. Live-in workers experience several challenges: they are isolated from their own families and communities, and sometimes live in arrangements with feudal remnants (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avila 2006: 555). Oftentimes there are no hourly parameters to their jobs and they often earn less than the minimum wage (Ibid.). On average live in workers work longer hours as they are generally available in the evenings to cook, wash up, baby-sit and serve snacks (Cock: 42).

These conditions were experienced by one of the live-in domestic workers, Seipati:

> Seipati is a 53 year old domestic worker living with her employers in a three bedroom house. She originates from Lesotho and visits home every three months. She has worked for her black employers for several years since the early 2000s and moved to Rustenburg with them from Mafikeng. Her daily tasks include cooking, cleaning and looking after a toddler, who was playing around us as we conducted the interview. She works Mondays to Sundays and even public holidays. She is always there. She said, "It is not nice. At least if I had Sundays off- I would go to church. But on Sundays at quarter to eleven, they come to me with vegetables saying I must cook them. When you are a person who loves church, it hurts" (Interview 15)

Live out work as led to the decline of highly personalised, particularistic relations between domestic workers and their employers which Seipati experiences (Hondagneu-Sotelo: 52). Because they have a social life outside of work, they are less vulnerable than live-in workers to being manipulated by employers' personalistic appeals to family ideology- to see themselves like "one of the family" (Ibid.). Day work is an improvement as it loosens but does not necessarily end, intensely "personalist" relationships between workers and their employers.

In recent years there has also been a transformation from live-out to "job work" where domestic workers are not paid by the hour but rather a certain amount upon the completion of certain tasks (53). Under these circumstances domestic workers are able to position themselves as experts to sell their labour services in the same way a vendor would sell products to customers (Ibid.). For example in South Africa, we see this shift towards job work through start-ups like "Domestly" and "SweepSouth" who recruit domestic workers and offer their services on an online platform paid for by clients via credit card. Each domestic worker has a profile which lists their details and services offered, and allow clients to rate their level of work once it is done (Sweepsouth.com 2017; Domestly.com 2017). When domestics work for several employers they are less likely to engage in deeply personalistic relationships with employers and should they have enough employers lined up they might be able to leave the least desirable jobs. Another advantage of job work is because they set up their own schedule

and work hours, they are allowed more flexibility which is appreciated by women with families and other domestic responsibilities (Hondagneu-Sotelo: 52). The drawbacks of job work include being highly privatised and isolated, and the requirement of securing and maintaining several employers in the context of job scarcity and volatility (Ibid.). Further, except in the case of companies like Domestly and SweepSouth, there is generally no standardised job contract and job work probably exacerbates the atomised nature of domestic work. It is important to note that job work is relatively uncommon in South Africa.

On the whole the shift to live-out work has presented domestic workers with many advantages because it helps them to gain some control over their working conditions as well as independence in maintaining their families and social lives. Beyond these advantages and perhaps more significantly, live-out work defies the "atomised" nature of domestic service and presents domestic workers with an opportunity to gather together quite frequently, in spaces like bus and taxi stops and street corners during their commutes to and from work. These spaces resemble the shop-floor that has eluded domestic workers for decades, however, are fundamentally distinct from unions' shop-floor premise, because of their existence in everyday life. These spaces, where injustices can be rallied around and advice shared, have the potential to build amongst domestic workers, a common identity and to form their political subjectivities.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided an exploration of some of the difficulties experienced by domestic workers on account of the ambiguity of domestic work as gendered, intimate and under-recognised. Even with protections in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Sectoral Determination 7, domestic workers' working conditions remain poor due to the indifference and resistance of employers who do not recognise this work as legitimate waged labour. The union for domestic workers in South Africa, though historically robust, is struggling to attract membership because of the informal character of the work, with its physically dispersed workplaces and the lack of a communal "shop floor" to air grievances, build moral support or rally around injustices. All of this makes it difficult for domestic workers to organise collectively. Additionally, the state's commitment to transforming the exploitative and oppressive relations within paid domestic work has led to the demobilisation and de-

politicisation of the union. Notwithstanding this the everyday practice of commuting to and from work by live-out domestic workers presents them with the opportunity to gather together in spaces like bus and taxi stops, taxi ranks and street corners, which has potentially far-reaching implications for efforts towards organising domestic workers that have not been anticipated. These spaces where they frequently interact hold the potential for common political identities to be built and a potential platform for domestic workers to organise themselves.

Chapter 4: "Spaces and Places"

4.1 Introduction

Miriam, Nthabiseng and Pauline hop on the bus and each toss R8 into the container next to the driver. They take seats next to each other towards the rear, and plunge right back into their conversation that had been interrupted by the bus' arrival. "Has he tried the mines? Aren't they always looking for people?" Miriam asks, raising her voice over the growl of the bus. The question is directed at Pauline, who shared with the women her two adult children's struggle with unemployment. Pauline supports her two children and one grandchild with her salary. "I don't know, anymore" Pauline replies with a sigh. Nthabiseng remains quiet, something is on her mind. Nthabiseng and Miriam both sympathise with Pauline. Miriam promises to keep a look out for any opportunities she might come across.

All three women are mothers and a significant portion of their conversations, held under the tree where the bus to town picks them up, are about money and how their salaries are not enough to support their children. The bus pulls up in Protea Park to pick up more people, most of whom are domestic workers. Pauline begins to tap her foot, impatiently. She wishes she had taken an earlier bus as she will be attending a stokvel meeting at 5:30pm. They will each be contributing R400 to their fund, since it is month end. Nthabiseng, who until now was quiet, turns to address the other two. She supports seven people with her meagre salary, and has been thinking about money, or rather the lack thereof. She has not received a salary increase in a few years and is considering demanding her employer give her one. Today she is particularly disgruntled because she learned that her "madam" and other employers of domestic workers in the area have meetings about their domestic workers. As the bus speeds up, its next stop being the taxi rank Nthabiseng suddenly says to the others, interrupting their ongoing conversation, "You know, they have meetings about us, but we can't even have one meeting amongst ourselves because we are afraid!" Miriam quickly chimes in, "If the government helped us, maybe things would be better". "The government?" interrupts Eva, another domestic worker they know, who has been eavesdropping on their conversation. "I told those ANC

people to get out of my house. They work for big cities like Joburg and Pretoria; they don't care about us here in Rustenburg. These parties never come to townships in Rustenburg; when they come they come to make us wear those red berets"

The conversation soon heats up and each domestic worker offers suggestions and complaints about what the government should do. The discussion spills over to conditions in their townships and villages that they are unhappy about, like crime, unemployment and broken promises of RDP housing, and comes back to their struggles as domestic workers. "If the government supported us, we would have the courage to strike and stand up for ourselves" says Nthabiseng. The bus slows down as it approaches the taxi rank, signalling the end of the conversation. The women, quite agitated at this point, quickly grab their belongings as they stand up to exit the bus. As everyone is saying their goodbyes, Pauline offers words of consolation, "Who knows maybe one of these days things will change". Miriam agrees, "Who knows?" The women get off the bus and walk their separate ways across the taxi rank, anxious to find the taxi that will get them home before the sun sets.

Driving through the suburbs on a weekday, one observes groups of domestic workers clustered together at street corners, and on the sides of the road under trees, discussing their working woes and sharing stories about their lives- like Miriam, Pauline and Nthabiseng usually do. In Rustenburg, the shift to live-out work means that domestic workers, who usually cannot afford their own private cars, come together at least twice a day in spaces like street corners to wait for public transport that will take them to the city centre. At certain points in the day, especially the mornings, it is not uncommon for a taxi or a bus to be filled with only domestic workers. Given the challenges of unionising domestic workers and that there is no communal "shop floor" where they can meet, rally around issues and form a collective identity, it becomes imperative to study the spaces in which they interact and socialise frequently. The nature of the interactions and the social networks formed will be discussed in the next chapter.

The everyday lives of domestic workers are also shaped by their experience of the social, political and economic processes of the city they live in. This chapter will look at the city as experienced by domestic workers. The chapter begins by offering a historical overview of Rustenburg, when it was "founded" and how its diverse inhabitants came to live there. This is then followed by a more in-depth discussion of the broader socio-economic and political struggles experienced in Rustenburg, stemming to a large extent from the socio-spatial legacies of the apartheid era. The chapter will end with a brief discussion on the role of the spatial perspective in analysing political action: it enables one to see the relationship between the spatial constitution of daily life and collective identity formation and; it sheds light on the connections between everyday life experiences and broader social, economic and political processes.

4.2 History of Rustenburg

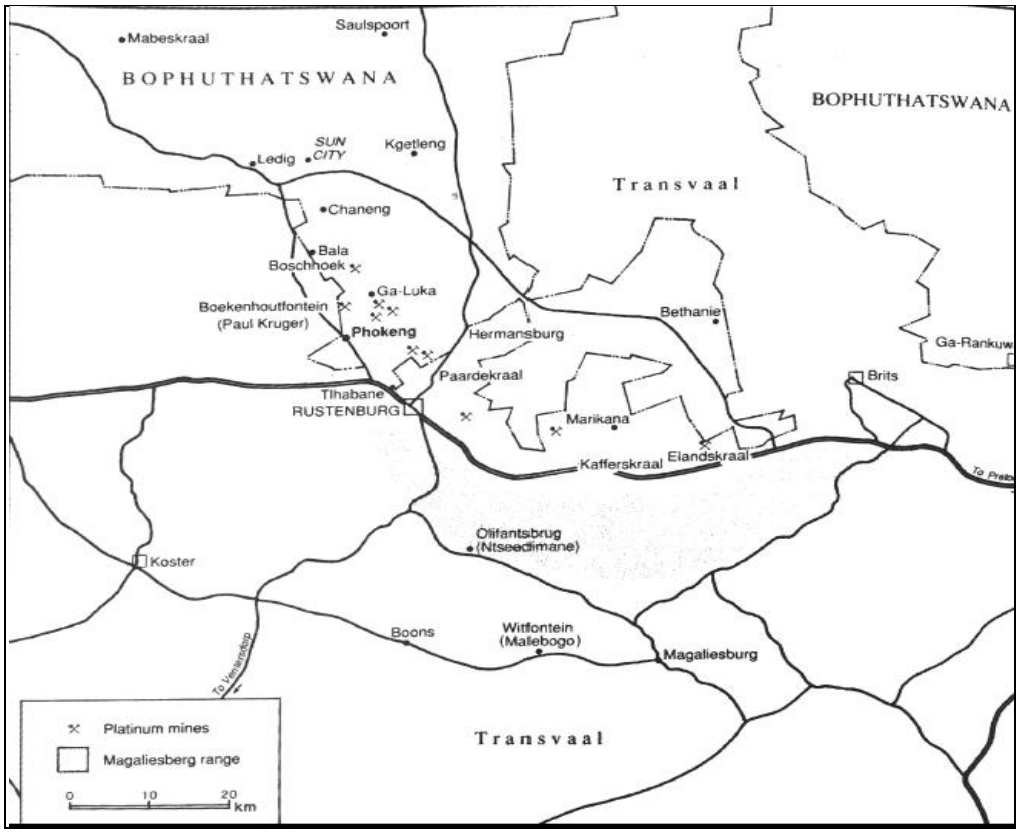
Rustenburg, Dutch or Afrikaans for "town of rest", is a city of about half a million people, located on a Highveld plateau at the foot of the Magalies Mountains in the North West Province. Rustenburg has a strong Afrikaner character. "Founded" by the Voortrekkers in 1851 as an administrative centre for the surrounding farming area, for some time Rustenburg was the capital of the Zuid Afrikansche Republiek until that status was transferred to Pretoria, now Tshwane (South African History Online 2013). Paul Kruger, president of the Republic between 1883 and 1900, called Rustenburg home after settling there with his family in 1842 (South African History Online 2012). The town played an important part in the development of Afrikaner churches in the 19th and 20th centuries; once Pretoria was established as the Boer capital, Rustenburg's role as the centre of church activity grew (South African History Online 2011).

Long before the arrival of Europeans, however, the area belonged to the Bakwena, the crocodile totemic social grouping (Bozzoli 1991: 30). It is said that the Bakwena have a long history and deep roots in the region, with one author stating that the tribe has at least a thousand years of history (29). It is said they arrived in the Transvaal in the 12th Century, having crossed the Zambesi from Egypt or Ethiopia (Ibid.). The Bafokeng, which means "people of the dew" are descendants of the Bakwena and settled in the Phokeng area in the

15th century (Bozzoli 1991: 30). With the arrival of the whites King Mokgatlhe (1836-1891) decided to secure the community's rights to the land (Ibid.).

Throughout the apartheid era the National Party was the dominant political party in Rustenburg, but the white supremacist AWB had a strong presence in the town (South African History Online 2016). When the Homeland legislation was passed, Black people in Rustenburg lost their South African citizenship. Rustenburg was split into two with the demarcation line being Plein Street in the Central Business District (Ibid.). In 2000 the Rustenburg Local Municipality was established as part of the local government demarcation process initiated by the post-apartheid transition, and incorporated the "tribal areas" of the Royal Bafokeng Nation and the Bakwena tribe, which previous fell under the Bophuthatswana Bantustan (Rajak 2012: 254).

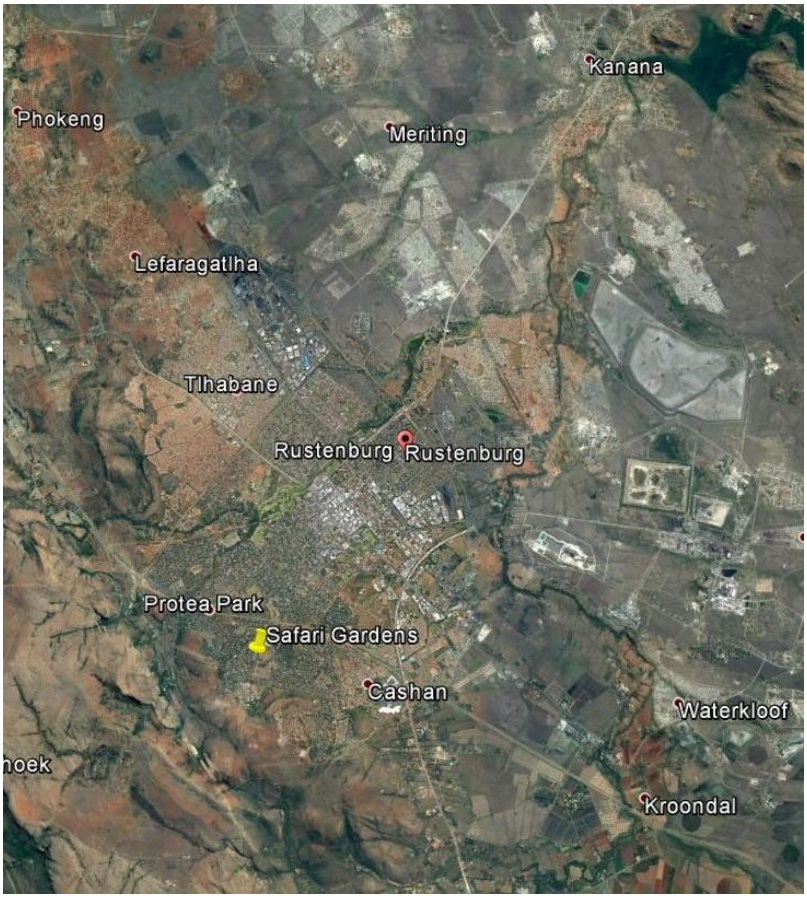
Figure 2.1: Map of Rustenburg in 1991 (Bozzoli 1991)



Today, the N4, a national route, slices through Rustenburg's suburbs connecting the city to Pretoria, Witbank and Nelspruit; and forming the South African section of the Trans-Kalahari

Corridor. Covering an area of 3423 square kilometres, Rustenburg is home to approximately 549 575 people, 88.5% of who are Black Africans (Statistics South Africa 2017). Located in the south of the city are Rustenburg's wealthiest suburbs, Protea Park, Safari Gardens and Cashan. The majority of the inhabitants of these areas are White, and constitute 9.4% of Rustenburg's population. Coloureds and Indians constitute 0.9% and 0.7% of the population respectively. The vast majority of Rustenburg's inhabitants, at 84.6%, live in rural settlements (Statistics South Africa 2017). All except one of the commuter domestic workers who participated in the study lived in rural settlements on the peripheries of the city and beyond.

Figure 2.2: Aerial view of Rustenburg and surrounding townships and villages (Google Earth 2016)



4.3 Rustenburg from a Socio-Spatial Perspective

A panoramic view of the outskirts of the city shows wide stretching plains and bushveld, however in some places the landscape is littered with imposing mine shafts, dumps and

refineries. The explosion of production on Rustenburg's mines over the last two decades has earned Rustenburg a new name, "the Platinum City". Over half of the world's platinum is produced in Rustenburg and the city is now regarded as Africa's fastest growing urban entity, second only to Cairo (Rajak 2012: 252-255). Mining is the municipality's dominant economic activity (Ibid.). Furthermore 50% of all formal sector employment opportunities are provided by the mining sector, which is expected to grow, and will result in the continued influx of people to the city and a growing need for investment in services, housing and supporting infrastructure (Mining Review 2016). The mining sector however has come under scrutiny in recent years, as community protests continue to affect the Platinum belt. Barring protests by mine workers, Rustenburg is also affected by service delivery protests every year.

The city has been the arena in which hegemonic power relations have been contested in urbanised societies, making broad claims for rights and justice, building and mobilising solidarities amongst diverse groups and people (Miller & Nicholls 2013: 452). The role of cities in broader social and political struggles is better understood by moving beyond the notion of the bounded city and by instead focusing on the systemic processes that permeate and shape the social relations of cities (455). Cities are important sites where discriminatory and oppressive practices are enacted through urban, regional and national policy (Miller & Nicholls: 457). The structure of Rustenburg, like other cities in Apartheid South Africa, was profoundly influenced by a period between the 1940s and 1970s, which Harrison et al (2008) refer to as "high apartheid", when influential planning policies and instruments such as the Group Areas Act were conceived and implemented (Du Plessis 2013: 70). Approximately 200 000 Black Africans were relocated during forced removals, which were particularly brutal, away from Rustenburg to an area near Sun City (South African History Online 2012). Indians were moved to Zinniaville, a site adjacent to the industrial area. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s older townships like Tlhabane continued to grow and new townships like Boitekong and Hartebeesfontein mushroomed across the region (South African History Online 2012).

Despite efforts to desegregate the city, the everyday socio-spatial legacies of apartheid continue to be reproduced (Du Plessis 2013: 70). In fact a decade after the dawn of the democratic era suggested that South African cities may be just as segregated and fragmented

as they were in 1994 (Ibid.). The National Planning Commission went further, highlighting the fact that spatial challenges that continue to marginalize the poor remain one of the critical issues that will influence the country's long term development and stated that although the spatial legacy was recognized since before 1994 it has probably been aggravated since then (Ibid.). These governmental practices have made South African cities key arenas of struggle, shaping how rights are distributed, implemented and violated (Miller & Nicholls:458).

The Socio-Economic Reality of Domestic Workers

Over two decades into the new South Africa, statistics regarding living conditions, education, health, income and employment remain skewed in favour of white South Africans. Statistics reveal significantly higher percentages for white South Africans in relation to access to piped on site water; land ownership; educational levels; employment rates; access to private healthcare facilities and; medical aid benefits, as compared to their Black African, Coloured, Indian and Asian counterparts (Statistics South Africa, 2011).

Figure 4.3: Street in a village near Rustenburg (Google Earth 2016)



The gap between the rich, majority of whom are white and the poor, majority black, is widening. South Africa's Gini coefficient, the best-known measure of inequality in which 0 is the most equal and 1 the least, ranged between 0.66 and 0.70 in 2016 (World Bank 2016). In 1993 it was 0.59 (The Economist 2012).

The black working class of Rustenburg and other South African cities can see inequality "inscribed into the landscape of their daily lives" as they compare the inadequate housing and public infrastructure of the poor neighbourhoods on the peripheries where they come from, with the immaculate landscaping, massive houses and security apparatuses of privileged neighbourhoods in which they work. This makes cities fertile ground for mobilisation (Martin & Miller 2003: 147). The daily experiences of the domestic workers who participated in the study might be better understood by looking at the socio-economic conditions of populations living in Rustenburg, where they are employed, and three townships where the majority of the domestic workers came from- Boitekong; Lethabong in Hartebeesfontein and Meriting.

Table 4.1: Key statistics of Rustenburg, Boitekong, Lethabong and Meriting

Key statistics	**Rustenburg**	**Boitekong**	**Lethabong**	**Meriting**
Population	104 612	79786	26 337	13 248
No. households	34 181	29 855	6419	4855
% Access to water	88	33.9	10.7	48.7
% Electricity	81.4	88	98.3	98.8
% Flush toilets	52.8	84.2	29.2	97.5
% weekly refuse removal	80.7	79.8	92.2	97.2
% of persons with matric	40.4	32.3	24.1	43.7
% higher education	21.1	5.2	1.6	6

Source: Statistics South Africa 2016

The statistics in the table above barring access to flush toilets show a vast difference between the conditions of inhabitants of Rustenburg and its suburbs, as opposed to the inhabitants of the surrounding villages and townships. While both the suburbs and townships enjoy access to electricity for lighting, the majority of township dwellers do not have access to running water. This condition is quite alarming in Hartebeesfontein where only 10.7% have access to water. Regarding education levels, particularly the percentage of those with a higher education: Rustenburg has 21.1%; Hartebeesfontein came up last with only 1.6% of the population having accessed higher education. The average household income in Rustenburg ranges between R153 801-R307600 as compared to and R38 201- R76 400 in Boitekong and Meriting, and R19601- R38200 in Hartebeesfontein (Statistics South Africa 2016).

Consequently thousands of South Africans take to the streets several times a year to protest. Since 2004 protests have intensified (Alexander 2010: 40). While the estimate for the number of protests between 1994 and 2005, according to various local authority areas, is over 50; the Minister of Safety and Security estimated that there were 5058 legal protests and 881illegal protests in the 2004/2005 financial year alone (Atkinson 2007: 53). Atkinson (2007: 53) highlights three main causes of the protests: municipal ineffectiveness in service delivery; the poor responsiveness of municipalities to citizens' grievances and the conspicuous consumption entailed by a culture of self-enrichment on the part of municipal councillors and staff.

Many of the grievances are around housing, urban land, poor service delivery regarding water and sanitation, government corruption, evictions and forced removals, unemployment, low wages, electricity disconnections and municipal demarcation. In these protests, the street is the venue for the expression of contention and the extension of solidarity- public discussions are held at street corners, residents march to municipal offices or City Hall and burning tyres are thrown into the street.

Figure 4.4: Street in Cashan, Rustenburg (Google Earth 2016)



The Political Street

While the street is a site of acts and expressions of discontent, it is also the physical place where collective dissent is *produced*. Bayat (2010) explains that certain spatial forms shape, galvanise and accommodate insurgent sentiments and solidarities. In the case of revolutions for example, prior to and during riots and protests, people rush to the streets to collect news, demonstrate, obtain literature and participate in discussions. Thus beyond mere physicality- "the streets of discontent" hold a distinct sociality- where solidarity is communicated, discontent extended and news spread beyond the immediate surroundings (Ibid.). Connected to the streets are the bus, taxi, train terminals which transfer not only people, but news and knowledge. Thus the street is "the chief locus of politics for ordinary people, those who are structurally absent from positions of power' (Bayat 2003).

Figure 4.5: Rustenburg City Centre, close to the taxi rank (Google Earth, 2016)



Certainly, Bayat's analysis of the streets sheds lights on the potential for spaces, like bus and taxi stops and street corners where domestic workers gather together quite frequently, have the potential to be sites where collective dissent is produced, where insurgent sentiments and solidarities are shaped, galvanized and accommodated. This will be the topic of the next chapter.

4.4 Discussion: the politics of "space and place"

South African cities, including Rustenburg are rife with contentious politics evidenced by the prevalence of service delivery protests from the early 2000s. While domestic workers as an occupational group are not likely to participate traditional conceptions of political action like strikes and protests due to the difficulties entailed in organising domestic workers in the post-apartheid era, as discussed in a previous chapter, the above examination of political action serves to illustrate how using the spatial perspective produces more revealing understandings

of how people perceive, shape and act upon grievances and opportunities (Martin & Miller: 143). Indeed their experience of the city in light of the above discussion does shape their collective identities as black, working class women. Further, the prevalence of contentious politics in Rustenburg has the potential to shape the daily experiences of domestic workers and provide them with background experience in political action.

Importantly, and more relevant for potential political action by domestic workers, the above discussion enables one to see the relationship between the spatial constitution of daily life and collective identity formation; it illuminates the connections between everyday life experiences and broader social, economic and political processes (Martin & Miller: 143).

4.5 Conclusion

Through the implementation of the Group Areas Act, cities all over South Africa including Rustenburg became sites for discriminatory and oppressive practices enacted through urban national policy. More than two decades into the democratic era, Rustenburg remains just as segregated as it was before 1994. The statistics regarding living conditions, education levels, health, income and employment in townships and villages are poor and the majority of black, working class people are reminded daily of the socio-economic inequalities between black and white South Africans as they move between their homes at the outskirts of the city and their places of work, which are usually located in the city.

These experiences in the city do much to shape the grievances of citizens and every year thousands take action and take to the streets to protest about issues like housing, urban land, poor service delivery, government corruption, evictions and forced removals, unemployment, low wages, electricity disconnections and municipal demarcations. While domestic workers as a group have yet to take part in collective action, the prevalence of contentious politics in Rustenburg may shape the daily experiences of domestic workers and provide them with background experience in political action. Furthermore the discussion about Rustenburg and its spatial challenges illustrates the relationship between the spatial constitution of daily life and collective identity formation.

Chapter 5: Domestic Workers and Everyday Life

"Workers do not only have a life in the workplace, they have a social life, a family life, a political life; they have a life outside of the domain of labour..." – Henri Lefebvre

5.1 Introduction

The discourse on domestic service in South Africa has focused on the domestic employment relationship, on the interactions between "Madams and Maids" and the serious power asymmetries that characterise their relationship, a relationship which exposes racial, classed and gendered power so dramatically that it has been described as "the last bastion of apartheid" (Archer 2011; Fish 2006). Although employers wield considerable power over their workers, they do not possess the monopoly on power (Ally 2010; Cock 1980; King 2007). Acts such as foot-dragging, pilfering, false compliance, feigned ignorance, playing tricks and dissimulation that domestic workers sometimes carry out (Cock 1980; Mwansa 2012: 177), are all forms of resistance used by subordinate groups (Scott 1985a). Mphahlele in Cock (103) asserts, "This non-committal attitude of the silent servant is his most effective weapon against the white master who has all the instruments of power on his side. Both of them know this". Therefore the domestic worker's silence and mockery of his employers might be viewed as quiet forms of rebellion (Ibid.). While these acts are viewed by some as cultural critiques or mere coping mechanisms (Constable 1997: 11-13), Parrenas (2001: 188) on the other hand, argues that these "immediate struggles" cannot be equated with coping mechanisms" as workers incorporate immediate struggles in their everyday work routine in an attempt to subvert the authority of employers, improve work conditions and gain control of their labour.

While the nature of the work calls for a certain degree of intimacy, this relationship of waged work and dramatic inequalities is sometimes masked by metaphors of kinship, for example describing one's domestic worker as "one of the family", that suggest equality. This produces what Bakan and Stasiulis (1997) call a "dialectic of intimacy and distance" in which closeness and familiarity coexist with estrangement and dehumanisation (Ally 2010: 98).These ambiguities of intimacy are among the more potent sources of exploitations of paid domestic work, structuring its unique architecture of dependence and exploitation (Ibid.). Further the growth of the black middle class and the increasing number of Black African, Indian and

Coloured domestic employers has highlighted the significance of class and gender inequalities as sources of both ideological and material subordination and exploitation (King 2007: 17).

Much of the discourse on domestic service adopts a Marxist approach, emphasising the significance of the capitalist system of production as determining the relations of exploitation, and thus enabling one to identify the structural relationships and historical processes which have created what Cock (1985) terms the "ultra-exploitability" of black women as domestic servants. The purpose of this chapter however is to look at the lives of domestic workers outside the domain of labour by exploring their engagement with the practices of everyday life. The chapter is divided into two sections: the first will look at the theory of everyday life and explores some aspects of the daily lives of domestic workers; the second is dedicated to the subject of domestic workers and their social networks. The argument propounded here is that domestic workers' engagement in the everyday practice of commuting to and from work and the spaces such as taxis and buses, taxi and bus terminals, and street corners where domestic workers regularly interact with each other allow for the appearance of social networks where grievances can be shared and rallied around; mutual support is given and; information regarding work can be obtained. Significantly, these social networks are integral to the formation of collective identities and the building of political subjectivities of domestic workers, who as a group are deprived of a platform to organise.

Section I:

5.2 The Critique of Everyday Life

For French sociologist, Henri Lefebvre (1987) everyday life is defined as "the invisible remains of the day, left over once the special, identified and specific acts are discarded" or as everything left once work is removed that is sustenance; clothing; furnishing; homes; lodging; neighbourhoods and environment. However as a text to be read, the everyday is continually being rewritten (Elden, 2004: 111). This makes the "everyday" a key concept in contemporary attempts to understand the lived experience of domestic workers.

Everyday life is an object of research in sociology which has increasingly come into its own (Kalekin-Fishman 2011:1). Several theorists in the humanities have used the concept of everyday life in their theories but ignored it as a theme: For Rousseau (2007 [1762]) his

conceptualisation of the social contract and his vision of the good society were based on the idea that the family, embedded in everyday life was the natural form of social organisation; Adam Smith (1937 [1776]) analysed the social division of labour which served individuals' 'everyday' needs; Durkheim (1984 [1893]) explains the division of labour, the forms of religious life (1965 [1912]) and the effects of anomie (1951 [1897]) in terms of everyday life with examples from relations in families and communities; Marx (1975 [1844]) explained that the working conditions demanded of the capitalist system were evil because there is a 'loss of self' which destroys ties of family and friends, leaving people with concerns like eating, drinking and procreating, aspects of everyday life which are not fully human (Kalekin-Fishman 2011:1).

Henri Lefebvre and Michel de Certeau analysed everyday life explicitly through a Marxist lens (3). Lefebvre owes much of his work to Marx's reworking of the Hegelian conception of alienation, which in his work largely pertains to the economic sphere (Elden 2004 110). However, it appears that this is not necessarily so as his other works suggest that alienation is something that can be found in a wider range of areas (110). Marxism is a critical knowledge of everyday life but that it does not already offer a complete critical knowledge of everyday life (110). Using Marxist analysis Lefebvre offers a detailed reading of how capitalism has increased its scope in the twentieth century to dominate the cultural and social spheres in addition to the economic sphere (Ibid.). He points out, "workers do not only have a life in the workplace, they have a social life, a family life, a political life; they have a life outside of the domain of labour" (111). Therefore the critique of everyday life should look at leisure in addition to labour for there is alienation in leisure as there is in labour. Furthermore while the everyday may be familiar to us, this does not mean that it is understood. Hegel stated, "What is familiar is not understood precisely because it is familiar" (Ibid.). Analysing the everyday may bring out the extraordinary in the ordinary. In fact Lefebvre holds that "it is the everyday that carries the greatest weight".

An analysis of the feats of Iranian women in the aftermath of the Islamic Revolution illustrates this.

As a result of the economic hardship that followed the war with Iraq in the late 1980s, middle class men in Iran were forced to take up multiple jobs and longer hours. Therefore chores like taking the children to school, banking, shopping, and dealing with the civil service which were shared between couples shifted exclusively to women (90). While debate about women's status in Iran was suppressed during the inset of the war with Iraq, this did not alter their conviction to assert themselves through practices of daily life. Through peculiar, dispersed and daily struggles in the public domain, the women of Iran were able to resist harsh laws and policies like forced veiling, gender segregation and widespread surveillance in the years following the Revolution (Bayat 2010: 87). They resisted these policies, not much by deliberate organised campaigns, but largely through mundane daily practices in public domains, such as working, playing sports, studying, showing interest in arts and music, running for political offices and socialising their children according to these pursuits (87- 90).

This increased public presence gave Iranian women self-confidence and new social skills. A study in Tehran confirmed that women, notably housewives, spent on average two hours per day in public places, at times until ten at night travelling by taxi, bus and metro" (91). Furthermore because they lacked institutional settings to express discontent, they would take their grievances to the streets, "Women complained in public daily, in taxis, buses, bakery queues, grocery shops, and in government offices, about repression, the war economy, the war itself. In doing so, they formed a court of irrepressible public opinion that could not be ignored" (Bayat, 2010:90). They imposed themselves as public players, creating a shift in gender dynamics; some of their achievements reinstated equal education with men, curtailed polygamy, restricted men's right to divorce, demonised religiously sanctioned temporary marriage, reformed the marriage contract, improved the employment status of women, brought back women as judges, debated child custody, and to some degree changed gender attitudes in the family and in society (87).

How are such activities characterised and how do we explain the logic of their operation? Because of their largely mundane and everyday nature, such women's practices are hardly considered a particular type of activism that can lead to some far-reaching consequences (87).

This case study provides an excellent example of the link between the formation of collective identities and the participation in the practices of everyday lives in public spaces. Collective identities were formed less in women's institutions/movements than in (albeit controlled) public spaces, workplaces, universities, bus stops, rationing lines, shopping markets, neighbourhoods, informal gatherings and mosques (100). Iran's women's activism represented a movement by consequence or what Bayat has coined a "nonmovement"- dispersed collective endeavours embodied in the mundane practices of everyday life, but ones that would lead to progressive effects beyond their immediate intent (101). Unlike in the case of contentious politics the nonmovement drew power not from the threat of disruption and uncertainty but rather it subsisted on the power of presence- the ability to assert collective will in spite of all the odds, by circumventing constraints, utilising what exists, and discovering new spaces of freedom to make oneself heard, seen, felt, and realised (102).

In light of the above, the scattering of domestic workers in their employer's residences and the concomitant difficulty in collective organisation makes studying the everyday life practices of domestic workers: their daily routines, their family and social lives as well as their social networks imperative. The study of the everyday is essentially a study of the relationships between structures of power and every day, subjugated individuals. While other workers, for example miners, are able through unions to contest these structures of power, given the difficulties in organising domestic workers discussed in Chapter two, there must be another way. There exists an element of creative resistance to these structures enacted by ordinary people in the everyday as mentioned in the introduction (De Certeau 1984; Scott 1976; Scott 1985; Bayat 2010). Moreover, everyday acts such as waiting together for the bus in the street and having discussions about their work and families may allow for the formation of collective identities and political subjectivities of domestic workers as illustrated in the example of Iranian women.

5.3 Everyday Lives of Domestic Workers

There has been little exploration of the domestic worker and her family life beyond the work of Deborah Gaitskell (1983), Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotsoe (1991) and more recently Laura Phillips (2011). This section aims to contribute to this body of literature by

referring to insights shared by the domestic workers regarding their family lives and their social networks.

The Challenges of Domestic Work and Motherhood

The majority of the respondents are mothers. During the insightful conversations shared with them it became apparent that the central feature of family life for the domestic workers was their role as mothers and that the experience and significance of motherhood had a particular connection to domestic work. Phillips (2011: 39) argues that one of the reasons for the centrality of motherhood as an identity marker in the lives of domestic workers is its function as an alternate identity to that of a domestic worker, which few women are proud of and many find demeaning.

This study deliberately avoids discussion about marital and romantic relationships of the women given the cultural sensitivities surrounding such conversations between people of different age groups. Nevertheless, when the subject was brought up the realities of their family lives, like the women in Phillips' study, appeared to be female dominated and child-centred.

Although mothering is generally understood as a practice that involves the preservation, nurture and preparing of children for adult life, there are many contemporary variants differentiated by race, class and culture (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla 1997: 548). In South Africa, working class black women have rarely had access to the economic security that allowed biological mothers to be the only one exclusively involved in mothering during the children's early years (551). Therefore black women built an alternative construction of motherhood at odds with white middle-class ideology which casts employment as oppositional to mothering (552). Many of the women in the study became domestic workers primarily because of the need to support their children. Their relationship to waged work as a labouring class is connected to their understandings of mothering and care, and their classed subjectivities are thus completely informed by their commitments as mothers (Ally 2010:181).

The structure of domestic service in South Africa influenced the "ways of mothering". Live-in domestic work, the predominant form during apartheid, was the archetypal image of oppressive work relations. Live-in domestic work is oppressive because it denies the domestic worker the independence of maintaining her own family- the workers were separated from their children and spouses by the "no visitors" rule usually enforced by employers. Furthermore the spatial engineering of apartheid and implementation of pass laws meant that the workers were based in urban white cities, while their children were left behind in the homelands (Phillips: 38).

The transition from live-in to live-out domestic work began in the 1970s and was facilitated and intensified in the 1980s and 1990s by the loosening and eventual removal of the labour and residential controls of the apartheid regime (Ally: 44). Unlike the image of passive victims of the apartheid structuring of domestic work usually assigned to domestic workers, black domestic workers sought to transform the structure of their work in ways that allowed them to maintain the capacity to be mothers (44). By the beginning of the 21st century, the majority of domestic workers were live-out workers. As they enter daily and return to their homes in the evenings, domestic workers nowadays better resemble industrial wage labourers (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla: 555). Free from the pass laws of the apartheid era and the "no visitors" rule, live-out domestic workers do not experience the same challenges as their apartheid-era or live-in counterparts.

Although the advantages of live-out domestic work are clear- the employer exercises less control over the worker, the worker is less dependent on the employer and the worker is allowed time with her family; there are drawbacks. The daily lives of live-out domestic workers are often strenuous as they try to juggle their own family commitments and the responsibilities attached to their employers' households (Anderson 2000: 46). All but two respondents in this study are live-out workers and thus most of them are not forced to "mother from a distance" (Ally: 181).

As mentioned before live-out domestic workers are faced with the challenge of travelling long distances and dealing with the inconveniences of using public transport. With a lot of time spent on the road, domestic workers are forced to wake up early to make it on time for work

and usually arrive at home late in the evenings. Two domestic workers, from the previous study in Cashan commented on how this affects their roles as mothers:

> "You need to put your family first, you have to tell them that you have a family, I am a woman with my own family, before you go to work you have to make sure the children are ready for school, that they are clean, their uniform is clean, a 7 year old child can't prepare themselves for school, they can't"

She continued,

> "My employer, she's a teacher at a school. She knows that at 1pm, I leave work, I lock the door, I leave, because I am a mother, I need to get home on time, ask the children how their day was, and help them with their homework. But they like to put themselves first, because they pay you"- Interview 1, Previous Study

Echoing the same sentiment, another domestic worker stated,

> "This issue (of coming into work early, and arriving at home late), I have discussed it with her because I have young children that need me to make sure they're okay when they climb the transport that takes them to school, to make sure their lunchboxes are made. I prepare their lunch boxes very early. They get dressed by themselves because I've already left. So I talked to her, I told her let's change the times because I leave the house too early and arrive late in the evening. Khumo is a child who is slow, she's mentally disabled, and a child like that needs a lot of attention"

She later added,

> "One of my children started primary school this year; I used to take her to crèche every morning- at this time that I go to work. When I get home in the evenings, I find them bathed and clean and in bed, waiting for me to bring food"- Interview 2, Previous Study

Although these two respondents did not "mother from a distance" in the sense that they were able to mother their children daily, the time burdens of their daily commutes forced them to sacrifice time spent preparing their children for school and spending time with them after

school for travelling to and from work. Moreover because black working class women lack the resources which allow for the full-time, continuous mothering they rely on various arrangements to care for their children (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Avilla: 551). Although the males in their lives were never discussed, the women seemed to rely on female dominated networks of emotional, familial and financial support (Phillips: 34). For example one of the respondents, Minah had five children and was a single parent whose husband had passed several years ago. Because she was struggling to care for all of them, she sent one to live with her parents and another to live with another domestic worker who also participated in the study. She lives with three of her children and stated that she has to work so that they can all have a better life (Interview 3, Previous Study).

It seems that motherhood is a central feature of how many domestic workers perceive themselves as women, with one of the reasons being that it functions as an alternative identity to being a domestic worker, which few women are proud of. Many of the women entered domestic service for the purpose of supporting their children and families, and sometimes accept poor working conditions and bad treatment from their employers because they fear unemployment and the consequent failure to support their children. It is this commitment to mothering that also informs their aspirations for their children to receive a good education, get "good" jobs and have better lives as discussed in Chapter two. Furthermore, this important aspect of their lives also helps to strengthen a sense of common identity of motherhood amongst the women. Indeed, many of the conversations that domestic workers have with each other while waiting for public transport are centred on their children.

Section II:

5.4 Domestic Workers and their Social Networks

Social Clubs

Generally domestic workers' long working hours, lack of holidays and time spent commuting to and from work involve a considerable level of deprivation of a social life. Employer adherence to labour legislation with regard to the working conditions of domestic workers remains poor. However domestic workers find opportunities to socialise outside the work space and during their weekends. When asked what she does on weekends, one worker

shared, *"We go to 'societies', you catch up on the washing and cleaning in the house, because during the week you don't get the chance. When you wake up on Saturday morning you wash the clothes, then you take a bath and go to the 'society'. On Sunday you continue with the housework, when you're done you go to church, in the evenings you iron clothes because the next day is Monday. You iron the kids' clothes."* (Interview 15, Previous Study)

The "societies" more commonly known as "stokvels" mentioned above refer to invitation only clubs of several people serving as rotating credit unions or saving scheme, where members contribute fixed sums of money to a central fund on a weekly, fortnightly or monthly basis (Townsend & Mosala 2009). A study by the University of Cape Town's Unilever Institute of Strategic Marketing found that stokvels play a substantial role in the South African economy, with black adults investing approximately R12 billion a year in stokvels, burial societies, "mogodisanos" and saving blocks. Furthermore the study revealed that at the time 2.5 million South African adults (9% of the adult population) and one in every two black adults belonged to a stokvel (Townsend & Mosala 2009).

Of the 30 domestic workers who participated in the study, 17 are members of a stokvel and 2 are members of a church society. The respondents had the following to say about their involvement in stokvels:

> "We work like a 'stokvel'. We help each other. They say "mabogo dinku a a thebana", I give you, you use it, the next month the money goes to you and so on and so forth. We say don't just buy food buy something "significant" because our work as domestic workers does not have value. It can end at anytime. Just like the work of a taxi driver."- Mavis

> "Yes, we join stokvels. There's no money working in the kitchens. It doesn't matter how long I have worked for them, the money is not enough. I struggle. If I leave my job in search of one that pays better, how am I going to get it if I am not educated? So I have to endure with this small amount. So we join stokvels; at the end of the month we contribute R100; we buy 5kg of chicken for each other and then we add on R100. Also we have societies, at the end of the month we contribute. Just like that. It helps, it makes things better, like if it's your child's birthday you tell them and they donate money to you"- Fumane

Stokvels are amongst the key poverty-alleviation strategies practised for many years by the majority of black people in a country characterised by extreme poverty, high levels of inequality and unemployment (Matuku & Kaseke 2014: 504). These community-based initiatives are attractive to those who are very unfamiliar with formal institutions like banks due to illiteracy or poor educational backgrounds (505). It has also been found that stokvels promote women empowerment. In their study participants explained that while they depended on their spouses for the initial contributions, their participation in stokvels empowered them to the extent that they had broken away from this culture of dependence on men (510). However in addition to providing the domestic workers with economic support, stokvels provide them with the social support needed to assert themselves as women.

Social Networks amongst Domestic Workers

To examine the social networks of domestic workers, conversations were held at street corners and on pavements, while the workers waited to be transported to town and in taxis and buses headed for the taxi rank. On an average afternoon, domestic workers engage in lively conversation, sharing advice on how to deal with employers, complaining about their workload and discussing other elements of their work. They also talk about their personal lives, current affairs and activities and events taking place in their communities.

A few words about method: to investigate and examine the everyday life of domestic workers, particularly their social networks, ethnographic network mapping, a type of network research used to describe groups of individuals, for example family, friends or work groups, was employed (Schensul et al., 1999, 1). A social network is "a specific type of relation linking a set of people, organisations or communities (Schensul et al., 1999, 1). In the case of domestic workers, their social networks are described as "naturally occurring" as they exist and interact independent of researcher intervention (6). The research conducted was a combination of qualitative research and observations of people's behaviour.

The method here was modelled on a study on domestic workers' social networks conducted in a Mexican immigrant community located in the San Francisco Bay area, bordering middle class and affluent residential areas. The data came from informal conversations and participant observation that took place in various public and private locations, and supplemented by interviews with 17 undocumented immigrant women. While the current study was limited to conversations and observations from domestic workers congregated at street corners in the suburbs, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994) observed women in various settings-baby showers, picnics, parish legalisation clinics and in people's homes. Some insights from her observations are worth sharing, before delving into a discussion about the social networks of the domestic workers of Cashan, Protea Park and Safari Gardens.

Analysing the networks of domestic workers, Hondagneu-Sotelo maintains, adds to our understanding of immigrant labour markets and processes by showing how occupational experiences are shaped by work cultures sustained by the networks (51). For the undocumented immigrant women featured in the case study, the social networks prove to be both enabling and constraining (Ibid.). The interactions between the domestic workers Hondagneu-Sotelo interviewed were not haphazard as those described among African American women in Rollins (1985) and Kaplan's (1987) studies. Some of the women were neighbours, relatives or co-godmothers. The women generally travelled to work alone as they worked different hours in widely dispersed suburban areas, by car, bus or walking (54).

The interactions she observed, in multiple social settings, provided a sharp contrast to the solitary quality of their work and the employer-employee relationship, they engaged in lively conversations about their work, they traded cleaning tips, tactics best to negotiate pay, how to geographically arrange jobs to minimise daily travel, how to interact (or avoid interaction) with clients, how to leave undesirable jobs, remedies for work related physical ailments. They were quick to voice disapproval of each others' strategies and recommend alternatives (54). Looking at domestic workers' networks counters the view that domestic work is entirely privatised and atomised (55). Domestic workers rely on their networks to resist atomisation (Ibid.).

Furthermore the study suggests that there is mobility in the occupation and that social networks govern this mobility. One's position in the occupation is not static, it may improve as she gains more experience, learns to utilise informational resources embedded in the network and establishes a set number of houses to clean (51). She explores how the interactions that occur between domestic workers in multiple social settings generate an important work culture. While the current study was limited to the streets in the suburbs and does not cover all the aspects explored by Hondagneu-Sotelo like occupational mobility through observations and conversations, it emerged that domestic workers' social networks provide 1) a space where grievances can be shared and rallied around, 2) a form of support for domestic workers and 3) informational resources regarding work. Furthermore this section argues that looking at domestic workers' networks counters the view that the work is entirely privatised and atomised and that domestic workers rely on their social networks to resist atomisation.

The Domestic Workers of Cashan, Protea Park and Safari Gardens

On weekday afternoons, groups of domestic workers cluster at street corners and under trees, to wait for transport. They spend, on average, between 15 and 30 minutes conversing with each other, depending on how early they leave work and whether they are using the bus or taxi. More conversations continue in the taxis and buses as they travel home which for majority of the respondents takes between 30 minutes to an hour. These encounters are largely haphazard. Additionally, many domestic workers spend their time waiting alone, occasionally greeting passers-by. In taxis too, it was not uncommon for all the domestic workers to remain silent throughout the duration of the ride. Some domestic workers although they have worked in the area for several years never form strong friendships with other workers in the area- their social networks are back in their townships and villages, at church or stokvels.

One corner, because of its location, was visited every day during the duration of the study. As a result this particular network was studied in depth. On any day, more than 30 domestic workers will catch a taxi or a bus from that corner, and everyday 20 minutes before 3pm, a sizable group of workers who take the bus forms. The members of this group are more acquainted with each other than with the rest and there are individuals, like Herminah whom

the social network revolves around. Herminah has worked Mondays to Fridays for the last 10 years for her employers. Every day she takes the 3pm bus into town where she catches another one to Boitekong, where she lives with her 3 grown children. She had five children, two of them passed away in the last few years. Herminah participated in the previous study in 2014 and was instrumental in introducing me to other domestic workers and encouraged them to participate in the study, as she continued to do in this round of interviews.

Every afternoon she shuffles up the street towards the corner at the top of the road with a plastic bag carrying her uniform in one hand, an umbrella to shield her from the elements on the other, handbag swinging from her shoulder. She usually stops to chat with Lerato the security guard who works in one of the complexes on the street. At the corner she sometimes stands alone quietly for several minutes but soon other women come by. Herminah is quite well known in the area. She politely greets workers as they walk past, engaging in some chit-chat. One day the conversation amongst the workers darted from gossip about one of the domestic workers employers, to sex and ended off with one of the workers, back from maternity leave, sharing photos of her baby with the others. That day there was so much laughter and cheer, I could not follow the conversation.

Airing Grievances

A significant portion of the conversation amongst domestic workers, at this corner and many others in the suburbs is airing grievances and working woes. When asked to mention some of the topics of conversation the workers engage in, the respondents in the study said the following,

> "We talk about employers that do not treat their workers fairly, that do not pay them at the end of the month and pay them on the 7th. Others relocate without paying their workers. When they call them they find that they have changed their phone numbers"- Herminah

> "One of the women I work for once came to me saying that things in her house are disappearing. She said that her phone is missing- I mean I don't even know how to use these modern phones- she said this and that is missing, some of them I found, others I

didn't. Frustrated, I thought maybe I should leave her. Another domestic worker advised me that if your employer does not ask you to leave, do not leave". She continued, "Sometimes when I finish work all I can do is just go on my knees and call out to God and pray. My heart was so sore the one day, I cried. It was 7th of January, on my birthday, and I was thinking about how I have been working for this lady for 10 years, I look after her house but now she is able to accuse me of stealing. When she saw me crying she said 'sorry'" – Dorah

"That you must persevere if someone accuses you of stealing and things like that. You must persevere. If I wasn't patient I would have quit so long ago... Some complain about long hours and little money; others are accused of stealing by their employers, you see?"- Neo

In a group interview with Oumakie, Tabitha, Bethany and Dikeledi these were their responses almost all at once, to the question, *"What do you talk about while waiting for the bus?"*

"We complain about these white people"

"We talk about money!"

"These white people don't treat us well, they abuse us, they do all this shit"

"We talk about the issue of money…. yesterday I got paid but I don't even have a cent right now. It's gone!"

"What is R2000?"

A resource to find work

Domestic workers use their networks as a resource to find work. Amidst the scourge of unemployment, which in Rustenburg stands at 26.4%, domestic workers assist each other with 23 of the respondents stating that they have helped organise work for another and 11 respondents stating that another worker has assisted them in attaining employment in the sector. Many others use the local newspaper, the Rustenburg Herald, to advertise their services, while others like the respondent below have benefitted from employer networks,

> "My employer found me when I was working temporarily for her friend and she took down my phone numbers and gave me a call. Before that I worked in Cashan. I was surprised when one day after I got paid she told me that my work is over. Now that is the reality of the work of domestic workers- we are not educated, and I was stupid I didn't take her to the CCMA..." on her employer before that, "my daughter used to work in the hair salon that she visited and she found a job for me at her cousin's but she moved to Joburg, she says Rustenburg does not have money"- Mavis

One of the workers has an interesting story of how she came to work find her current employers. She previously did typing at "phone efficiency" then worked at "Bostol" as a counter attendant when she got retrenched in 1998. She remembers,

> "We were retrenched at Bostol on the 3rd of July. My mother passed away on the 20th of July and her funeral was on the 25th. I stayed at home July, August and September. At the end of September I thought to myself, the few cents I had made are finished I have to look for a new job. A woman referred me to a house on De Wet Street, an employment agency. I got a job with Mrs. Shirazi working 3 days. After those 3 days the agency gave me R250 whereas Mrs Shirazi intended on starting me up with R500. I called Mrs Shirazi and she went to the agency with me. She told them that she does not agree with this business of deducting so much money. The lady got upset and said to her that if they take away someone form their contract they need to pay R90. Mr and Mrs Shirazi then wrote a cheque for R90 and that was when I started working every day for Mrs Shirazi; from 3 October 1998"- Pauline

The vast majority of domestic workers however share similar stories as the respondents below,

> "My friend found this job for me. I found her a job also and then when my previous employers relocated to Cape Town, she found this one for me. A white lady stopped on the side of the road. My friend then ran to her- she said she needed someone to work for her and my friend told her that I am available. She only needed me for one day, but then one of her friends also needed me for another day. So I work for a group of friends, one day, one day, one day"- Zeporah

"Yes, I found a job for someone in January in Safari Gardens. She works 3 days there. I'm lucky, when White people drive around looking for domestic workers, they find me and I refer them to someone if I have someone" – Pauline

"My grandmother used to work for them, and I took over when she left"- Fumane

Mutual Support

A network of domestic workers is also a source of mutual support and assistance. In addition to the airing of grievances, the workers also give each other advice about their dealings with their employers and offer emotional support to those going through challenges in their work and in their personal lives:

"Yes we chat; to work as a domestic worker you gain a lot of experience when you meet up in taxis because others work here and others work there, so you listen and you think 'Oh okay, this one's owners treat her well' or whatever... maybe if I am treated well I can help somebody who is not. You can work more than 5 years, no registration and unaware that you are just being used so we must enlighten you to the fact that you cannot work for a person for all these years without benefits. Go to Labour or talk to your employer"- Aniki

"For example Dorcus had problems with her boyfriend. She wanted to move out but I told her not to move, and not to do "snaaks" things towards him. Just be patient with him"- Mavis

When asked, "Do you share advice?" One worker replied, "Yes, especially these young ones, we tell them be patient. We encourage them and tell them that this kind of work is not for them"- Zeporah

One network showed a particularly strong sense of collaboration and support. Mavis, who knows and travels with other workers from Lethabong, shared that when one of the domestic workers employed in the same complex passed away in a car accident a few months ago she walked to all the houses in the complex, asking all domestic workers to contribute something towards her funeral. Where she could not visit she asked the gardener to go on her behalf. She did this because, "we are a team".

Expanding the network

Many of the domestic workers find employment in residential complexes in Cashan and Safari Gardens. Other workers, gardeners and security guards employed in these complexes, interact regularly with domestic workers and many form friendships with them. Many gardeners and security guards are part of the social networks of domestic workers as they frequent the same spaces in the neighbourhood. On one occasion in a taxi a gardener was heard telling a domestic worker who works closely with him the following regarding his employers,

"The Afrikaners from Safari Gardens are okay, the ones from Cashan are shit- they still haven't paid me", he continues, *"You know there's a new family that moved into the complex and I heard they are looking for a domestic worker. They are nice, better than the previous ones, those ones were rude"*.

In another interview, Gontse arrived at our rendezvous with a friend, a gardener who works with her in two households- one in Cashan and the other in Safari Gardens. Every day they have breakfast and lunch together .When asked if they assisted each other in finding their jobs, the domestic worker replied that she found him already working for the house in Safari Gardens but helped him to secure the job in Cashan (Interview 14).

One such security guard, Lerato granted me an interview to talk about her relationships with some of the domestic workers. On any given afternoon, one can find her standing beside the intercom outside the gate of the apartment complex at the top of the road, whose corner serves as a bus and taxi stop for workers. As domestic workers from the surrounding complexes make their way to the corner, they greet her but many stop to have a chat with her before the bus arrives at 3pm. The following is a conversation with Lerato who is more reserved than when we have our usual chats.

K: Are you friends with some of the domestic workers who work in this complex?

L: Yes, I like to chat to them and I find them work.

K: How exactly do you do this?

L: When a white person comes to me and asks me if I know of anyone who can work for them I take their phone numbers and bring the two together.

K: How many domestic workers have you organised jobs for since you have been working here?

L: About 6

K: What do you think of the relationship between workers and their employers?

L: Some are good and some are bad. I check on those domestic workers that I organise work for, I ask them how they are being treated.

She then refers to a Shona speaking domestic worker she told me about a few weeks prior to this interaction. She was heavily pregnant when she broke her employer's vase and was subsequently fired. Her employers deducted R1000 from her salary and kicked her out. She was left crying at the gate.

L: It was around the time I was working for these two complexes. She came to me and told me that her employer's husband did not like her- when she would eat the food he would shout and say "You dare eat my food". She always complained about him not liking her. She would walk in in the morning and greet him and he would just stare at her.

K: What do you talk about with the workers?

L: We just chat and laugh. We talk about our lives and our problems. A lot of the time I talk to the ones I organised jobs for. I ask her when they knock off if they are being treated alright. Most of them are treated just fine.

K: Do domestic workers have the same relationship with the gardeners?

L: Yes we work together. If I have problems, I ask them and they do the same. One of our domestic workers died while I was away on maternity leave. Her employer came and told me that they attended the funeral and helped with some money.

K: Do you have the same relationship with the residents as you do with the domestic workers?

L: No I just greet them. They only come to me if there is a problem at the gate and I help them out.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter sought to examine domestic workers' engagement with the practices of everyday life, departing from the trend that emphasises the domestic employment relationship and the power asymmetries that characterise that relationship. Outside the domain of labour, domestic workers' everyday life comprises of (but is not limited to) their family and social lives and the networks they form amongst themselves as domestic workers. The chapter began by exploring the concept of everyday life from the field of sociology, focusing on the work of French sociologist Henri Lefebvre. A case study, illustrating how analysing the everyday may bring out the "extraordinary in the ordinary" was then incorporated into the exploration. What do we make of the everyday activities, largely described as mundane and uncoordinated, of the women of Iran after the Revolution like working, playing sports, showing interest in arts and music which resulted in changes in gender attitudes at the level of the family and in society as a whole, as collective identities and a political subjectivity was formed in public spaces like universities, work places, shopping markets and bus stops. Can we infer from the case study that engagement in everyday life activities is integral to the formation of collective identities and beyond that, the building of political subjectivities of groups who are deprived of a platform to organise?

The last section looked at the social lives of domestic workers; their family lives and their social networks. Through conversations it became apparent that the central feature of family life for the domestic workers was their role as mothers and that the experience and significance of motherhood had a particular connection to domestic work. As more domestic workers "live-out" of their places of work, more women are not subject to "mothering from a distance" as was the case in the past. However, the shift to live-out work is not without its challenges. As with many workers, time spent travelling and working takes away from time spent bonding with family. However an alternative construction of motherhood, which does

not cast employment as oppositional to mothering, has been built by black women who lack the resources which allows for full time mothering. Further to mitigate the lack of financial resources and to ward off poverty, a significant number of domestic workers join stokvels.

Domestic workers spend a great deal of time socialising in spaces like street corners and pavements as they wait to catch a taxi or bus after work. Through numerous conversations with domestic workers it emerged that these networks provide spaces where grievances can be shared and rallied around; informational resources regarding work and serve as a form of mutual support for domestic workers. These networks that emerge are integral to the formation of collective identities and the building of political subjectivities of domestic workers, who as a group are deprived of a platform to organise.

Chapter 6: Everyday Life and the Formation of Political Subjectivities

6.1 Introduction

The concepts and subjects explored thus far all contribute significantly to our understanding of the formation of the political subjectivities of domestic workers. We were introduced to the protagonists of the study, women from different backgrounds employed as domestic workers in the suburbs of Rustenburg. Travelling daily from townships and villages, these women see inequality "inscribed into the landscape of their daily lives" in comparing the inadequate housing and public infrastructure of their poorer neighbourhoods with the immaculate landscaping, massive houses and security apparatuses of privileged neighbourhoods. The vast majority of the workers are not educated and work in this sector to support their families on a meagre salary. Much has been written about the unfavourable working conditions of domestic workers, and the limitations placed on the implementation of state interventions due to indifference or resistance of employers in their private homes. Their relationships with employers, while not explored in depth, are generally characterised by inequality with employers wielding significant power over the workers. However, many domestic workers carry out quiet forms of resistance in their everyday lives such as gossiping, jokes and silent treatment.

The previous chapter analysed aspects of the everyday life of domestic workers namely, mothering and the accompanying challenges of live-out work for the individual worker; the involvement of domestic workers in the life of the community through their participation in social clubs and; their experience of networks of domestic workers, gardeners and security guards formed in there suburbs where they all work. It emerged that the everyday practice of socialising in these networks provided the workers with a space where grievances can be shared and rallied around; mutual support and assistance and; a source for informational resources regarding work. Despite their long history of organising, South African domestic workers are deprived of a platform to organise due to the post-apartheid state positioning itself as the primary articulator, representative, and protector of domestic workers' collective interests and the resultant displacement of the domestic workers union in these roles. Workers' engagement with everyday life activities and participation in social networks then become paramount in exploring the potential for the formation of collective identities and the

building of political subjectivities in ways that have not been anticipated in legislation and formal unionisation.

This chapter will begin with a discussion on the emergence of political subjectivities from philosophers Foucault, Arendt, Ranciere and Badiou. This discussion introduces a debate on whether political action is a necessary condition for the emergence of a political subjectivity. This is followed by a discussion on the political agency of the domestic workers in Rustenburg and the obstacles standing in the way of their participation in political action. Finally, the chapter ends with an analysis of the links between daily routines and the formation of a political subjectivity.

This chapter argues that domestic workers' engagement in the everyday practice of commuting to work and the spaces such as taxis and buses, taxi and bus terminals, and street corners where domestic workers regularly interact with each other allow for the appearance of social networks where grievances can be shared and rallied around; mutual support is given and; information regarding work can be obtained. Significantly, these social networks are integral to the formation of collective identities and the building of political subjectivities of domestic workers, who as a group are deprived of a platform to organise.

By adopting a fuller conception of political action however we see that domestic workers, who are without resources and the leadership of a vital union, and find themselves in a position of political marginalization, participate in everyday forms of resistance and these coupled with their engagement in everyday life, constitute the invisible face of political mobilization. The chapter further argues that while these social networks show promise, they are under-developed and have not yet been formalised in a way that organised action can ensue. Moreover, due to the preoccupation with the struggle for survival and security which dominate the everyday lives of domestic workers and that their form of work is under-recognised, the likelihood of self-organisation is low and it is possible that organisational impetus will have to come from the efforts of middle class actors belonging to NGOs, activists and government agencies as has been experienced in other parts of the globe.

6.2 The Emergence of a Political Subjectivity

How to conceive of the subject and how human beings can conceive of themselves as acting agents has been a key problem in philosophical thought. The concept of political subjectivity explains how a single person or a group of actors is brought into a position to stake claims, to have a voice and to be recognisable by authorities (Krause & Schramm 2011: 115). Thus the concept helps us to understand how people relate to governance and authorities (Ibid.). Naturally, a conversation about political subjectivity is a conversation about the relationship between power, subjectivity and agency.

A prevalent conception of power, termed the juridical model, conceives of power as always and only repressive and the individual subject or agent as a fully formed, stable and unified entity that then gets caught up in power relations which are external to its own constitution (134-135). This model of power is opposed by philosophers, Michel Foucault and Hannah Arendt. For Foucault, power is both productive and repressive, both enabling and constraining (Allen 2002: 134). It is the interweaving of the productive and repressive aspects of power that is the key to understanding the relationship between power, subjectivity, and agency in his work. Foucault became famous for claiming that the individual subject is one of the primary effects of this productive/repressive, enabling/constraining power as opposed to the conception of the individual based on the juridical model mentioned above. Individual subjects or agents, rather, are constituted in and through a set of social relations, all of which are imbued with power. Power is a key element in the very formation of individuals and is a condition for the possibility of individual subjectivity (135).

Arendt maintains that the conditions necessary for being a thinking subject are only in place when there is a public space constituted and preserved by the power that arises out of the sharing of words and deeds (138). She defines power as 'the human ability not just to act but to act in concert', both makes possible and preserves the public, political realm in which individuals act (Ibid.). Therefore for Arendt, the "sharing of words and deeds" or acting together is a necessary condition for being a thinking subject. As she puts it, "the political realm rises directly out of acting together, the 'sharing of words and deeds'". Thus action not only has the most intimate relationship to the public part of the world common to us all, but is the one activity which

constitutes it (138). Insofar as one's identity as an actor is only fully realized in and through action in the public, political realm, and the public political realm is constituted by power, it turns out that, for Arendt too, power is a condition for the possibility of the full achievement of agency and subjectivity (138).

Likewise for Ranciere, a political subjectivity emerges through politics, which he defines as "an extremely determined activity antagonistic to policing", which is defined as the political order which defines a party's share or the lack of it (Ranciere 1999: 29). Politics is nothing but the appearance of the people, the construction of a scene on which the people occur as a political subjectivity. This occurs when there is a "miscount" during the distribution of the common, and a distinction between "speaking beings" and those who are not acknowledged as speaking beings (Arsenjuk 2007: 4). Politics exists when "those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account" (Ranciere: 27). Politics constructs a scene in which the existence of a wrong is verified and *subjectivized*, that is, through giving name to "the part of those who have no part", the people, the proletariat, the women or the workers, who constitute the political subjectivity which is the subject of a wrong (Arsenjuk: 4). Finally, Ranciere believes that this must culminate in a disagreement, a provisional confrontation between those who believe that all speaking beings are equal as speaking beings and those who do not (Ranciere: 49).

While Foucault's standpoint on action being a necessary condition for subjectivity is unclear, from the works of Arendt and Ranciere we see that the subject develops an understanding of itself as a political subject only by executing decisive political action or making decisive political interventions. Badiou too claims that the subject, who is always material and localised in what he calls "body", only comes to define or understand itself in and through its interventions (Calcagno 2008:1052). From this viewpoint, political agency therefore comes to define political subjectivity and the subject defines agency through her intervention.

6.3 The Political Subjectivity of Domestic Workers in Rustenburg

The domestic workers of South Africa as a group have already taken part in action like marches, petitions and protest through the leadership of SADWU in the 1980s and early 1990s, even achieving such feats as its launch of a Legislation Campaign, demanding that the

Department of Manpower extend protective labour legislation for domestic workers and for the passage of a national minimum wage (Ally 2008: 5). However the subsequent demobilisation and de-politicisation of the union in the post-apartheid era due to the state displacing the union in its role as representative and protector of domestic workers' collective interests, has left individual domestic workers without recourse against non-compliant employers. With this, can the domestic workers of South Africa consider themselves political subjects?

According to Calcagno's (2008: 1060) overview, Badiou identifies three conditions that make an "event" political as opposed to an event of poetry, love or mathematics. Firstly, an event is considered political if its material is collective, that is subjects must work together as a collective to bring about an intervention. Secondly, the collective character of a political event must affect present day politics and the character of situations. Thirdly politics emerges within a relationship between the event and the state; it brings to the fore the possibility of measuring state power. South African society has seen such events over the years by way of countless service delivery and labour protests. However apart from the SADSAWU's securing domestic workers' access to the national Unemployment Insurance Fund by aligning themselves with a coalition organised by the Commission on Gender Equality, political action by domestic workers at the grassroots is yet to take place.

Participation in strike action

In the past, domestic workers under the leadership of SADWU participated in more traditional conceptions of political action, which are essentially Arendtian. The marches, strikes and protests organised by the union and in which thousands of domestic workers participated, were a manifestation of "the sharing of words and deeds" through which Arendt argues the political realm rises. Domestic workers have not participated in this form of political action in a long time, and given the demobilisation of SADSAWU it seems alternative forms of political action may need to be adopted in domestic worker organising.

A conversation about grassroots political action by domestic workers was discussed with the respondents, in particular strikes. Of the domestic workers who participated in the study, 14 of

the 30 stated that they would participate in strike action with a few expressing some reservations; 1 was not sure; 7 stated emphatically that they would not participate in a strike; 2 more stated that they believe that domestic workers cannot strike and 6 respondents did not give an outright answer.

These are some of the comments of the respondents who said they would participate in a strike if it were organised,

> "If they called all the domestic workers to the stadium, we'll go! They (employers) will hear that 'it's going down' and they will increase our salaries"- Group interview with Oumakie, Tabitha, Bethany and Dikeledi

> "Yes, it's possible. Like if you worked for R150 and they hire a "Zim" who is willing to work for R70, you can toyi-toyi. We have to support the person who lost their job"- Nteseng

> "Yes because I will be supporting others. The thing is today you will be working just fine, but tomorrow things might change. So when domestic workers strike for increases I will join them" – Lebogang

Another respondent said the following after being asked if she would join a strike, and expressed that she believed that it is almost inevitable, *"Yes I would. I must join what is being organised by other women. If it is going to benefit all of us, I will join it"*. She continued*, "It can happen. It will happen at the taxi rank in the morning, they will tell us that none of us will be going to work or this is what we are going to be doing. We will join"* – Fumane

Others of course were not as enthusiastic about the prospect of participating in a strike. When asked if the domestic workers she knows would participate in strike action one respondent replied,

> "No, they are not the type of people who would strike. They have given in. You can see that they have given in. A week doesn't go by without hearing one of us complain about work. Perhaps we can meet up with the people at Labour so that they can

address us and tell us what to do. The problem is that we are not registered. We can go years without being registered."- Nteseng

She went on to ask, *"My question is 'what can you do for us?' Can you fight for us to be registered? Maybe you can hold a meeting for employers at a hall"*

Laughing, one worker shared an excuse, "*No, I would not join the strike. I don't want to fall due to my high blood"*- Meisie

Other workers showed a desire to participate in strike action if it were organised. However many expressed reservations:

"Yes I would; depending on the purpose. You can't just join a strike not knowing what the key issues are"- Aniki

"We could strike but understand that we don't earn the same amounts; we don't work under the same conditions. Maybe I'm satisfied with where I am working, my white people treat me well but then I'll be striking with one that earns R70 who works from 7am to 12pm, do you see? We don't work under the same conditions"- Zeporah

"No I would not because it will not be easy as we have different grievances. You'll find one who is getting paid enough money; she can't join me because she risks losing money for her children"- Eva

A lack of a united vision for organising seemed a concern for many of the workers:

"If we stand together united, we can do it. If not, we will not be able to do it. Like if others immediately run away when they see white people and leave us alone. It will not work"- Tshepang

"Yes, if we were a group, united. But others are afraid of losing their jobs"- Aniki

The failure of SADSAWU to mobilise domestic workers in the post-apartheid era due to the involvement of the state in the face of non-compliant employers has an impact on the subjectivity of domestic workers. If we accept the traditional conception of political action, where power is a condition for the possibility of the full achievement of agency and

subjectivity, then after years of a lack of an active political agency the domestic workers of South Africa have become politically alienated. From this standpoint, active political agency requires a certain power or capacity to engage in the struggle without being limited or being squelched from the start. Therefore a degree of political alienation occurs in every political struggle and affects those who lack power or the ability and resources to participate in the struggle in a "consequential and significant" manner (1065).

The ability for domestic workers to engage in traditional forms of political action at the grassroots level is limited by several factors, which the respondents identified:

One of the biggest obstacles is the atomisation of domestic workers in individual houses. The respondents recognised,

> "The issue is that we don't meet. The next time you see a person she had a fall out with her employer and she got fired. All you can advise her is to go to the CCMA"- Mavis

> "... We don't know each other. Tomorrow one of us has been fired, we don't know each other and we are not able to group ourselves. We come from different places. As we are like this, we don't know each other's names"- Zeporah

> "Striking is a challenge for us. How can we strike when one is over there, the other over there?"- Pauline

> "No because we cannot come together. But if there was to be a place where domestic workers can meet, we could organise strikes but we cannot come together"- Gontse

The greater limitations of women's labour market opportunities and the absence of legal protection and social security in most informal jobs make any form of organised protests by women a high-risk activity (Kabeer et al 2013: 4). The vast majority of domestic workers do not have an employment contract and are not registered for unemployment insurance, making them vulnerable to unfair dismissal and subsequent unemployment. They live in fear of losing their livelihoods, of starvation, of losing their children to illness and of being thrown out of their houses (6). They have little legal or social protection to confront the entrenched

asymmetries of power both at home and in the wider economy. Without legal protection they are reluctant to participate in strike action,

> "We hear on TV and radio that.... Most of us find ourselves in situations where we are let go without pay, without having been given a notice... and when you tell the others that we should stand up for ourselves they say they work for their children. But I know that if I am fired unfairly I know where to go for help"- Mavis

> "Would you strike by yourself? ... Others are scared to lose their jobs; they say they are working for their children"- Herminah

> "Domestic workers and miners are different, do you know that? So the miners can strike but we cannot. Sometimes if you strike, there is no reason for striking. If you strike sometimes you can find the day you come back you find someone else working where you worked. So it's better for us to work. Even if he or she says they don't have the money to pay you, you have to continue"- Rumbidzai

> "I wouldn't strike because what will I eat? If I strike they will hire another person. Domestic work is not like other jobs, like at the mines. You and your employer have to talk to each other. You are together in the house. If you don't get along then you just don't. If you strike, it's the same as leaving the job because they will just hire someone else. There are many people. Even they will tell you, "*Die mense is baie, is te veel*"- Dorah

The problem is further exacerbated by the fear of losing one's job to a foreign national as it is held that due to their being in the country illegally, they demand lower wages:

> "If you strike, your white employer will go out and employ a Zimbabwean. Now, would you strike? And another issue is that our employers do not register us. They want you to work for free when they fire you they don't give you notice; they don't give you benefits it does not matter that you worked for them for 15 years. You get nothing! You leave with your pay for the day or the month. And then we are told to join unions but we don't have enough money for it! You can't afford all of these things" -Group interview with Leah, Esther, Nkisa and Francinah

A fuller conception of subjectivity may require one to consider that political agency need not result in an event or an intervention in order to be political, that failed interventions or non-interventions may still be considered political and thus be said to shape the subjectivity of an individual or group (Calcagno: 1065). Much can be learned about the relationship between political subjectivity and political intervention by looking at events that take place at the grassroots level. For example:

> A local neighbourhood association lobbies unsuccessfully to block certain zoning readjustments that would allow for large-scale, higher-density living and business space. Likewise, the failure to mobilize residents to block a proposed zoning change may set precedents for future developments that could prove deleterious to the integrity and character of a unique residential area. In the case of the former, though there is an intervention and though it is unsuccessful, the desired change will not be felt. In fact, a stronger authority will limit the residents' own subjectivity. One could also maintain that, because the character of the neighbourhood will change, the residents' subjectivity will also be annihilated, forgotten or ignored as their identification with their neighbourhood will no longer exist in the same way as it did before. Failed interventions may result in little or no change. But, they may also make way for the will of a stronger, more powerful subjectivity to impose its own desires on the weaker subjects. In the case of the latter example, the failure to mobilize for whatever reason and the failure to make an intervention will have an impact on the way one will live and exercise one's future subjectivity in a given neighbourhood.

Calcagno uses an extreme example to illustrate the effects of a non-intervention:

> On a larger scale, the failure to intervene in certain grave political situations like the massacres and ethnic cleansings in Rwanda resulted in the annihilation of countless innocent persons. Though there are no interventions, the absence of an intervention still has grave political consequences. Political subjectivity need not be determined solely by an active political agency that makes interventions. The absence of an intervention may result in a subjectivity being affected or disaffected politically.

From Calcagno's examples of an unsuccessful intervention and a non-intervention we see that traditional political action is not a necessary condition for the manifestation of a political subjectivity.

6.4 Everyday Life and the Emergence of Political Subjectivities

As mentioned briefly in a previous chapter, although domestic workers have limited resources and face numerous challenges in their ability to act politically in order to improve their working conditions, domestic workers are not without power. In fact what is required is a different conception of political action, where practices in everyday life constitute the invisible face of political action.

Domestic workers like other marginalised groups take part in everyday, subtle forms of resistance through acts such as foot-dragging, pilfering, false compliance, feigned ignorance, playing tricks and dissimulation (Cock, 1980; Mwansa, 2012: 177). Ideological resistance can come in the form of gossip, folktales, songs, jokes and the theatre and serve to resist the abuse of power (Scott, 1985b: 137). These "everyday forms of resistance" require little or no coordination or planning and can be used by groups or individuals to resist without directly confronting the dominant. In fact Parrenas (2001) argues that while these acts are enacted by individuals, they are so pervasive across space and time in domestic service that they constitute collective action.

While these everyday acts subvert the authority of individual employers, do everyday acts in the daily routines of domestic workers have the potential to shape the political subjectivities of domestic workers in a way that might lead to more significant forms of political action? Boudreau et al (2009) argue that the political consciousness of domestic workers can be formed by their engagement in practices of everyday life. There are links between daily routines, the formation of a political subjectivity and the decision to engage in political action.

For example, Boudreau and her colleagues looked at the 2006 protests against Senate and Congress immigration reforms in many US cities including Los Angeles where thousands of

immigrants, including domestic workers, participated. The study revealed that many everyday practices contributed to several domestic workers' decision to participate in the march. The domestic workers shared that everyone spoke about the demonstration in daily places like buses and grocery stores that it was impossible to miss it; everyday public figures like radio personalities were constantly encouraging people to participate in the march; the workers' long everyday commutes helped them to "appropriate" the streets and; lastly, the habit of everyday struggles, "*las luchas*" facilitated the participation in a larger political struggle. Moreover, their daily commutes were of particular significance: in addition to the domestic workers learning how to navigate the public transport system and familiarising themselves with the social and ethnic geography of the city, the domestic workers shared information with each other, they co-constructed experiences as unjust, they compared various neighbourhoods and their personal and work situations- they shaped their political subjectivities (341).

The condition of urbanity has had a complex impact on political action and due to its growing influence, political action takes place within a less dichotomised framework than the traditional dominant-dominated implies. Lefebvre suggests that one of the most significant political consequences of urbanity is the fact that the most banal acts of everyday life are valorised against the rational-scientific logic (Boudreau et al: 338).The interdependencies characteristic of urbanity therefore give unprecedented salience to small acts, like taking the bus, that can easily be transformed into unexpected political situations on global and local scales (Ibid.).

The lesson from the case study does not lie in the participation of the domestic workers in the march- after all they did so in their capacity as immigrant workers. Rather, the decision to participate in the march was informed by their participation in everyday life routines like taking the bus, and more importantly, the conversations they shared while participating in these everyday activities in spaces like buses and grocery stores, shaped their political subjectivities. Political action comes out of invisible acts of contestation. Protest action is very close to everyday life, rather than seeing ruptures as what sparks political action, it may very well be that political action is *generated* through continuity with daily routines (340). The workers' everyday struggles for respect and their resentment towards their white employers

were transferred to a collective struggle for respect and their resentment was directed to white authorities (342). These everyday acts, like taking the bus which are not perceived as political are the invisible face of political action (343). These acts are forms of disguised resistance; of infra-politics and are the silent partner of a loud form of public resistance (Ibid.).

Discussion

While the domestic workers who participated in the study in Rustenburg were physically isolated from one another in their workplaces and were not organised by any union or other institution, their capacity for an active politics can be formed by their engagement in practices of everyday life. Domestic workers spend a great deal of time socialising in spaces like street corners, pavements and taxi ranks as they wait to catch a taxi or bus to or from work. Through numerous conversations with workers it emerged that these networks provide spaces where grievances can be shared and rallied around; informational resources regarding work can be obtained and serve as a form of mutual support for domestic workers. Should the discourses in these networks be strengthened, like the domestic workers in Los Angeles, they have the potential to form their political subjectivities. Although the domestic workers showed no signs of political mobilisation, the nascent capacity for the formation of a political subjectivity was present. Armed with such spaces and the right to be politically active brings to the fore the issue of the *possibility* to act. Considering the fact that there are numerous such street corners all over Cashan, Protea Park and Safari Gardens, where domestic workers come together to discuss their personal and work lives, the activation of the political subjectivities of these women in their everyday practices has the potential to galvanise the domestic workers of the neighbourhood to take part in more meaningful courses of political action.

Yet more would need to be done. The opportunities for organising presented by these spaces demand more innovative forms of action, which may or may not include other actors. In their study of several organisations for women in the informal sector, Kabeer et al (2013: 8) found that organisations have their origins in the efforts of actors who come from a different class background to the women being organised. This is due to the fact that the likelihood of self-organisation is low due to the preoccupation with the struggle for survival and security which dominate the everyday lives of domestic workers and that their form of work is under-

recognised. Therefore organisational impetus has largely come from the efforts of middle class actors belonging to NGOs, their role being of facilitation rather than active organisation, with emphasis put on helping the women learn to articulate their own priorities and identify their own pathways to change (8). Efforts to organise domestic workers in the United States too have often been through the efforts of different actors. Race or ethnic based Non-governmental Organizations, middle-class women reformers, government agencies, and trade unions have participated in the process of reforming domestic work (Boris &Nadasen 2008: 415).

Moreover, organising domestic workers may require a shift in strategic approach from what has been done before, relying more on social movement strategies of social change, such as lobbying and legislation, codes of conduct and education, rather than strikes and slowdowns which are more suited to mobilising workers with strategic locations like a communal shop-floor (415). Furthermore, successful domestic worker organisations, like Domestic Workers United in the United States, have looked to communities and neighbourhoods as avenues of mobilisation; instead of unions, neighbourhood associations were formed. These associations helped the workers to develop bonds of solidarity, overcome the language barrier, and provide assistance with housing and immigration issues, for example, rather than addressing strictly workplace concerns (425). Given the range of subjects in the conversations amongst domestic workers, from work to social and family life, associations where support is given for different aspects of their lives might be more appealing to domestic workers in South Africa. Moreover, the experience in the States shows that organising efforts that are rooted in the community rather than the workplaces were also more sustainable, as workers frequently switched jobs, thus enabling workers to organise independent of a particular employer or even of a particular occupation (426). Furthermore the activities of such associations include popular education, including role playing to teach workers their rights and to instil confidence that they can challenge employers. Many associations offer leadership training and worker's rights courses. They organise "one worker at a time" in contrast to traditional unions where elected leadership represent the interests of the workers (Ibid.).

6.5 Conclusion

The shift to live-out work has precipitated opportunities for domestic workers to organise themselves in the face of a now defunct union and difficulties enforcing legislation. At bus and taxi stops, in the buses and taxis, at the street corners while waiting for buses and taxis, domestic workers have formed social networks amongst themselves where grievances can be shared and rallied around; mutual support and assistance given and informational resources regarding work provided. The domestic workers' engagement with everyday life activities and participation in social networks then become paramount in exploring the potential for the formation of collective identities and the building of political subjectivities in ways that have not been anticipated in legislation and formal unionisation.

The concept of political subjectivity explains how a single person or a group of actors is brought into a position to stake claims, to have a voice and to be recognisable by authorities. During apartheid, domestic workers had begun to form a political subjectivity in their involvement in marches, petitions and protests, demanding protective labour legislation and for the passage of a national minimum wage organised by the union, SADWU. However, the post-apartheid state's position as the articulator and protector of domestic workers' interests has resulted in the demobilisation and de-politicisation of the union, leaving individual domestic workers without an alternative mechanism to organise and partake in collective action.

About forming a political subjectivity, Arendt, Ranciere and Badiou argue that the subject develops an understanding of itself as a political subject only by executing decisive political action or making decisive political interventions. Indeed, this is how domestic workers during the 1980s and 1990s formed their political subjectivity through participating in the activities of the union, as mentioned above. The situation today is vastly different: domestic workers are without a vital union and continue to experience difficult working conditions because of the lack of adherence to labour legislation by their employers. How can domestic workers manage to form a political subjectivity again when without resources and the leadership of a vital union, they find themselves in a position of political marginalisation? What do the political actions of the politically marginalised look like?

Calcagno presents us with a fuller conception of subjectivity, one that does not consider political agency to be defined by the result of an event or an intervention in order to be political. Failed interventions or non-interventions may still be considered political and thus be said to shape the subjectivity of an individual or group. Domestic workers are not "inactive" rather as mentioned in preceding paragraphs they participate in everyday, quiet forms of resistance that seek to subvert the authority of their employers. Further, their everyday practices of socialising in networks in the space of the street corner or bus stop, serves to provide the workers with a space where grievances can be shared and rallied around; mutual support and assistance and a source where informational resources regarding work is given.

These, therefore, are the channels through which the politically marginalised and threatened act politically. Indeed, these everyday acts in the daily routines of domestic workers shape the subjectivities of domestic workers, as seen in the study of domestic workers from the Los Angeles area by Boudreau and her colleagues. Their study establishes a strong argument that there is continuity between everyday life and political events, and that politics in the "here and now" of daily rhythms constitutes the invisible face of organised mobilisation. The everyday participation in conversations with each other while waiting for transport have the potential to lead domestic workers in Rustenburg to participating in more significant forms of political action. It is possible however, that new forms of organisation will need to be adopted, that may or may not include activists, NGOs and government agencies to lend impetus to the movement of domestic workers in South Africa.

Chapter 7: Conclusions

Nteseng lets out a sigh of relief as she shuts the security gate of her employer's home at 2pm. She had had a long, miserable day. She was looking forward to getting paid today, after her employers had failed to pay her on Monday. However she and her employers missed each other this morning: Nteseng took the bus that leaves the taxi rank at 7am, instead of the 6:30am bus, to avoid walking through an empty plot littered with tall grass and bushes that lies before her employers' complex, by herself. She thought this would be fine, as she usually waits some 10 minutes outside for her employers to open the door but when she arrived at 7:35am her employers were already gone. She sent them a "call back" but they didn't respond. After waiting a long time, they sent her a message informing her that someone would come to drop off the key for her. Half an hour later the messenger came bearing the key but no envelope.

As she walks towards the bus stop her stomach gives her another grumble. She didn't have time to pack a lunch this morning. The path she walks along was not designed with pedestrians in mind: where there should be a pavement, there are rocks and dirt and other small obstacles. Nteseng is stopped by Lerato the security guard who works in the adjoining complex. Lerato wants to catch up so they stand outside her security booth on the side of the road. Nteseng doesn't mind because the bus only arrives around 3pm, she has time. After a brief chat, she strolls to the street corner where five other domestic workers are waiting for the bus beside an electricity box. They all share a few greetings, and when Herminah asks her how her day was, Nteseng immediately offloads her distress. She ends the tirade with, "and what's worse is that they left the fan on and when I opened the window a hairbrush flew off the table and broke. They're probably going to make me pay for it, how much do those things cost, something like R69.99?" Her outburst is met by more complaints about employers and the conversation carries on at the street corner until the bus arrives 30 minutes later.

Despite their long history of organising, South African domestic workers are deprived of a platform to organise due to the post-apartheid state positioning itself as the primary articulator, representative, and protector of domestic workers' collective interests and the resultant

displacement of the domestic workers' union in these roles. Even at its peak, the union struggled to rally domestic workers around its cause. This study then was concerned with domestic workers' engagement with the practices of everyday life, like socialising in spaces such as street corners, the bus and taxi stops, and in buses and taxis- as seen in the above short narrative about Nteseng and her fellow domestic workers; and the potential for the formation of collective identities and political subjectivities through the networks created in these spaces.

The study was conducted over a three month period in the wealthy suburbs of Rustenburg: Cashan, Protea Park and Safari Gardens. Interviews were conducted with individuals and groups at street corners; in shady spots under trees on the sides of the road; at bus and taxi stops; inside taxis and buses and; at the taxi rank. Initially a semi-structured interview schedule was used, but was discarded to allow for the natural flow of conversation. More than forty domestic workers were approached and thirty consented to participate in the study. A significant portion of the data was obtained through continuous direct observation of the domestic workers these various spaces, watching them as they go about their days and listening in to lively conversations in the street.

Findings

Domestic workers belong to one of the most vulnerable groups in society, positioned at three lines along which social inequality is generated- class, race and gender. Even with the rights to basic education afforded to South Africans, the education levels amongst domestic workers remain relatively low compared to other occupations and economic sectors. A general lack of education coupled with huge transport costs amongst others, leaves domestic workers living in relatively poor conditions.

Their working conditions too remain poor, even with protections in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act and Sectoral Determination 7, because of indifference and resistance from employers who do not recognise this work as legitimate waged labour. The union for domestic workers in South Africa, though historically robust, is struggling to attract membership because of the informal character of the work, with its physically dispersed workplaces and the lack of a communal "shop floor" to air grievances, build moral support or rally around injustices. All this makes it difficult for domestic workers to organise

collectively. Additionally, the state's commitment to transforming the exploitative and oppressive relations within paid domestic work has led to the demobilisation and de-politicisation of the union.

Notwithstanding this, the study found that the everyday practice of commuting to and from work by live-out domestic workers presents an opportunity to efforts towards organising domestic workers that has not been anticipated. The study of the spaces where they frequently interact on their daily commutes, like bus and taxi stops, taxis and buses, and street corners, is crucial as these spaces hold the potential for common political identities to be built and a potential platform for domestic workers to organise. These spaces are where collective dissent is produced, where insurgent sentiments and solidarities are shaped, galvanized and accommodated. Domestic workers are no longer isolated in their employers' homes but rather the street serves as a space where outlooks and sentiments and subjectivities can be formed and spread, and to the extent that obstacles for mobilisation can be mitigated, ultimately expressed.

Outside the domain of labour, domestic workers' everyday life comprises of (but is not limited to) their family and social lives and the networks they form amongst themselves as domestic workers. Through conversations it became apparent that the central feature of family life for the domestic workers was their role as mothers and that the experience and significance of motherhood had a particular connection to domestic work. As more domestic workers "live-out" of their places of work, more women are not subject to "mothering from a distance" as was the case in the past. However, the shift to live-out work is not without its challenges. As with many workers, time spent travelling and working takes away from time spent bonding with family. However an alternative construction of motherhood, which does not cast employment as oppositional to mothering, has been built by black women who lack the resources which allows for full time mothering.

A significant number of domestic workers join stokvels, informal community based savings groups, which are popular in South African townships. These provide the women with economic empowerment; they also provide socially acceptable spaces where domestic workers can assert their identity as women.

Domestic workers spend a great deal of time socialising in spaces like street corners and bus and taxi stops in the sides of the road as they wait to catch a taxi or bus after work. Through numerous conversations with domestic workers the study found that these social networks provide spaces where grievances can be shared and rallied around; informational resources regarding work obtained and serve as a form of mutual support for domestic workers. These networks, it has been found, are not limited to domestic workers but include other workers like gardeners and security guards. The domestic workers' engagement with everyday life activities and participation in social networks then become paramount in exploring the potential for the formation of collective identities and the building of political subjectivities in ways that have not been anticipated in legislation and formal unionisation.

The concept of political subjectivity explains how a single person or a group of actors is brought into a position to stake claims, to have a voice and to be recognisable by authorities. During apartheid, domestic workers had begun to form a political subjectivity in their involvement in the activities of SADWU. However, the post-apartheid state's position as the articulator and protector of domestic workers' interests has resulted in the demobilisation and de-politicisation of the union, leaving individual domestic workers without an alternative mechanism to organise and partake in collective action. By adopting a fuller conception of political subjectivity, we see that political agency is not defined by the result of an event or an intervention in order to be political. Failed interventions or non-interventions may still be considered political and thus be said to shape the subjectivity of an individual or group. Domestic workers are not "inactive" rather as mentioned in preceding paragraphs they participate in everyday, quiet forms of resistance that seek to subvert the authority of their employers. Further, their everyday practices of socialising in networks in the space of the street corner or bus stop can be political as they serve shape the subjectivities of domestic workers, as seen in the study of domestic workers from the Los Angeles area by Boudreau and her colleagues. Their study establishes a strong argument that there is continuity between everyday life and political events, and that politics in the "here and now" of daily rhythms constitutes the invisible face of organised mobilisation. These activities of the domestic workers in Rustenburg have the potential to lead them to participating in more significant

forms of political action. Their participation in everyday forms of resistance coupled with their engagement in everyday life, constitute the invisible face of political action.

Nevertheless, there are significant obstacles in the realisation of collective political action by domestic workers. The atomisation of domestic workers in individual houses remains a major impediment as the current meeting spaces of domestic workers have not yet been formalised in a way that organised action can ensue. These spaces are still at the early stages of development. Moreover, due to the preoccupation with the struggle for survival and security which dominate the everyday lives of domestic workers and that their form of work is under-recognised, the likelihood of self-organisation is low and it is possible that organisational impetus will have to come from the efforts of middle class actors belonging to NGOs, activists and government agencies as has been experienced in other parts of the globe.

Bibliography

Alexander, P. 2010. "The rebellion of the poor: South Africa's service delivery protests- a preliminary analysis" *Review of African Political Economy* 37 (123): 25-40.

Allen, A. 2002 "Power, Subjectivity, and Agency: Between Arendt and Foucault", *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 10:2, 131-149.

Ally, S. 2010. *From Servants to workers: South African Domestic Workers and the Democratic State*. Natal: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press.

Ally, S. 2008. "Domestic Worker Unionisation in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Demobilisation and Depoliticisation by the Democratic State" *Politikon* 35: 1-21.

Anderson, B. 2000. *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour*. London: Zed Books.

Anderson, B. 2001. "Just Another Job? Paying for Domestic work" *Gender and Development* 9 (1): 25-33.

Archer, S. 2011. "'Buying the Maid Ricoffy', Domestic Workers, Employers and Food" *South African Review of Sociology* 42 (2): 66-82.

Arsenjuk, L. 2007. "On Jacques Ranciere" *Fronesis* (19-20).

Atkinson, D. 2007. "Taking to the streets: has developmental local government failed in South Africa?" in S Buhlungu, et al. (Eds.) *State of the Nation: South Africa*, 2007, Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council Press.

Auyero, J. 2004. "When Everyday Lives, Routine Politics and Protest Meet" *Theory and Society* 33: 417- 441.

Babbie, E and Mouton, J. 2001. *The Practice of Social Research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bakan, A. B. & Stasiulis, D. K. 1995. "Making the Match: Domestic Placement Agencies and the Racialisation of Women's Household Work" *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 20 (2): 303-335.

Bamu, P. 2013. "Nurturing a Culture of Compliance with Domestic Workers' Rights in South Africa" in Darcy Du Toit (Ed.) *Exploited, Undervalued and Essential: Domestic Workers and the Realisation of their Rights*. Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press.

Bayat, A. 2010. *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Bayat, A. 2003. "The 'street' and the politics of dissent in the Arab world" in Chris Toensing & Bilal El-Amine (Eds.) *Middle East Report: Dissent* 226 (33).

Boris, E and Nadasen, P. 2008. "Domestic Workers Organise*!" Working USA: The Journal of Labour and Society* 11: 413- 437.

Boudreau, J., Boucher, N. And Liguiori, M. 2009. "Taking the bus and demonstrating on Sunday: Reflection on the formation of political subjectivities in an urban world" *City,* 13 (2-3): 336-346.

Bozzoli, B and Nkotsoe, M. 1991. *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy, and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983.* North America: Heinemann.

Budlender, D. 2016. "The introduction of a minimum wage for domestic workers in South Africa" *Conditions of Work and Employment Series 72,* International Labour Office.

Burja, J. 2000. *Serving Class: Masculinity and the Feminisation of Domestic Service in Tanzania*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

Calcagno, A. 2008. "Alain Badiou: the event of becoming a political subject" *Philosophy and Social Criticism* 34 (9): 1051-1070.

Cock, J. 1980. *Maids and Madams, A Study in the Politics of Exploitation*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Constable, N. 1997. *Maid to Order in Hong Kong*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.

De Certeau, M. 1984. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Berkeley Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Department of Labour. 2002. "Sectoral Determination 7: Domestic Worker Sector" Retrieved on September 16, 2014 (http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/legislation/sectoral-determinations/sectoral-determination-7-domestic-workers)

Department of Labour. 2013. "Minimum Wages Domestic Workers 1 December 2013- 30 November 2014" Retrieved on October 1, 2014 (http://www.mywage.co.za/main/salary/minimum-wages-2013-14/minimum-wages-for-domestic-workers-2013-2014/minimum-wages-domestic-workers-1-december-2013-30-november-2014)

Department of Labour. 2016. "Domestic Workers Minimum Wages 2016-2017" Retrieved on December 18, 2016 (http://www.labour.gov.za/DOL/downloads/legislation/sectoraldeterminations/basic-conditions-of-employment/domesticwages2016_2017.pdf/view)

Dilata, X. P. 2010. *Between 'Sisters': A Study of the employment relationship between African Domestic Workers and African Employers in the Townships of Soweto*.MA. University of the Witwatersrand.

Dill, B. T. 1988. "'Making your job good yourself': Domestic service and the construction of personal dignity" in Anne Bookman and Sandra Morgen (Eds.) *Women and the Politics of Empowerment:* 33-38.

Du Plessis, D. J. 2013. "A critical reflection on urban spatial planning practices and outcomes in post-apartheid South Africa" *Urban Forum* 25:69–88.

Du Preez, J., Beswick, C., Whittaker, L., Dickinson, D. 2010. "The Employment Relationship in the Domestic Workplace in South Africa: Beyond Apartheid Legacy" *Social Dynamics* 36: 395-409.

Du Toit, D. 2013. “Situating Domestic Work in a Changing Global Labour Market” in Darcy Du Toit (Ed) *Exploited, Undervalued and Essential: Domestic Workers and the Realisation of their Rights*. Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press.

Elden, S. 2004. *Understanding Henri Lefebvre, Theory and the Possible*. London and New York: Continuum.

Fish, J. 2006. “Engendering Democracy: Domestic Labour and Coalition-building in South Africa” *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32 (1): 107-127.

Foucault, M. 1986. “Of other spaces.” *Diacritics* 16: 22-27.

Gama, N., & Willemse, L., 2014. “A descriptive overview of the education and income levels of domestic workers in post-apartheid South Africa” *GeoJournal* 80:721–741.

Ginsburg, R. (2000). ‘‘Come in the dark’’: Domestic workers and their rooms in apartheid-era Johannesburg, South Africa. *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, 8:
83–100.

Ginsburg, R. 2011. *At Home With Apartheid: The Hidden Landscapes of Domestic Service in Johannesburg*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press.

Giddens, A. 1984. *The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Google Earth. 2016. “Rustenburg” Retrieved on March 14, 2017

Gordon, S. 1985. *Talent for Tomorrow: Life Stories of South African Servants*. Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Harrison, P., Todes, A., & Watson, V. 2008. *Planning and transformation: learning from the post-apartheid experience*. London: Routledge.

Harvey, D. 1982. *The Limits to Capital*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Harvey, D. 1989a. *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Harvey, D.1989b. *The Urban Experience*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Harvey, D. 1996. *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. 1994. "Regulating the Unregulated?: Domestic Workers' Social Networks" *Social Problems* 41 (1): 50-63.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P., & Avila, E. 1997. '"I'm here, but I'm the there': The meanings of Latina transnational motherhood" *Gender and Society* 11 (5): 548-571.

Jacobs, N., Manicom, D. And Durrheim, K. 2013. "'Help Somebody Who Help You': The Effect of the Domestic Labour Relationship on South African Domestic Workers' Ability to Exercise their Rights" *Alternation* 20: 273-294.

Kabeer, N., Milward, K., & Sudarshan, R. 2013. *Organising Women's Workers in the Informal Economy: Beyond the Weapons of the Week.* Chicago: University of University Press.

Kalekin-Fishman, D. 2013. "Sociology of everyday life" *Current Sociology Review* 61 (5-6): 714-732.

Durkheim E (1951 [1897]) *Suicide: A Study in Sociology*, trans. JH Spaulding and G Simpson. New York: Macmillan/The Free Press.

Kanbur, R. 2009. "Conceptualising informality: regulation and enforcement" Retrieved on March 14, 2017

(http://www.arts.cornell.edu/poverty/kanbur/ConceptualizingInformality.pdf)

Kaplan, E. B. 1987. "'I don't do no windows': Competition between the domestic worker and the housewife." in Valerie Miner and Helen Longino (Eds.) *In Competition: A Feminist Taboo?* 92-105. New York: The Feminist Press.

King, A. 2007. *Domestic Service in Post-apartheid South Africa: Deference and Disdain*. England: Ash Gate Publishing Limited.

Krause, K., & Schramm, K. 2011. "Thinking through political subjectivity" *African Diaspora* 4:115-134

Lefebvre, H. 1991 [1974]. *The Production of Space*. Trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Matuku, S. & Kaseke, E. "The role of stokvels in improving people's lives: the case of Orange Farm, Johannesburg, South Africa" *Social Work* 4 (4): 504-515.

Massey, D. 1984. "Introduction: Geography Matters." Pp., in Doreen Massey and John Allen, (Eds..) *Geography Matters 1-11*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Massey, D. 1994. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

McAdam, D., Tarrow, S., & Tilly, C. 2001. *Dynamics of Contention*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Martin, D.G., & Miller, B. 2003. "Space and Contentious Politics" *Mobilization: An International Journal* 8(2): 143-156.

Marx K .1975. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. In: Marx K and Engels F, *Collected Works, Volume 3*. New York: International Publishers.

Miles, M. 1999. "Working in the City: The Case of Migrant Women in Swaziland's Domestic Service Sector" in J. Momsen (Ed), *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service*. London: Routledge.

Miller, B., & Nichols, W. 2013. “Social movements in urban society: the city as a space for politicization” *Urban Geography* 34 (4): 452-473.

Mining Review Africa. 2016. “Platinum mining contributes significantly to Rustenbrug economy” Retrieved on October 17, 2016 (https://www.miningreview.com/features/platinum-mining-still-contributes-significantly-to-rustenburg-economy).

Mouffe, C. 1988. 'Radical democracy: modern or postmodern?', in Andrew Ross (Ed.) *Universal Abandon? The Politics of Postmodernism*, 31-45. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Mwansa, S. 2012. *The Experiences and Working Conditions of Domestic Workers in Lusaka Zambia*. MA. University of the Witwatersrand.

Nadasen, P. 2016. Panel at Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University, February 25, 2016. Retrieved on November 11, 2016 (https://www.radcliffe.harvard.edu/video/household-workers-unite).

Ntombela, S. 2012. “Do clothes make a (wo) man? Exploring the role of dress in shaping South African domestic workers”, in Relebohile Moletsane, Claudia Mitchell, Ann Smith (Eds..) *Was it Something I Wore*, Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council Press.

Philips, L. 2011. “I am alone. I am a woman. What are my children going to eat? Domestic Workers and Family Networks” *South African Review of Sociology* 42 (2): 29-44.

Qayum, S., & Ray, R. 2013. “Grappling with modernity: Calcutta’s respectable classes and the culture of domestic servitude” *Ethnography* 4:4.

Rajak, D. 2012. “Platinum city and the new South Africa dream” *Africa* 82: 252-271.

Ranciere, J. 1999. *Disagreement*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Rollins, J. 1985. Between *Women: Domestics and their Employers.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Romero, M. 1998. "Sisterhood and Domestic Service: Race, Class and Gender in the Mistress Maid Relationship" *Humanity and Society* 12: 318-348.

Schensul, J. J., LeCompte, M. D., Trotter II, R. T., Cromley, E. K., & Singer, M. et al, 1999. *Mapping Social Networks, Spatial Data, and Hidden Populations- The Ethnographers Toolkit*. Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press.

Scott, J. 1985. *Weapons of the Weak, Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Scott, J. 1985. *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts.* New Haven and London: Yale University Press.

Silver, B. J. 2003. *Forces of Labour, Worker Movements and Globalisation since 1870*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smith, A. 1937. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. New York: Random House.

Soja, E. W. 1989. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London and New York: Verso.

Soja, E. W. 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Malden, MA and Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

South Africa History Online. 2011. "Rustenburg- an overview" Retrieved on October 17, 2016, (http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/rustenburg-overview).

South Africa History Online. 2013. "Community history" Retrieved on October 17, 2016 (http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/community-histories-0).

South Africa History Online. 2016. “Rustenburg a segregated city” Retrieved on October, 17 2016 http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/rustenburg-segregated-city.

Statistics South Africa. 2016. “Statistics by place: Rustenburg” (http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=993&id=rustenburg-municipality).

Statistics South Africa. 2017. “Labour and Workforce” Retrieved on January 25, 2017 (http://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=737&id=1).

The Economist. 2012. “South Africa: Over the rainbow” Retrieved October 17, 2016 (http://www.economist.com/news/briefing/21564829-it-has-made-progress-becoming-full-democracy-1994-failure-leadership-means).

Townsend, S., & Mosala, T. 2009. The stokvel sector: opportunities and challenges. Case for Wits Business School. (http://sk.sagepub.com/cases/the-stokvel-sector-opportunities-and-challenges).

Tuan, Y. 2001. Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press.

Vanqa-Mgijima, N., Wiid, Y. and Du Toit, D. 2013. “Organising for Empowerment” in Darcy Du Toit (Ed.) *Exploited, Undervalued and Essential: Domestic Workers and the Realisation of their Rights*. Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press.

Wage Indicator Foundation. 2017. “South Africa living wage” Retrieved February 8, 2017 (http://www.tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/living-wage-individual).

World Bank. 2016. “South Africa Overview” Retrieved March 14, 2017 (http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/southafrica/overview).

Wrigley, J. 1991. “Review Essay: Feminists and Domestic Workers” *Feminist Studies* 17 (2): 317-329.

Appendix

Interview Schedule

Background

1. Interview Number:
2. Sex: (1) Female (2) Male
3. Age: (1) 15-19 (2) 20-24 (3) 25-29 (4) 30-34 (5) 35-39 (6) 40-44 (7) 45-49 (8) 50- 54 (9) 55-59 (10) 60-64 (11) 65-69 (12) 70-74 (13) 75+
4. Home language: (1) Setswana (2) Sesotho (3) Sepedi (4) Zulu (5) Xhosa (6) Shangaan (7) Venda (8) Other
5. Education: Have you ever been to school? (1) Yes (2) No
6. If yes, what standard did you pass? (1) Grade 1 (2) Grade 2 (3) Grade 3 (4) Grade 4 (5) Grade 5 (6) Grade 6 (7) Grade 7 (8) Grade 8 (9) Grade 9 (10) Grade 10 (11) Grade 11 (12) Grade (12) (13) Other
7. Have you received any other training or education? (1) Yes (2) No
8. If yes, please specify:
9. Do you (1) live in or (2) live out?

Dependents

10. How many children do you have under the age of 16?
11. How many children to you have over the age of 16?
12. How many people are dependent on your earnings?
13. Is anyone else in your household or family employed? (1) Yes (2) No
14. If yes please state their wage:
15. Are your children presently employed?
16. If yes please state their wage:
17. Would you like any of your children to become domestic workers? (1) Yes (2) No
18. If yes, please say why; if no, please say why not

Work

19. How did you hear about your present job? From someone who is/was a domestic worker? From your previous employer? Other?
20. And jobs before that?
21. Have you referred anyone to a potential job as a domestic worker? (1) Yes (2) No
22. How many households do you work for?
23. If you work for more than one, in which suburb are they located?
24. How do you divide your time between them?
25. How long have you worked with your present employer(s)?
26. What is the race of your employer? (1) Black (2) Coloured (3) Indian (4) White (5) Other
27. How much time do you have off in the day?
28. What do you do in this time?

Relationships with employers

29. Do you ever feel unhappy with your working conditions? (1) Yes (2) No
30. Do you express your feelings to your employer? (1) Yes (2) No
31. If yes, how does she respond?
32. If no, what do you do instead?
33. Do you ever feel disrespected by your employer or members of their family? (1) Yes (2) No
34. How do you respond to this treatment?
35. Have you ever been advised by other domestic workers on how to deal with employers?
36. Have you shared advice with other domestic workers on how to deal with employers?

Travel

37. Where do you live?
38. How many hours to you spend travelling to and from work? (1) about 30 minutes or less (2) about an hour (3) about 2 hours (4) about 3 hours (5) about 5 hours
39. What modes of transport do you use to travel to work every day? Bus? Taxi? Train? Private car? Do you walk?
40. Do you travel with other domestic workers?

41. Are there other domestic workers who have a similar schedule to yours and therefore results in regular interactions with them in buses, taxis, trains, cars?
42. How much time do you spend walking to catch transport?
43. Do you walk alone?
44. How much time do you spend waiting at the street corner? Taxi rank? Bus station? Train station?
45. What do you do in this time?
46. Please talk me through your daily routine.

Domestic Work

47. Do you discuss your work problems with others in the domestic work field? (1) Yes (2) No
48. If yes, where are these discussions held? Buses? Taxis? Trains? Cars? Homes? Church? Other social gatherings?
49. Are there any similarities in your experiences? (1) Yes (2) No
50. What are some of the topics of conversation?
51. Are you part of any informal domestic worker group? (1) Yes (2) No
52. If not, can you explain why not?
53. If yes, how have you found this experience?
54. Are you part of any women's group (stokvels or "societies")?
55. Are other domestic workers also part of these groups? (1) Yes (2) No
56. Are you a member of a trade union?
57. If not, can you explain why not?
58. If yes, how have you found this experience?
59. Have you taken part in worker strikes or any kind of political action (1) Yes (2) No
60. If yes, how did you find the experience?
61. If no, what discourages you from participating in them?
62. Do you think domestic workers as a group are on the whole (1) Well treated (2) Badly treated (3) Other
63. What could be done to improve the situation of domestic workers?
64. What do you think domestic workers can do to improve their situation?

Participant Information Sheet:

Domestic Workers' Networks and the Formation of Political Subjectivities: A Socio-Spatial Perspective

Kelebogile Khunou: 0791354002, kaykhunou@gmail.com

Project Description:

The study is based on my honours long essay, titled "The Politics of Domestic Labour in Post-Apartheid South Africa", which suggests that the theories of everyday life and popular resistance can help us to understand how domestic workers may be beginning to see themselves as potential participants in political action through their interactions in the workplace and other spaces of collective engagement, in ways that have not been anticipated in legislation and formal unionisation. This forms the starting point for my Master's dissertation, the title of which is "Domestic Workers' Networks and the Formation of Political Subjectivities: A Socio-Spatial Perspective". The research question I seek to explore is: What is the role of informal spaces where domestic workers regularly interact in forming and shaping their political subjectivities?

Procedure and Risks:

Please understand that **your participation is voluntary** and you are not being forced to take part in this study. The choice of whether to participate or not, is yours alone. If you choose not to take part, you will not be affected in any way whatsoever. If you agree to participate, you may stop participating in the research at any time and tell me that you don't want to go continue. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will not be prejudiced in any way.

I would like to record the interview electronically, if you are willing, and use the recordings to write my materials. I will record the interview only with your written consent, and will ask that no personal identifiers be used during the interview, to ensure your anonymity. Please feel free to say as much or as little as you want. You can decide not to answer any question,

or to stop the interview any time you want. The recordings and transcripts will become the property of project.

If you so choose, the recordings and recording-transcripts (or copy of notes taken) will be kept anonymous, without any reference to your identity, and your identity will be concealed in any reports written from the interviews.

There are no known **risks** associated with participation in the study. The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life. However there may be discomfort in discussing some issues about your working conditions close to your workplace. As such, all interviews will be conducted away from your place of work. Further the study may include tracking your daily travel patterns. To avoid the risks associated with this, false names will be used in all notes taken, reports written and in the final dissertation.

Benefits:

There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, it is hoped that the results of this study will benefit the community through providing greater insight into the nature of domestic work in South Africa.

Cost Compensation:

Participation in this study will involve no costs or payments to you.

Confidentiality:

All information collected during the study period will be kept strictly confidential. The information gathered will be stored in a password protected computer and in an online data base, Drop Box. No publications or reports from this project will include identifying information on any participant without your signed permission. In the final report the identities of the participants will be protected through the use of fictitious names and addresses. If you agree to join this study, please sign your name on the following page.

Who to contact if you have been harmed or have any concerns

If you have concerns or questions about the research you may call the project leader Kelebogile Khunou at 0791354002

INFORMED CONSENT FOR INTERVIEWS

Dear Participant:

This form gives us final authorization to use material from your interview in Masters Research on domestic workers' networks.

I, _____, agree to be interviewed for the project entitled "Domestic Workers Networks and the Formation of Political Subjectivities" which is being produced by Kelebogile Khunou of University of the Witwatersrand.

I certify that I have been told of the confidentiality of information collected for this project and the anonymity of my participation; that I have been given satisfactory answers to my inquiries concerning project procedures and other matters; and that I have been advised that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation in the project or activity at any time without prejudice.

I agree to participate in one or more electronically recorded interviews for this project. I understand that such interviews and related materials will be kept completely anonymous, and that the interview records will be kept by the interviewer and the project, and that the information contained in the interviews may be used in materials to be made available to the general public.

_____

Signature of Interviewee Date: _____

_____

Signature of Interviewer Date: _____

Other

Pseudonyms:

Pseudonyms were used in the course of the essay. The following table matches up pseudonyms with the interview number

Interview No.	Pseudonym	Description
1	Kantse	Cashan
2	Nteseng	Cashan
3	Josephine	Cashan
4	Mavis	Cashan
5	Herminah	Cashan
6	Bontle	Cashan
7	Rumbidzai	Cashan
8	Aniki	Cashan
9	Zeporah	Cashan
10	Dorah	Cashan
11	Tshepang	Cashan
12	Lerato	Security Guard-Cashan
13	Louisa	Cashan
14	Gontse	Cashan
15	Seipati	Live-in worker-Cashan
16	Meisie	Cashan
17	Pauline	Cashan (older part)
18	Nthabiseng	Cashan (older part)
19	Miriam	Cashan (older part)
20	Eva	Cashan (older part)
21	Leah	Safari Gardens
22	Esther	Safari Gardens
23	Nkisa	Safari Gardens
24	Francinah	Safari Gardens
25	Lebogang	Safari Gardens
26	Fumane	Safari Gardens
27	Neo	Protea Park
28	Oumakie	Safari Gardens
29	Tabitha	Safari Gardens
30	Bethany	Safari Gardens
31	Dikeledi	Safari Gardens

Tables for Chapter 2:

Table 2.1: Ages and home languages of respondents

	Number of Domestic Workers
Age	
20-29	4
30-39	6
40-49	10
50-59	10
Language	
IsiNdebele	1
Sesotho	1
Xitsonga	1
Setswana	27

Table 2.2: Number of dependents

Number of dependents	Number of domestic workers
1	3
2	3
3	7
4	6
5	3
6	1
7	2

Table 2.3: Amount of time domestic workers spend getting to work

Time	Number of workers
< 30 minutes	2
>30min <1hour	12
>1 hour < 1 hour and 30min	5
>1 hour, 30mins < 2 hours	2
> 2 hours	1

Table 2.4: Highest grade reached by respondents

Grade	Number of domestic workers
Grade 4	1
Grade 5	1
Grade 6	2
Grade 7	4
Grade 8	4
Grade 9	1
Grade 10	6
Grade 11	5
Grade 12	3