

**Mothering across borders: Basotho migrant women in domestic work in
Pretoria**

By

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

This study explores the experiences of ten migrant women who have migrated from Lesotho to work as domestic workers in South Africa. The enquiry is centred on their experiences as mothers who spend extended periods of time away from their children and in turn have to take care of their employer's children in South Africa. The study is motivated by the increased migration of women in the southern African region, as is the trend global, and the social impact that the migration of women has on sending communities and families. The study aims to look at the construction of motherhood and childcare in an era of increased female migration. In addition, it aims to highlight the importance of childcare for both migrant sending and receiving countries, to contribute to scholarly work on migration and gender studies and to advocate for policies that improve the conditions of migrant domestic works in particular and domestic workers in general.

1.1 Gender and migration: contextual background to the study

The movement of people across national borders is shaped by various factors such as age, class, gender, race, nationality, marital status and types of identity and travel documents one has. Gender plays a significant role in shaping the experiences of migrants and as a result migration and gender scholars should explore the nuances of gender and migration. In the IOM Gender Equality Policy 2015-2019 – it is argued that

“...a person's sex and gender shape every stage of the migration experience, whether forced, voluntary or somewhere in between. Gender influences reasons for migrating, who migrates and to where, how people migrate and the networks they use, opportunities and resources available at destinations, and relations with the country of origin. Risks, vulnerabilities and needs are also shaped in large part by one's gender, and often vary drastically for different groups. The roles, expectations, relationships and power dynamics associated with being a man, woman, boy or girl significantly affect all aspects of the migration process, and can also be affected in new ways by migration.”

The increased 'feminisation of migration' requires scholars to explore how women experience migration differently to men and how their gender plays out within the context of being migrant mothers who work in the private and informal sphere of domestic work. Migration to South Africa is becoming increasingly feminised because of the changes in the post-apartheid labour market. The mining industry, which has historically been the main driver for migration to South Africa, is becoming less and less reliant on migrant workers. Research suggests that one common household response to mine retrenchments is the replacement of male by female migration (Coplan and Thoalane 1995; Seidman 1995).

Women are increasingly moving from their communities and households to become migrant workers – how does this affect gendered division of labour in the sending households, especially where women have carried the burden of doing unpaid domestic work?

1.2 Problem statement

Women from the southern African region are increasingly migrating to South Africa in search for work or as informal traders. This has changed from pre-democracy South Africa, where it was largely men from the region migrated to South Africa as cheap labour for the mining industry. Female migrants from the region who have low levels of skills end up in informal labour markets such as domestic and farm work. As women increasingly migrant, children from their sending households and communities are often left without their primary care givers. This affects the survival strategies of these household and communities and their construction of 'motherhood' and 'childcare'. Furthermore, migrant domestic workers are required to work and live in their employers' private household and to also take care of their employers' children. As a result migrant women are required to negotiate the meaning of motherhood and find alternative means of care for their children, while they care for their employers children as live-in domestic workers.

Studies have been conducted on the exploitative conditions of domestic work however in South Africa the focus has largely been on South African domestic workers that migrate internally, from rural areas and townships, and do not have to grapple with the conditions of being cross border migrants. The voices of migrant domestic workers,

who often have to navigate the risk and vulnerabilities of being foreign and undocumented, are not articulated. Some researchers have also looked at how migration affects households and communities of sending countries - especially children who have to deal with 'transnational families'. These studies have however not looked at how migrant women deal with and conceptualise 'motherhood' and 'childcare' in the era of increased female migration.

This study explores the impact of female migration and how migrant women negotiate being mothers and how they conceptualise 'motherhood' and 'childcare'. It also explores how being a migrant woman, who is likely to work undocumented, affects their work as domestic workers. This research seeks to challenge the assumed definition of 'motherhood' and 'childcare' which is often defined from a western, middle class context and it explores its meanings as defined by the participant.

To contribute to a more nuanced understanding of post-apartheid migration patterns in South Africa, this research paper has attempted to look at the gendered aspect of migration. By understanding the movement of women across national borders as a movement to follow men is to mask the lived experiences of migrant women. It is to make sense of them in a limited understanding of dependent followers of men. It is also denying them of the unique experiences that come with being a woman, a migrant, a worker, a mother, a daughter, a wife. As a result, scholars that explore the issue of migration do not interrogate the conditions and experiences of migration that are unique to women. If we are to accept the basic sociological understanding that various social groups experience lived realities differently then we need to explore how gender plays a unique role in the process of migration. Migration studies ought to pay particular attention to the phenomenon of female migration. In addition to their pursuit to understand the unique condition of women, feminists should look at the issue of women's experiences as migrants and as workers. Labour studies that look at the informal labour market should interrogate the conditions of domestic work as informal labour in the private sphere of the home. In addition, family studies that attempt to look at the family and issues of childcare and motherhood should also make sense of this reality in an era of cross-border and transnational families.

1.3 Purpose and significance of the study

This research paper attempts to outline the experiences of women from Lesotho who are domestic workers in South Africa – with particular focus on women who are also mothers and whose children live in Lesotho. It attempts to explore their experiences of being mothers to children in Lesotho and also being domestic workers in South Africa. The four main research questions are: how do migrant women experience being mothers and migrant workers? How do they conceptualise or make sense of motherhood and childcare as migrant workers? How does the condition of being a domestic worker impact on their experiences and conceptualisation of ‘motherhood’ and ‘childcare’? What strategies do they employ to cope with being mothers, domestic workers and migrants?

In viewing migration as a process undertaken by both women and men, we begin to exploring the different gendered experiences of migration. Furthermore, to make sense of female migration as a process that can take place independent of male migration is to also explore the opportunities and challenges that come with female migration. This study argues that although post-apartheid South African immigration policies have made it possible for Africans to migrate to the country, it still continues to cater for a male African migrant worker and does not make it possible for poor and largely low skilled women from the region to migrate to South Africa legally and independent of their male counterparts. This, I also argue, is embedded in the patriarchal nationalist discourse that continues post-apartheid, where the area of migrant work is gendered and marginalising of low-skilled migrant women from the region. The post-apartheid immigration regime in South Africa does not make it possible for females from the region to work in the country, unless if they are accompanying spouses or are skilled workers. Recently, in 2009 , in 2014 and again in 2016, the Department of Home Affairs offered ‘special dispensations’ to waive the visa requirements for migrants from Zimbabwe (in 2009 and renewals of these permits in 2014) and Lesotho (in 2016) to study, work and conduct business in South Africa. This has, for the first time, given an opportunity for women with low skills from the region to work in South Africa. (This was limited to Basotho nationals that were already in South Africa and need to regulate their stay in the country.) These were however once off waivers that do not offer a long term solution for migrant women to migrate

as easily as migrant men from the region are able to migrate to South Africa. The idea of an unskilled female migrant worker (not to mention mothers that may want to migrate with their children) from the southern African region does not form part of South African immigration policies. I will argue this by looking at the female migrant worker as a mother as well as a domestic worker.

1.4 Scope and limitations of the study

This study looks at the conditions of migrant domestic workers from Lesotho and therefore excludes domestic workers who may be internal migrants in South Africa – moving from rural or semi-urban areas to work in urban areas. Although, women who migrate internal also have to deal with being away from their children and reconceptualising motherhood and childcare, they are not affected by the risks, challenges and vulnerabilities of not being documented and without a legal residency status in South Africa. This study is also limited to respondents that have children under the age of 18 years, with the purpose of exploring the aspect of childcare and motherhood.

All the respondents worked for black families and as a result the study does not explore the nuance that race would bring in analysing the lived experiences of migrant women who work for families of different racial groups. This was however not a selection criterion that was used when respondents were approached but rather an element of the study that became apparent at the point of data analysis. In future, a research study that looks at conditions of migrant domestic workers that work for different racial groups may make for an interesting analysis considering the racialised history of domestic work in South Africa. It could explore questions such as: has democracy made a difference in how ‘white madams’ treat their black domestic workers and if so, how is it different for South African domestic workers (who enjoy their democratic citizenship rights) and migrant, largely undocumented domestic workers (who have to hide and navigate their irregular stay in the country)?

The respondents were limited to ten migrant women as the purpose of the study was not to make broad generalisations of the conditions of migrant women from Lesotho,

but rather to explore experiences of migrant women and how migration is made sense of in light of being a mother and having children.

1.5 Summary of dissertation and outline of chapters

Chapter two covers the literature review on the topic. Firstly, it outlines various theoretical frameworks on migration and gender. It also explores the various ways in which motherhood and childcare have been conceptualised and how this affects migrant women in what is called an 'era of transnationalism'. This chapter also looks at the issues of domestic work, its global reproductive or care chain and how different feminisms can be used to analyse the process of migration. Lastly the literature review attempts to interrogate how the imagined post-apartheid nation deals with gender and migration and whether there are continuities in how a democratic South Africa makes sense of migration from the region. The analyses of post-apartheid nationalism and nation-building will be done through a brief overview of the immigration policies of the country and how issues of documentation affect migrant women.

In chapter three the methodology underpinning this study is explained. A case is made for the use of qualitative data collection through in-depth interviews. The data collection methods and their analysis are discussed. In this chapter the ethical matters as well as the researcher's positionality are considered.

Chapter four looks at the findings of the study by thematic analysis. This analysis and discussion of the findings covers the following themes: (1) demographics and profile of participants, (2) their work experience, (3) the process of and decision to migrate, (4) their current work conditions as domestic workers, (5) childcare and transitional motherhood as well as (6) motherhood and migration.

The final chapter covers the conclusion and makes recommendations for further research and policy consideration in the area of gender, migration, childcare and regional development.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will provide an overview of migration from Lesotho to South Africa since the migration of Basotho male mine workers. Secondly it will outline the theoretical framework used in the paper as well as discuss the key debates and literature relating to the topic. An argument will be made for the use of a feminist theoretical framework in the attempt to explore the dynamics that gender brings in the process and experience of female migration. This will be followed by a review of scholarly literature in the five main thematic areas that this research focuses on. These thematic areas have also been used to guide the interview process as well as the data analysis and research findings. They include: 1) 'transnational' motherhood and childcare 2) women as migrant workers and the 'feminisation' of migration; 3) domestic work as a global reproductive value chain; 4) documentation and migrant rights; 5) as well as the construction of a post-apartheid nationalism, its immigration policies and implication for migrant women.

2.1 Background

Labour migration from Lesotho to South Africa has a long history and the flows of Basotho nationals to South Africa were largely due to the use of labour migration within the mining industry and, to a certain extent, the farming industry. The mining industry is male-dominated and therefore labour migration from Lesotho to South Africa has been largely male-dominated. According to Boltson (1994) about 40% to 50% of men in Lesotho work in South Africa and a considerably higher percentage have worked there at some point in their lives.

Consequently, scholarly work on labour migration in Lesotho and its impact on the social life, particularly economic livelihood and the family have been centred around the absent man/ father/husband, the male breadwinner and the impact it has on women and children that have been left behind. To make sense of the history of labour migration to South Africa, one needs to do so within the context of the policies and social engineering of the apartheid state which rendered black migrant workers as largely a cheap labour force for the mining industry. Black women migrants to South

Africa during apartheid were seen as a costly and an undesirable social phenomenon, while the temporary and circular movement of single black migrant men from neighbouring countries, to serve as cheap labour for the South Africa economy, was encouraged.

In her analysis of the structure of migration in Southern Africa, Wright (1995) gives an account of how the development of the labour migration system in the region was gendered. The process of creating a cheap labour reserve of mine workers in areas such as Lesotho was largely gendered in that it has a different and unique impact on women. She argues that the proletarianisation of males in Lesotho – in the interest of the apartheid capitalist system - created a situation where retaining women in the rural area served the interests of many. Firstly, it was in the interest of white South African capitalists to ensure that labour migration to the mining areas was temporary and circular and therefore cheap. Secondly, it was also in the interest of the chieftaincy and elders in the community to have a population of adults, often women, who are able to do agricultural and domestic labour in the rural areas (also see Groenmeyer, 2010). Thirdly, due to the segregationist apartheid laws, it was in the interest of the apartheid government to prevent permanent African urbanisation and therefore discourage female migration. Wright (1995) however does not argue that Basotho women were homogenous and passive victims of these structural conditions. She also outlines how other women were willingly subjecting themselves to patriarchal control but also how others were resisting gender divisions of labour (Wright, 1995:784).

Many women from southern Africa that migrate to South Africa generally have low levels of skilled and often occupy work in the informal sector as informal traders or domestic workers. “Domestic service does not fall under any category of labour migration permitted under South African immigration law and policy. This means that these migrants’ employment contract is ‘illegal’” (Griffin, 2011). Therefore, although the migration of women from the region has increased considerably in post-apartheid South Africa, it still confines migrant women to being visitors or to work as undocumented migrants, often in the precarious informal labour market.

Some feminist scholars have argued that the increased migration of women allows them to escape the patriarchal and gender inequalities in their societies that confine them to the home. They laud female migration as allowing women greater social and

economic independence. This is often a romanticised view of female migration that fails to consider the challenges that women face in the process of migration. The increased migration of women in the Southern African region does not necessarily mean that women are moving away from 'feminised domesticity' - referred to as the 'continued relegation of housework to the women' (Frakier, 2010) - it simply means that these women are able to earn waged income by being a domestic worker in another household. Furthermore, women have to deal with other gendered issues such as access to documentation, dealing with the burden of childcare (even as migrant workers) and limited access to formal employment for migrant women.

Post-apartheid South Africa has come with changes in the migration regime, albeit limited. This regime still marginalises women and limits their movements across its national borders. There have not been significant changes for women in the legal frameworks that govern migration to South Africa – from the apartheid Aliens Control Act to post-apartheid Immigration Act. However, there has been an increase in the number of female migrants, particularly from the neighbouring countries. "In South Africa, female migration has accounted for most of the increase in migratory movements and the figures for female migration has risen from 30% to 34% through the 1990s" (Posel 2003 in IOM, 2006). Some scholars refer to this increase in female migration as the 'feminisation of migration'. Peberdy, (2008) argues that debates on migration to South Africa fail to reflect the increasing feminisation of migration streams to and from South Africa, particularly the flow from the rest of Southern Africa. "The new movement of female migrants from Lesotho to South Africa is part of a reconfiguration of patterns and processes of migration in Southern Africa. Historical research has destroyed the myth of the stay-at-home wife" (Ulicki & Crush, 2000, 77). Women are no longer staying at home with children while men migrate in search of work. And when these women do migrate, it is no longer to accompany men – they migrate independently and in search of work. The increased cross-border movement of women is not unique to South Africa, De Jong (2000) indicates that this increase has also taken place in other less developed countries (his study focuses on female migration in rural northeast Thailand).

"Globally it is the case that most women who migrate in the less skilled category work as domestic or care workers" (Piper, 2009:19). As a result, it is important to study how the changes in migration trends impact or are impacted by gender relation within the

family and their livelihood strategies. “Gender exerts significant influence on the experience of immigration, as men’s and women’s motivation for migrating, conditions of travel, and situation at resettlement are fundamentally different” (Essed, Goldberg & Kobayashi, 2005: 308). In her work on migration, Fakier argues that there has been a commodification of social reproduction where there is a “transfer of the responsibilities of social reproduction between classes – from middle-class women to migrant working-class women as domestic workers” (Fakier, 2010:22). Some scholars have referred to this phenomenon as the ‘international division of reproductive labour’ or the ‘global care chain’ where migrant women are paid to take care of children and the household of middle class households while those women enter the formal labour market. This form of ‘out-sourced care work’ that is often filled by migrant women from poorer countries needs to be analysed to understand its impacts on the migrant sending households and communities, how migrant women make senses of their gendered role as mothers and how this impacts on the livelihood strategies of sending households and communities.

The ‘out-sourcing’ of domestic work to poor and often marginalised women, is not a new phenomenon in South Africa. During apartheid, black women from the racialised Bantustans worked as live-in domestic workers in segregated white areas. As a result, black women would leave their children for an extended period of time in the townships and rural areas to work in white households – including caring for their children. These women worked in white areas as ‘migrants’ from racially segregated Bantustans. They were rendered foreigners by apartheid policies and had to get documentation to allow them to access and work in white South Africa. In her work on domestic workers in Soweto, Dilata (2008) writes about the dependency of domestic workers on their white employers during apartheid and how their lack of citizenship rendered them vulnerable to exploitation (Dilata, 2008). Building on scholarly work that looks at issues of documentation and citizenship during apartheid, this study argues that in post-apartheid South Africa this position is taken up by migrant women from the southern African region. Migrant women from the region become live-in domestic workers who are undocumented and vulnerable to exploitation in South African households – this time by both black and white employers. The continuities of apartheid’s ‘international division of labour’ are evident in post-apartheid South Africa where migrant domestic workers are not recruited from the Bantustans but rather from neighbouring countries

such as Lesotho and Zimbabwe. In the post-apartheid era the 'madam' is no longer a white, black middle or even working class women are becoming 'madams'.

"The restructuring of the gold-mining industry has led to massive retrenchments among black male mine workers, particularly from Lesotho, (Peberdy, 2008: 803). The decline in the employment of migrant men from Lesotho and the increase in female migration from that country are indicative of the changes in the livelihood strategies of households in Lesotho. Consequently, "these [female] migrant workers leave behind the responsibility of social reproduction in their communities and households of origin where it is shouldered by other women: mothers, grandmothers and sisters of migrants" (Frakier, 2010:23). Census 2001 data showed that domestic work offered significant employment opportunities for black women in South Africa. Furthermore, about 42% of employed black women from the Southern African Development Region (SADC) that live in Johannesburg are employed as domestic workers (Dinat & Peberdy 2007).

In their study on migrant domestic workers (on both internal and cross border migrants), Dinat & Peberdy, 2007 discuss the dominance of Basotho women within the pool of migrant domestic workers in South Africa. "Almost 50% of foreign domestic workers in the study came from Lesotho, almost a third from Zimbabwe and the rest were from Mozambique (6%), Botswana (4%), Swaziland (4%), Malawi (4%) and Zambia (2%) (Dinat & Peberdy, 2007). However, their study, together with Census 2001, suggests that the overwhelming majority of migrant domestic workers are still internal migrants with only 68 (6%) of the women interviewed in their study coming from another country. Even though domestic workers from other countries constitute less than 10% of domestic workers in the country, it is important to note the under-representation of domestic workers in Census data. Firstly, because they may be undocumented and avoiding interacting and being recorded by the government and also because domestic workers are by the nature of their work confined to the private household of their employer who also do not want them to be detected.

Domestic work is a livelihood strategy of many households from sending countries such as Lesotho and the impact it has on a relatively smaller country. Previous research suggests that one common household response to mine retrenchments in Lesotho is the replacement of male by female migration (Coplan and Thoalane 1995;

Seidman 1995 in Ulicki & Crush, 2000). Female migrants from Lesotho are major economic actors. Lesotho is one of the most migrant dependent societies in the world and remittances are a major source of foreign exchange and was approximately 25% of GDP in 2006 (UN In straw 2010:8). Historically, young men migrated to the mines in South Africa however women also migrated to South Africa. These women were either unmarried younger women or widows who migrated to break the cycle of poverty at home. There are many ways to illustrate the links between the increased feminisation of the migration to the decline in wages by men. But women have also migrated in huge numbers because of delaying or avoiding marriage, widowhood, abandonment and divorce resulting in women becoming the primary wage earner (UN In straw 2010:9). Domestic work in South Africa is poorly paid but the wages are higher than a similar employment contract in Lesotho. (Groenmeyer, 2010).

I have attempted to outline the background of migration of Basotho to South Africa, from apartheid era and the boom in the mining industry. I have also illustrated how globally migration has become increasingly feminised and the increased cross-border movement of women who migrate alone and for the purposes of work. Theories on migration have also neglected the issues faced by female migrants, especially the social impact of migration on women and children - both as migrants and children who remain in the countries of origin. Where there has been an analysis of the impact of migration on the household, it has been on the economic effects of remittances on sending households and communities. Below I will discuss the various migration theories and argue that most of these theories ignore the social impact of migration and focus on the economic aspect of the process. In addition, they fail to give a gendered analysis of migration and ignore the condition of being woman and a migrant worker. I will also argue for a feminist analysis in migration studies in teasing out the gendered dynamics of migration.

2.2 Theoretical framework

Migration has been largely understood as a process undertaken for economic reasons. The three main theories on migration tend to focus on issues in the public sphere such as issues of the economy, labour market and capitalist development (Hernandez-Albujar, 2004). For example, neo-classical theories of migration focus on the “transfer of under-employed labour from the non-capitalist sector of an economy to the capitalist

sector, under the condition of a given wage in the latter which exceeded earnings in the former” (Wright, 1995:772). This argument is also linked to a migrant considering better social mobility (Bean & Brown, 2015). Labour market segmentation theories also look at how there are dual economies created in various regions or countries and that this creates a stratified labour markets where people in the secondary sector will move towards the primary sector to seek better employment and wages (Bean & Brown, 2015). These approaches to understanding migration have been widely used and have helped in making sense of the process of migration as an economic phenomenon. It has however neglected the social reasons and impacts of migration.

2.2.1 Neo-classical migration theory

Neoclassical theory states that international mobility is caused by geographic differences in the supply of and demand for labour. Countries with large populations of labour relative to capital have a low equilibrium market wage, while countries with limited populations of labour relative to capital are characterised by a high market wage. Neo-classical theories on migration have their limitations. According to Chant and Radcliffe (1992:18), the neoclassical economic theories focusing on macro push/pull factors of wage differentials or labour demand or supply were oversimplified because of researchers’ over-reliance on uncertain data on rural income and unemployment rates. Neo-classical theories were gender blind because it was assumed that migration was a male phenomenon or that migration was the same for women as it was for men (Osishi 2003:7). In addition, the neo-classical development approach did not acknowledge migrant women’s productive and reproductive roles within society, as pointed out by critics such as Massey et al (1993). “Neoclassical economic and Marxist political economic theories of migration have been a primary target of feminist criticism and revision, as those theories conceptualise migrants as purely rational actors embedded in social contexts devoid of gendered power relations” (Nawyn, 2010:752). To argue that a person is ‘utility-maximising’ is to offer a simplistic theorising of social action (Noswell, 2008:552).

2.2.2 Household strategy theory

Household strategy theorists contend that migration decisions are not made by individuals but by households (Osishi 2003). This is a view that gender is a social

construction determined within the context of that particular society. Proponents of this approach note that people act collectively to maximise expected income. They also minimise risks for members of the kinship unit. Households control risks to their economic wellbeing by diversifying the allocation of household resources – for example family labour. Crush and Frayne's (2010:16) writing on migration in the SADC region note that migration is essential for both the individual and the family. For migrants this is an opportunity to earn income for children's education, for health services, for shelter or to start a small business. Consequently, the number of women in cross border migration has increased. However, family/household decisions and actions do not represent unified and equally beneficial outcomes for all members (Boyd & Grieco 2003). It is within families and households where production and redistribution take place but families also represent centres of struggle where people with different activities and interests can come into conflict with one another. Theorists note that on-going power relations that operate in families and households because of diverse interests and activities strongly suggest that the interests of men and women in families do not always coincide and may affect decisions about who manages to migrate, for how long, and to which countries.

2.2.3 Dual labour market theory

Dual labour market theory advocate that advanced economies require a permanent demand for migrant labour. These are pull factors that are built into the structure of developed countries. There are four fundamental characteristics of advanced industrial societies and their economies. The first is structural inflation whereby wages are not only linked to supply and demand but also status and prestige which are social qualities that inhere to the jobs to which the wages are attached. There is a rigid notion of status linked to wages. Therefore, wages are not free of socially defined relations between status and prestige. Dual labour market theorists argue that workers in developing countries are structurally pulled into the secondary labour markets in industrialised countries. These secondary labour markets offer casualised jobs of lower pay, poor working conditions and lack job security to migrant workers.

2.2.4 Dependency theory

Grounded in an economic analysis of migration, the dependency theory assists in making sense of the relationship between South Africa and Lesotho and the migration process between these countries. This theory argues that “the economy of a peripheral country is conditioned by the development and expansion of the central economy to which it is subordinated” (Frank, 1967 in Wright 1995:773). The history of the migrant labour system in apartheid South Africa and the boom of the mining industry are well documented. Lesotho, alongside Malawi and Mozambique, has been the main sending countries of cheap migrant labour to the South African mining industry.

The post-apartheid feminisation of migration in Lesotho requires us to explore the dependency theory and its relevance in the migration of Basotho women as domestic workers. However, there is a need to look beyond the economic aspect and consider the social implication of migration between ‘peripheral’ and ‘central’ economies. This study focuses on childcare and reproductive labour among domestic worker and its social impact on the sending country.

2.2.5 Feminisms in migration studies

“To examine migration as a political process is to question the economism central to much research, to ask what interests are served when certain groups of people migrate for particular purposes, and to uncover the power relations that underpin the migration flows and experiences of specific social groups” (Silvey, 2004:495). The debate on migration has been criticised as being ‘economic reductionism’ in that it privileges the economic reasons and effects of migration over other factors. Migrants are understood as rational actors that make the decision to migrate based on calculated economic reasons. Therefore, when analysing the effects of migration, the focus tends to be on its (economic) developmental impact, the contribution of remittances to the economy of the sending family and country. It is only in the past few decades that gender has been used as a tool of analysis in migration studies. “The integration of gender analysis in migration studies first emerged in the 1970s and early

1980s with a conception of gender as an individual-level, static category, determined at birth...as the field evolved into the mid- and late- 1980s feminist migration scholars shifted their analysis from studying women to studying gender, the difference being that instead of contrasting women and men, they focused on gender as a system of relations which was influenced by migration” (Nawyn, 2010:750).

“In contrast to neoclassical approaches, feminist migration research is centrally concerned to disentangle the politics of gender and difference as they shape both the knowledge that is produced about scale and the dynamics and meanings of scale in production” (Silvey, 2004:492) Neo-classical economic and Marxist political economic theories of migration have been criticised by feminist scholars as “conceptualising migrants as purely rational actors embedded in social contexts devoid of gendered power relations” (Nawyn, 2010:752). This focus privileges the analysis of the public sphere of the migrants’ life and work over the private sphere. This needs to be expanded to include the social, the domestic and the household.

Migrant women, especially those with low levels of skills, are largely confined to the private sphere of work in households as care-givers. By only focusing on the public sphere of formal male-dominated migrant work (such as mining and farming in South Africa) the private sphere of the migrant worker experience is ignored. “Therefore, any effort to exceed economic reductionism in theories of migration needs to make perceptible migrants’ gender, their gendered obligations, care responsibilities, loyalties, family ties and the like” (Lutz, 2010:1659). Traditional and mainstream studies of migration have been male-centred, neglecting to address the private sphere of women (Hernandez-Albujar, 2004).

There is a great need to ‘bring gender in’ when looking at migration and its impact on an individual’s lived experiences as “migration patterns and processes, the experience of migration, as well as the social, political, economic and cultural impact of their migration are gendered” (Morokvasic, 2007:92). Feminist scholars from various disciplines have attempted to bring gender in in their analysis of female migration. “When people’s movements are largely understood in terms of their contributions to the formal economy, critical aspects of the process are lost, and women’s experiences are among the most striking omissions from this literature (Boyd 2003 cited in Kihato, 2007).

In this study feminist theories are used to analyse how motherhood shapes the lived experiences of women migrant from Lesotho. It focuses on the contradictory location and double burden of these women who become transnational mothers (away from their children for months on end) as well as live-in domestic workers that have to take care of their employers' children. It will explore the gains for women when they have access to employment as migrant workers. This is not to ignore the precarious nature of their migrant work as South African immigration polices do not make provision for domestic workers. As a result, they are rendered undocumented workers that enter the country on visitor's visas, at best, or without any form of documentation at worst. Furthermore, I will explore the challenges that migrant women from Lesotho are faced with when negotiating their role as mothers and live-in domestic workers. These gendered contradictions that women have to negotiate in the public sphere of work and the private sphere of the family will be used to illustrate the inadequacy of theories that solely focuses on the economic aspects of migration.

This study also attempts to go beyond just 'bringing gender in' in the debate around migration. It endeavours to illustrate that "migration is not merely a process best understood in economic and/or political terms; it's also a socio-political process mediated by gender and kinship ideologies, institutions and practices: (Mahler, 2005:33). Its main focus is around the private sphere of the lives of migrant women by looking at the institution of 'the family' with a particular focus on the discourse around transnational motherhood. Feminist theories that deal with issues such as transnational motherhood, care-giving and the gendered division of labour will be used. I locate my work within the discourse of the 'global care chain' and the 'international division of reproductive labour' - these are conceptual frameworks that "constitute an important innovative theoretical tool for the analysis of the relationship between globalisation, migration and care in its paid and unpaid form" (Piper, 2009:28).

The analysis of the experiences of Lesotho migrant women in South Africa is based on feminist paradigms. Feminism, as a theory attempting to make sense of the lived reality of people, is in no way homogenous. In fact, one does not speak about feminism but rather about 'feminisms'. Feminisms basically argue that the world is largely

patriarchal, positioning women as secondary citizens of the world that need to strive for female empowerment and greater gender equality, but there are competing streams of feminist theories. For example, Black Feminists have criticised white western feminists for marginalising the experiences of working-class and racialised women and women with disabilities (Abbot et al, 2005:365). African feminists bring on the issue of hegemony when looking at the construction of feminist theories, they write about “the anger that many African women have felt towards what they perceive as attempts by Western academics and activists to co-opt them into a movement defined by extreme individualism, by militant opposition to patriarchy, and ultimately, by a hostility to males” (Mikell, 1995:405). Therefore, although feminists may aspire for a world where there is more gender equality and women and girls are being empowered, their approaches and points of departure differ.

I will therefore explore the concept of motherhood and childcare in the context of migration. I will explore these concepts using various feminist tools of analysis as well as locating it in the broader debate of migration studies.

2.3 Motherhood and childcare

Motherhood is a universal role that most women, regardless of status, negotiate at some point in their lives. However, the experience of motherhood is marked by different identities and positions they occupy in society. Class, race, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, geographic locations (rural or urban) are some of the nuances that contribute to the meanings and experiences of motherhood. “Motherhood is not biologically predetermined in any fixed way but is historically and socially constructed” (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001:308). Scholars that investigate the family and motherhood have often looked at motherhood in an objective or a subjective way. An objective view of motherhood investigates motherhood in light of the development of children - instrumental motherhoods (Van Doorene, 2009:17). This view is generally adopted by developmental psychologists. Feminist scholars have argued that this is instrumentalising mothers. “Instrumentality is a hallmark of masculinity, and some feminists argue that research on motherhood from a masculine perspective has focused on the instrumental value of mothering, as opposed to the subjective

experience of women (Gerson, Alpert & Richardson, 1990 cited in Van Doorene, 2009:20). Within the area of migration, women have been studied as followers of men – where they have been understood as migrating alone it is often within the neo-classical economic views of remittances and how they contribute to the development of their family as breadwinners. This type of scholarly enquiry does not take into consideration the gendered nature of migration – especially of migrant women who are also mothers; how they experience and make sense of their motherhood in the context of (undocumented) migration.

2.3.1 Constructing motherhood in the context of migration

“Much work on gender and migration has highlighted the often contradictory roles that women adopt as they leave their children to provide for their children.” (Contreras & Griffith, 2012: 51). There is a growing body of knowledge on the impact of migration on mothers and children in labour sending countries such as the Philippines, Mexico, Italy, Poland, Ukraine and Spain (see Lutz, 2002; Lutz and Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2012; Parrenas, 2010; Contreras & Griffith, 2012). Terms such as ‘transnational motherhood’ (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997: 548), ‘diasporic motherhood’ ‘commodified motherhood’ (Parrenas, 2001: 73), and ‘fragmentation of motherhood’ (Gamburd, 2000: 186) have been coined in investigating the increased number of women who are negotiating motherhood across national borders and being away from their children for extended periods of time. “These divergent forms of mothering extant in the transnational social field contest the grand narrative of a normative motherhood predicated upon the experience of privileged women in dominant groups, both locally and globally.” (Cheng, 2004:136). Thus, globalization and migration serve to build upon tensions in motherhood that already exist, rendering motherhood simultaneously a global and local process (Maher 2010).

Contreras and Griffith (2012) have looked at Mexican women working in United States on temporary work visas to pick meat from blue crabs in small coastal factories. They found that migrant women are faced with contradictory circumstances when they migrate. They may be able to improve their material lives and that of their families,

but the quality of life is diminished with increased separation from family – the ‘social and psychological tensions derived from separation’. Secondly they found that the migrant women justify being away from home as an attempt to become better mothers to their children, by being able to provide for their needs, “yet their long absence from home affects the quality of the parent –child relationship and commonly negatively influences their children’s well-being” (Contreras & Griffith, 2012: 57).

In their work on migrant women from the Philippines who are domestic workers in Singapore, Asis et al. (2004) looks at how migrant women and their families negotiate family ideals, gender identity and family relationships. Their study is important in that they interview the migrant women and the family members to explore how migration impacts both the migrant and the family left behind. This study however, does not investigate the meanings and experiences of these migrant women as mothers. The focus, like many, continues to be on the family and/or the children left behind by migrant women. How migrant women experience and negotiate notions of motherhood is seldom investigated even if there is evidence that gender roles seldom change with migration of women. Women are still expected to perform gender roles of mothering and childcare even across national borders. “Some immigrant women may need to leave children behind in their home countries to seek employment opportunities in other countries. Practicing ‘transnational motherhood’ (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila 1997) put strains on mother’s relationships with their children, as long distances challenge the expectations put upon mothers by themselves, their communities, and their children” (Nawyn, 2010:755). While migration impacts motherhood through changing conceptions of gender roles, attachment, and family structures (Alzoubi,2011), transnational mothers also express a great deal of anxiety over the separation from their children and remaining a “good” mother (Nicholson 2006). At the same time, amidst this anxiety and physical displacement, being able to provide for their children brings a sense of empowerment, despite their separation. (Millman, 2013). It is these paradoxes and contradictions that are missed when the gendered aspect and social impact of migration is not investigated in migration studies

The experiences of migrant mothers are not similar – there are documented migrant mothers (often skilled or accompanying their spouses) that are able to bring their children with to the host country and get access to services such as healthcare and education. “From the perspective of migrant women, it is not the choice of motherhood

but the right to motherhood/mothering that is in jeopardy in the transnational era.” (Cheng, 2004:142) Low skilled migrant mothers often live and work in the host country as undocumented migrants that have to deal with the challenges of irregularity. In her study of Salvadoran women working in the United States, Horton (2008) conducts an anthropological study of migrant women and how they negotiate their status as irregular/undocumented migrants and how that impacts on their experiences of motherhood. She found that “mothers feel profound moral failure in not being able to serve as physical caretakers for their children, a failure they’ve exchanged for securing their children’s financial and physical wellbeing” (Horton, 2008:10)

“Motherhood and mothering is [also] a great challenge, which is made more complex when it is combined with migration” (Liamputtong, 2003:650). Motherhood and migration are the focus in this study –especially migrant women who are low skilled and work in the unregulated industry of domestic work. “For the millions of migrant women... the issue of motherhood is not about male dominance, the public-private dichotomy, unequal gender division of labour, double shift, or struggle for individual autonomy. For them, they cannot mother their children the conventional way because economic deterioration and family survival compel them to seek overseas employment” (Cheng, 2004:136).

To understand how migrant women experience and conceptualise motherhood, this study has also looked at how migrant women make sense of and perform ‘childcare’ as mothers that are away from their children for continuous periods of time. Migration can have significant consequences in the sending and receiving societies, it impacts on family arrangement and cultural norms and perceptions about gender roles especially when women migrate. “Cultural norms regarding gendered practices are challenged [with migration], although several scholars have found those norms to be surprisingly durable despite the structural difficulties families face in maintaining them” (Nawyn, 2010:755). Child care arrangements are negotiated when women migrant. In their study of migrant women from Poland and Ukraine, Lutz and Palenga-Mollenbeck (2012) found that in the absence of present mother’s care work is taken over by fathers left behind; grandmothers; female friends, family members, and caring children and Skype mothering; significant carers. However, if different understandings of family and motherhood are adopted by migrant societies – it is important to ask if indeed new arrangements are necessary or if different family forms deal with migration

without having to negotiate alternatives for childcare. This next section looks at how families and motherhoods have been conceptualised and how child care is made sense of within the context of female migration in southern Africa.

2.3 2 Conceptualising motherhood

Feminist scholarship challenges uniform notions of 'motherhood' and 'family' that assume public/private dichotomies and rely on simplistic and overarching conceptualizations of the motherhood role (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila:1997). In addressing transnational migration, feminist studies investigate how gender is constituted and reconstituted in transnational spaces, and the political implications of this process. It interrogates how gender is lived across borders and nation states, and how gender divisions, inequalities, and hierarchies function within transnational experiences (Fouron & Schiller 2001).

Feminist notions of motherhood can be categorised into two broad ideologies – *rational feminism* and *romantic feminism*. Doorene (2009) outlines the different views of 'rational feminism' and 'romantic feminism' in her study. She argues that rational feminism emphasises the equality of women and men and rejects mothering as a primary role of women. On the other hand, romantic feminism celebrates woman's capacity to mother and views mothering as a rewarding and empowering experience that is unique to women (see Kruger, 2006 and Oberman & Josselson, 1996).

Motherhood – as a biological as well as socially constructed term has received attention largely by feminist scholars. The conceptualisation and debate on mothering and motherhood has a long history in feminist work. In her review of feminist scholarship on motherhood, Ross (1995) dates back this probe into motherhood from the publication of the *Feminist Mystique* in 1963. This, she argues, resulted in the 1960s and 1970s "questioning and probing of the social and subjective meaning of motherhood" (Ross, 1995:397). In their attempt to make sense of the idea of motherhood, feminist scholars can be plotted along a continuum where on one end there is the biological view of motherhood that tends to celebrate or abhor it and on the one end motherhood is understood as a fluid and socially constructed term.

Previously, studies of motherhood have also “focused on the quality of mothering and its supposed effect on a child. The study of mothering both expanded dramatically over the course of the past decade and become more multidisciplinary” (Arendell, 2000:1192). This functionalist view of mothering is also intertwined with ideas of femininity and womanhood where “mothering is associated with women because universally, it is women who do the work of mothering” (Arendell, 2000:1192). In conceptualising motherhood, Arendell (2000) argues that its definitions and practices vary and are not ‘natural, universal and unchanging’ nor based on biological reproductions. What is important is to analyse how these practices and definitions are understood in various social and cultural contexts.

2.3.2 Discourse on 'bad' and 'good' mothers

The notion of motherhood/ mothering plays central role in this research. Motherhood is understood as a socially constructed term that takes on different meanings from one society to another - these meanings are gendered and change with time. The notion of motherhood is not only socially constructed, but it is also biologically determined in that women can bear children. Experiences and expectations of motherhood are not the same for all women as they are influenced by their multiple identities such as class, race, nationality and sexual orientation. Furthermore, as a gendered term, motherhood is made sense of in the context of dominant gendered discourse and ideas about relations between men and women. These gendered discourses of motherhood inform different ideologies about a ‘bad mother’ and a ‘good mother’. “There are many mothers who fall outside the club of ‘good motherhood’ as defined by dominant motherhood ideologies. Several scholars have noted the relegation of teenage mothers (Bailey, Brown & Wilson, 2002), older mothers, single mothers, and lesbian mothers (Lewin, 1994) to the bottom rungs of the hierarchy of motherhood (Dilapi, 1989 in Johnson & Swanson, 1999:22). However, these constructions of the ‘good mother’ emanate from a position of privilege and the unequal relations of women across the globe with the dominant discourse being that of western, urban, middle class women. “The personal is no longer simply the political; the personal is the global. Centering the story of Third World mothers is important in challenging the dominant

feminist theorizing in motherhood, which is often predicated upon the experience of Western, white, middle-class women” (Cheng, 2004:137).

2.3.3 Non-western constructions of motherhood

In her study on immigrant women who leave their children in their country of origin as they seek migrant work, Horton (2008) argues that this processes is “reconfiguring the shape of the immigrant family and transnationalising the very meaning of motherhood” (Horton, 2008:24). Her analysis assumes that meanings of motherhood are centred on the idea of the ‘present mother’ and that any other arrangement is a ‘reconfiguration’. In a study of transnational mothers and fathers, Avilia argues that “in the case of single-parent mothers, [women] must rely on other female kin in their countries of origin, an action that results in them been stigmatised as ‘bad mothers’” (Avilia, 2008). This understanding is centred on the discourse of the ‘present mother’. However African feminist scholars that focus on issues of the family and motherhood such as Oyewumi (2003) and Magwaza (2003) argue that different family arrangements and mothering practices are acceptable in African societies. Co-mothering (where the role of child care is shared among female relatives or community members) is an accepted practice. Magwaza also argues that “much of the available literature on motherhood, i.e. academic literature, pregnancy and childcare guides is not only produced elsewhere than in Africa, it also lacks an African focus” (Magwaza, 2003:4). In many African societies “co-mothering as a communal ideal and social practice is not reducible to biological motherhood; it transcends it...in the consanguinally-based African family, the reality is that children experience many mothers” (Oyewumi, 2003:13).

In her study on the experience of Thai migrant mothers in Australia, Liamputtong found that “the low satisfaction with motherhood and its consequent unhappiness found in several studies with women from Western societies does not exist in [her] study...this may be due to the societal expectations of motherhood in Thai culture and the family support women receive when they become mothers” (Liamputtong, 2003:665). “In the last two decades, feminist theory has succeeded in problematising ‘motherhood’ and some of these theoretical debates are beginning to engage

researchers and political activists here. The international debate has exposed shortcomings in common-sense views of motherhood(s) as naturally the role of women, but there is no consensus on how to conceptualise and theorise this now controversial but seemingly intractable institution” (Walker, 1995:423).

Using the different conceptualisations of motherhood this paper explored the construction of transnational motherhood among women migrant workers from Lesotho and how they negotiate their position of being live-in domestic workers that are away from their children for an extended period of time. It covers themes within the area of family studies and migration studies such as transnational motherhood, migrant domestic workers, the international division of reproductive labour/ ‘the global care chain’, child-rearing and migrant family structures and their survival strategies.

The conceptualisation of motherhood cannot be understood independent of the conceptualisation of childcare. However, this research attempts to escape the temptation of taking a functionality approach to understanding motherhood by linking it to its benefits for childcare. Instead it attempts to make sense of mother from the perspective and experiences of the migrant woman. The analysis on childcare is brought in to understand how migrant women make sense of their motherhood and not how their motherhood is beneficial to children. Firstly, how they experience motherhood as migrant women who spend extended periods of time away from their children and secondly how this experience of motherhood is made more complex by the fact that they also have to ‘mother’ their employers’ children.

2.4 Childcare

The rearing of children is an important social act and the family is the main institution in which social reproduction takes place; and often female family members become the primary caregiver of children. In some societies the responsibility of childcare may also be shared by the state depending on the social policies that are in place. In some developed countries, the caregiving role has been extended to include the state to assist in providing care through care centres or subsidising the care of children, the elderly and the disabled. “The development of a domestic labour sector usually takes place in countries that lack effective social policies and initiatives designed to help families to achieve such a balance between labour activity, household responsibilities, and

caretaking” (Labadie-Jackson, 2008:69). The extended family, especially in African societies takes up the role of childcare. “[T]he particular characteristics of migration in the South African context are, firstly, evidence that it is not only the children of migrants who require care, but also the parents of migrants. In the South African context, gogos or grandmothers are expected to care for the children of migrants despite the fact that they are themselves often frail or sickly” (Frakier, 2010:28).

In their study on the child care regime in three European countries (Britain, Spain and Sweden), Williams and Gavanoas (2008) summaries care regimes in Europe under three categories: “first, the redistribution of responsibility between state and family (What they call childcare ‘going public’); second the redistribution economic and caring responsibilities between mothers and fathers (especially with the endorsement of paternity leave); and thirdly, a transnational redistribution of care work” (Williams and Gavana, 2008:16). In South Africa, the responsibility of child care has only ‘gone public’ in as far as poor children are concerned with the state’s child support grant. There is still a long way to go with regards to shared care by mothers and fathers as South Africa has a high level of single-mother households (and an increasing number of child-headed households). Transnational care work and how Basotho migrant women perform it, is the focus of the study. We have also interrogated the phenomenon of using member of the extended family- often women, to assist with child care -- an alternative form of caregiving that western study and societies often overlook.

The study will not only look at the ‘global reproductive care chain’ as it benefits south African children through the acquisition of paid domestic work, but it will focus on how it has an impact on Basotho children whose mothers have to become migrant domestic workers and find them alternative forms of care. Basotho women that work in South Africa as domestic workers for extended periods of time have had to leave their biological children in the care of their extended family and in some instances without adult supervision, safe for neighbours that may check on them from time to time. The impact of female migration is not just economic; it is also social, having a direct impact on children of migrant women who stay behind in the sending countries having to content with mothers who work in a different country. The renegotiation of motherhood and family arrangement in a time of increased female migration requires the

renegotiation of childcare and household strategies of sending families. These concepts are teased out in the findings.

To understand the conceptualisations of motherhood and childcare in a period of increase female migration we also need to look at the 'global reproductive/care chain' and how low-skilled migrant women negotiate this. The concept of the 'global reproductive/care chain' also sheds light into the dichotomy between the centre and peripheral economies of various regions. Often these dichotomies are understood in economic terms considering the public sphere divides of the two economies. This research takes a different approach to understanding the relationship between the centre and peripheral economies - an analysis that is gendered, that politicised the social impact of migration and one that looks into the often overlooked private sphere of the family and the household.

2.4 Domestic work – the global reproductive/care chain

Members of a household play an important role in providing care for people that are in need of it; this includes children, the elderly or the disabled. Care giving is often a gendered role that is ascribed to women and girl children in society – either in the household as mothers, sisters, aunts, wives or grand-mothers. In the public sphere careers such as nursing, domestic work and pre-school teachers are mostly occupied by women. In some societies- especially in developed countries, the state also plays a role in care-giving. Developed countries have in the past decade looked at care work for children, the disabled and the elderly and the state has assisted families through giving parental leave, crèches, elderly care and nursing homes. Other countries in Europe have looked into more market driven provision such as state subsidies for families to hire paid caregivers (Lutz, 2008:5). For example, the French crèche system has made way for state subsidized family care. In the Netherlands there has been the marketization of child care within the family (Lutz: 2008).

Where the state has not made provision for care giving (the focus will be care-giving for children for purposes of this study) or where there has been a large 'marketization of child care' paid domestic work is sought. Domestic work as Lutz (2008) argues, has become an area of work that attracts poor, unskilled and increasingly migrant women. "Rather than challenging the devaluation of women's work and that of care as a whole, the availability of migrant women's care labour enables labour receiving states to

deepen the privatization of childcare and evade the commitment to the collective responsibility for social reproduction. Migrant women's care labour serves as a cheap solution for the inadequacy of public provision of care in labour receiving nations.” (Cheng, 2004:142)

With the increased mass movement of people across national borders, domestic work has become a task for immigrants (Moya, 2007:560). Drawing on the dual economy theory it is important to study the impact of migrant domestic work between the ‘secondary sectors’ and the ‘primary sectors’, however this must not be limited to an economic analysis on the labour market and the need to earn better wages. The analysis should consider the social and political impact that migration has on women and their families, especially their children. “The global unequal distribution of care has enabled female employers to resolve their individual needs for childcare without making demands on the state. Their participation in the public sphere hinges upon the stunted enjoyment of civil, political, and socioeconomic rights of women from less developed regions and nations. This paradox illustrates the necessity to reconsider motherhood, from the standpoint of migrant women, not only as an issue of choice but also as that of right” (Cheng, 2004:141).

This study looks at the increased need for paid child care and the ‘feminization of migration’ in South Africa through the concept of the ‘global care chain’.

“The ‘global care chain’ concept (Hochschild, 2000), drawing on the GCC [global commodity chain] framework in its conceptualization, constitutes an important innovative theoretical tool for the analysis of the relationship between globalisation, migration and care in its paid and unpaid forms. ‘It captures the significance of transnational care services and the international division of reproductive labour as integral features of the contemporary international economy that are otherwise neglected by globalization studies and also migration studies’ (Yeates, 2004:370) ”(Piper, 2009) (see also Williams, 2010 and Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2012).

“The work areas into which women migrate now comprise feminized domains like domestic and care work, entertainment and prostitution, and also sectors in agriculture and catering services. The term ‘feminized domain’ (Wetterer, 2002) was coined on the basis of observation that when the majority of the workers becomes female, this links up with low wages, low status and low occupational mobility” (Lutz, 2010:1652).

In the context of cross-border migration in South Africa, migrant women are also largely undocumented migrants rendering them vulnerable to abuse and exploitation within the private space of work and in the public space with law enforcement agencies. "Housework and personal care (child care and elderly care) are typical sectors of the underground economy" (Bettio et al, 2006: 276). This is unlike some countries such as Spain, Italy, Greece, Britain, Ireland and Germany that have made provision for migrants to work as domestic workers – either through their quota system or some other similar programme (Lutz, 2008:6)

Globally, it is the case that most women who migrate often work in the less skilled category work as domestic or care workers. In France, for instance, over 50% of migrant women are believed to be engaged in domestic work and in Italy, from among the 600,000 registered domestic workers the great majority are non-EU nationals (ILO, 2003: 11; Irene and IUF, 2008). In Spain domestic service is the main and almost obligatory gateway for 63% of non-community foreign women (Colectivo lo~, 2003, Irene and IUF, 2008). This situation is not so different in Canada and its 'live-in-caregiver' programme (McKay, 2003; Hankivsky, 2009). Domestic work is also the single most important category of employment among women migrants to the Gulf States, as well as to Lebanon and Jordan (Esim and Smith, 2004). Chin's (1998) study on foreign domestic work has situated the 'import' of such workers within the "politics of development" of Malaysia and the expansion of the middle class with more educated women entering the labour market, leaving a care gap to be filled. Without the state providing such services, this gap has been filled by foreign domestic workers (Chin,1998; see also Teo and Piper, 2009 on Singapore). In this regard Chin's work echoes studies by other social scientists that have linked foreign domestic worker issues to larger questions of global economic restructuring and the feminization of labour migration (Sassen, 1988 in Piper, 2009)

2.4.1 Reproductive care chain in the African context: south: south migration

Post- independent African countries have not focused on care work and the role of the state in assisting families in the care of children, the elderly and disabled. South Africa is one of the few countries that have a social security programme (most through support grants for children, the elderly and the disabled) but it has not looked into the need for child caregiving in an economy where women, who are mostly primary

caregivers, are entering the formal labour market in increasing numbers. There is a dearth of scholarly work on child caregiving in Africa. It is generally assumed that the family or women within the family will take care of this need. In her Masters dissertation, Dilata (2010) outlines the demand for domestic workers in Southern African countries post-independence. She describes the increase in the number of black middle class families that end up hiring domestic workers. Dilata uses race as a tool of analysis and investigates relationships between black domestic workers and their black employers. Although her work contributes to the limited study of domestic workers in Southern Africa, it does not look at migrant women that are domestic workers.

In her study on women from Ethiopia that are domestic workers in Yemen, De Regte (2010) explores South- South migration of women and the global care chain. She argues that these workers' recruitment by middle- and upper-class Yemeni women signifies the importance of power differentials based on class and ethnicity between women in the South (see de Regt 2009), an issue with which gender scholars have not yet dealt sufficiently" (239).

The 2001 census indicates that less than 10% of people employed in the domestic sector are of foreign origin (migrant workers in South Africa constitute about 10% of the workforce). With the decline in male migrant labour from Lesotho in South African mines, the challenges facing Zimbabwe, politically and economically, one could argue that this number may increase in the years to come. Other scholars have cautioned against the low number of recorded migrant domestic workers as domestic work is confined to the private space of the home and that most migrant domestic workers may be undocumented – the number may in reality be far greater than what is documented.

Scholarly work on the 'global care chain' needs to look at both the economic and social aspect of care work and migration. Within the neo-classical economic analysis, the focus is often on the conditions of employment, immigration policies and remittances between sending and receiving countries. Although these studies assist in analysing the impact of migration and development in the sending and receiving country, this is often a narrow view of development that does not look at the impact within the family and society. "In this [migration] process, unfortunately, [migrant women] confront three

paradoxes: constructing quality family life while separating the family; transgressing while reaffirming traditional gender roles; and striving to become better mothers apart from their children.” (Contreras & Griffith, 2012: 54). By looking at the social impact of the ‘global care chain’ between South Africa and Lesotho, this study focuses on the impact that this has on the conceptualization and experience of motherhood and childcare. Who cares for the children of domestic workers while they are away caring for their employers’ children? What mechanism do sending families use to deal with distant and transnational mothering? Horton (2008) has captured the contradictions that migrant women face when they have to negotiate motherhood and domestic work:

“Undocumented immigrants who have left their children at home endure a compartmentalized citizenship—serving as physical laborers “here” and mothers “there.” This embodiment of the global division of labor in one individual is perhaps the ultimate contradiction, even irony, of a late capitalist economy that separates reproduction from production” (Horton, 2008:2)

2.4.2 'Care drain' and conceptualisation of motherhood

“In an article published in 2000, Hochschild coined the term “care drain” to describe a situation in which migrant women take care of children and elderly people elsewhere, leaving behind a gap with regard to their own care responsibilities” (Lutz & Palenga-Mollenbeck, 2012). The focus is also on the social inequalities that develop as a result of some families that can afford to ‘buy’ care work (‘care gain’) while this deprives the families of the migrant workers (‘care drain’). However, this conceptualization of motherhood is limited and some societies do not necessarily expect motherhood to be performed by a biological mother and performing motherhood is not always limited to a physically present mother.

African feminist scholars that focus on issues of the family and motherhood such as Oyewumi (2003) and Magwaza (2003) argue that different family arrangements and mothering practices are seen as acceptable in African societies. Therefore, the concept of ‘care drain’ may be understood differently in the African experience when it comes to women migrating and leaving their children to be taken care of by other mothers. There may not necessarily be any ‘drain’ as motherhood may not be

understood to be performed by a single person. Furthermore, the drain that comes with poverty that most migrant women are trying to escape from, may be seen as more severe than the drain of an 'absent' mother. Therefore, material 'care' in terms of remittance is given more value than the physical and emotional care of the present mother. The concept of the 'global care chain' does shed light in as far as it highlights the increased movement of women who are paid care givers across national borders. But when it is made sense of in light of societies left behind and the impact it has on families and especially children, a different conceptualization may need to be adapted.

2.5 Feminisation of migration

Migration is a process that is undertaken by both women and men, however because of the marked difference that gender brings on – their experiences differ. In the past when the migration of women has been studied, it was often viewed as a process that is linked to the migration of men; migrant women were understood as people who migrate to accompany men. There has been an increase in the number of women who migrate and that do so alone and for various reasons – largely for employment. The term 'feminisation of migration' is increasingly used in migration studies. "The trend of female migration has increased in contemporary South Africa; by 1999 an estimated 34 per cent of African migrant workers in South Africa were women (Posel 2003b) while by 2001 the number of male migrants was just marginally more than that of women (PCAS 2006: 56). Some scholars argue that the increased movement of women across borders brings opportunities for women to escape patriarchal boundaries that may exist in their sending society. Women are believed to gain greater autonomy through migration. Some have however argued that, "women migrate from one patriarchal system to another, and even though they may find new barriers to autonomy, in the host country, they also find new opportunities and new ways to negotiate for additional power" (Nawyn, 2010:757).

In their study of contemporary migration from Lesotho to South Africa, Ulicki & Crush (2000) have raised pertinent question on the issue of increased female migration. They challenge scholars to analyse "the interactions between male and female migrancy. What happens when mine jobs are no longer there for any man who wants one? What happens when male migrants and their dependents can no longer count

on even this most miserly of income streams for survival? What impacts does this have on gender relations and dynamics within the household and the migration nexus more generally? What, in turn, are the effects on the longstanding transnational linkages characteristic of this nexus?" (Ulicki & Crush, 2000:66). This paper attempts to explore some of these questions.

By "situating female migration within the feminist perspective [it] allow[s] for an understanding of how the social construction of gender influences migration decisions and behaviours" (Nkau, 2003:29). In addition to analysing how 'gender influences migration decisions and behaviour', one needs to interrogate the nuances that gender brings to the experiences of migrants. This should not be done by simply adding a gender variable to the analysis of migration but by analysing the experiences of women; a social group that has often been neglected in migration studies; or at the least, been added as a peripheral variable in the generally male-centred studies of the migration process. "Rather than unproblematically adopting malestream theories and 'adding gender on', feminist scholars have argued that it is necessary to develop feminist theories: theories that explain the world from the position of women, and that enables us to conceptualise reality in a way that reflects women's interests and values, drawing on women's own interpretation of their own experience" (Abbot, Wallace & Tayler 2005:364).

2.6 Nationalism, migration and gender: Continuities with apartheid patriarchal policies

South Africa's neighbouring countries have played and continue to play a significant role in shaping the socio-political and economic landscape of the country. The violent oppression and exploitation of people and resources by the South African apartheid government extended beyond South Africa's borders. The labour migration system that affected societies in countries such as Lesotho and Mozambique, for example, has received extensive attention by scholars. This has however focused on the impact that labour migration system has on male workers and if they analyse the impact it has on women it is often under the discourse of the 'women left behind'. The apartheid labour migration system was systematic and intentional in discouraging female labour migration from the so called 'homelands' as well as from neighbouring countries from

residing in white South Africa. The apartheid nation-building project discriminated against black people and black migrant women and children in particular. Neocosmos (2006) - using Mamadani's concept of 'subjects' and 'citizens' – argues that democratic South Africa has reproduced the colonial division between 'subjects' and 'citizens'; the only difference is that it now applies to non-citizens (Neocosmos, 2006: 27). Black male migrant workers could reside and offer their cheap labour in South Africa in as far as it was temporary and not with their families. "Where the migration of women was documented, this was done in the context of attempts to control or prevent it lest it encourage permanent male urbanisation" (Wright, 1995:776). Historically, it was difficult for a black woman to migrate to South Africa.

With democracy, migrant workers from the region received certain rights – including the right to apply for permanent residency and some were naturalised as citizens. Arrangements were also made to allow migrants, mostly mine workers, to vote in South Africa's first democratic election in 1994 (Neocosmos, 2006). Male migrants played a significant role in the national building project of post-apartheid South Africa. I would however like to argue that, just like the apartheid government, the post-apartheid nation-state does not imagine the female migration worker (often poor and unskilled) from the region as part of the nation –building discourse. There is a "confirmation of perpetration of gender discrimination and inequality. While these practices were perpetrated under the brutal apartheid regime, sadly, these abuses have outlived the apartheid regime and are still being perpetrated in the post-apartheid era in South Africa" (Gobodo-Madikezela, 2004 in Odeku, 2014:673). Post-apartheid there is still no legal mechanism for migrant women from the region to reside and work in South Africa – except if they are 'highly skilled'. The patriarchal view of the male migrant worker and female family member who 'stays behind' continues post-apartheid. This is in spite of global and regional trends of an increasing number of female migrants moving by themselves. "No nationalism in the world has granted women and men the same privileged access to the resources of the nation-state. So far all nationalisms are dependent on powerful constructions of gender differences" (McClintock, 1993). Migrant women from the region have not escaped this discrimination by both the Afrikaner nationalism and the post-apartheid nationalist government. Even when they are playing an important role as domestic workers -

“ironically, the reproduction of the nation – at least in terms of care labour – is in the hands of migrant women” (Zavos,2010:27)

In post-apartheid South Africa, the situation for working class black migrant women has changed slightly in that migrant women from the southern African region can migrate to South Africa on the visitor’s visa for a maximum period of 90 days a year. However, the right to work and reside in the country is not as accessible to them as it is to men who, through the labour agreements that were established in the 1960s between South Africa and migrants sending countries such as Mozambique, Lesotho and Malawi, are able to work in the South African mining and farming industries. Immigration policies in South Africa continue to discriminate against low skilled migrant women, especially those from the poorer neighbouring countries. This has created a system of irregular and undocumented female migration in South Africa. Willien, (2007) in Horton, (2008:3) argues for a more richly descriptive field of migration studies, she urges that scholars should examine “illegality” not only as a socio-historical construct but also as embodied experience. Willien shows that migrants’ undocumented status intimately shapes their subjective experiences—in particular, their experiences of time, space and embodiment.”

In her article, De Regt (2010) argues that "illegal migration is seldom studied when dealing with gender and migration; when it is considered, it often focuses on human trafficking rendering illegal migrant women as victims" (241). In addition, when women migrate undocumented it also has a bearing on their children – whether they migrate with her, undocumented as well, or when they stay in the sending countries. “[M]others do not bear the strain of their immobility alone; suffering is not merely individual but, rather, shared and intersubjective. As we have seen, mothers and their children together shoulder the burdens of poverty and undocumented migration.” (Horton, 2008:18).

With the call for more gender inclusive immigration policies that allow women to move across borders and reside in host countries legally, and therefore limit the vulnerabilities that being undocumented may create, there are some scholars that argue that being documented may also disadvantage women and render the migration process riskier. According to these scholars there is a sense of agency in the illegal status of migrants. “Women sometimes opt for illegal ways to migrate and for an

undocumented status in the country of migration because this gives them fewer duties (such as having sponsors who are in control of their passports and the need to comply with the conditions in a contract). Illegality is thus not automatically disadvantageous. It is equally worth paying attention to agency exercised by women to improve their situation, even under difficult circumstances” (De Regt, 2010:240).

The legal status of a migrant may render the migrant vulnerable to greater control and dependence on the employers – especially if the visa is linked to a particular employer and therefore attaching the documentation of the migrant to the relationship they may have with them. However, the benefits of being documented as a migrant must not be overlooked and so should the risk of exploitation, not having access to services, not being able to travel easily to and from the sending country. The status of the migrant woman also has a bearing on their ability to mother. “Migrant women's status as non-citizens calls attention to the state's realization of nationalist/racial projects through the regulation of their sexuality, reproduction, and motherhood. In other words, they face structural as well as intimate violence” (Cheng, 2004:141). By being undocumented, migrant women may not return home as often as those that are documented.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This study attempts to give a detailed account of how Basotho migrant women negotiate and conceptualise their experiences both as migrant women and as 'transnational' mothers that work in households in South Africa where they are required to provide paid care work for their employers' children. To this end, ten women from Lesotho, who are domestic workers in South Africa, were selected for one-on-one interviews. This number was pre-determined and kept to a small sample group as the research is qualitative, underpinned by feminist research methods.

3.1 Qualitative research methods

"Feminist researchers have criticised quantitative positivistic methods for ignoring and excluding women (e.g. Oakley 1974) and "adding" women to male knowledge, whereby the findings from research on men are generalised to women (Stanley & Wise 1993), or "malestream methods" are used to research the experiences of women (Mies 1983)" (Westermarland, 2001). Feminist research is concerned with allowing the voices of the participant to 'be heard' in an effort to see and understand the world from the position of the research subject (Abbot, Wallace & Tayler, 2005:368). "(A)cknowledging the importance of gender in social life and social research means a variety of things to feminist sociologists. Specifically, it involves defining women as the focus of analysis, recognizing the central place that men have held in most sociological analysis, and viewing gender as a crucial influence on the network of relations encompassing the research act" (Cook & Fonow, 1986).

Research that is underpinned by feminist ideology is critical of the positivist and scientific methods of most scholars and argues for alternative epistemologies and research methods (Acker et al. 1983; Harding 1986, 1987; Nielsen 1990; Nicholson 1990 in Gilbert 1994). In her articles on conducting feminist research, Gilbert (1994:90) outlines three factors that differentiate feminist research from non-feminist research:

First, feminist research debunked the myth that research done on men represented the human experience. Research that was done on men can no longer be assumed to represent women's

lives, interests, or perspectives. Feminist research generates questions and analyses from the perspective of women's experiences. Second, feminist research critiqued the idea that objectivity was possible or even desirable. Instead of attempting to be a neutral, distant researcher, feminists focused on the mutuality of the research process; inter-subjectivity not objectivity and dialogues in place of monologues became the goals. The relationship between the researcher and the researched was thereby made visible and open to debate. Furthermore, some argued that women researchers, because of their socialization as women in this society, were better able than men to conduct non-authoritarian and non-hierarchical research. Lastly, feminist research was supposed to be for women (e.g., see Monk and Hanson 1982). Feminist research was to contribute to the women's liberation movement by producing knowledge that could be used by the movement and/or the researched. 'Research was supposed to have a consciousness raising component and to have a positive impact on the subjects.' (Gilbert,1994:90)

Although this characterisation of feminist research methods gives a good outline of the intentions of feminist work it is not without its limitation and Gilbert (1994) discusses these limitations in her article. In the section below on 'positionality', I will also reflect on the limitation of the feminist methodology in my research project, albeit its many good intentions and contribution to understanding the lived experiences of women.

Similar to Gilbert's (1994) conceptualisation of a feminist epistemology, Cook and Fonow (1986) summarise it as (1) continuous reflexivity of gender relations in social life – including research, (2) consciousness-raising as a methodological tool, (3) challenging the norm of 'objectivity' in research, (4) analysing ethical implications of research and (5) the need to transform patriarch and to empower women. Feminist research "investigations occur within a sphere that has been socially lived as personal so that feminist methodology does not deny or discount the subjective but rather seeks to validate the private, emotional, interiorized, intimate world (MacKinnon, 1982 in Cook & Fonow,1986). In understanding the lived experience (personal, emotional and often contradictory) of migrant women, it would be limiting to attempt to do so using positivist and 'objective' methods of quantitative studies. It would negate the personal and emotive elements of migration, childcare and motherhood that domestic workers experience. Furthermore, the research does not attempt to present the experience of the ten Basotho migrant women as universal and acknowledges that their experience is 'situated knowledge' (Haraway,1991 in Westmarland, 2001).

Qualitative studies allow the researcher to get an 'insiders account' of the world, that is, participants could give their subjective account of their experiences as mothers, live-in domestic workers and migrants in South Africa. "Thus, research methods which overemphasize quantification force the researcher to pose structural questions about action while ignoring the subjective dimension of behaviour, as well as the contradictions between action and consciousness. Such an approach ignores the fact that women simultaneously oppose and conform to conditions that deny their freedom" (Cook & Fonow, 1986).

Qualitative research method, through semi-structured interviews, was chosen for this research study as the study seeks to explore the experiences of the participants as migrant domestic workers and as mothers to children who do not reside with them. Most feminist researchers prefer to conduct qualitative research, however this is not to say that there is no place for quantitative research in studies underpinned by feminist theories. Other scholars have cautioned against the total disregard for quantitative research in feminist studies and like Reinharz 1992 in Westmarland, (2001) have highlighted that "survey based data can be useful in looking at the prevalence and distribution of particular social problems". Quantification can be useful in providing background data. There is a dearth of data on migration and gender in the southern African region, especially with regards to its relation to childcare, motherhood, remittance and impact on households. Such quantitative research could complement the qualitative research that is conducted on gender and migration in the region and allow for more longitudinal and comparative studies on gender and migration in the region.

3.2 Selection of cases

Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling was used to select participants by only including particular categories or subgroups of the population. The semi-structured interviews were held with ten Basotho migrant women, who work as domestic workers in Pretoria. These women have at least that have one child, under the age of 18 years, that live-in

Lesotho. It was therefore necessary to do purposive sampling in selecting the participants. Purposive sampling often attempts to include particular categories or subgroups of the population...[it] selects only certain subgroups that represent theoretically meaningful variation” (Brewer & Hunter, 2006:93). Therefore, theoretical significance is more important than statistical significance in this research paper.

The women were approached to participate in the study after a preliminary interview was conducted to establish if they would be relevant for the study. To do this, basic questions were asked; such as their nationality, the type of work that they did and if they have children under the age of 18 years that live in Lesotho. The study aims to explore the experience of being a migrant domestic worker and also having children that live in your sending country. Some of the women at the park were domestic workers who are internal migrants that have their families in provinces such as Limpopo, Kwa Zulu Natal, North West and Mpumalanga. They were not included in the study because the study focuses on the issue of ‘transnational motherhood’ and cross-border migration. When I spoke to these women during fieldwork, they indicated that they have similar experiences to women from Lesotho because they also spend extended periods of time away from their children and that they would also like their stories to be documented on their experiences as domestic workers. Although this was not the focus of this study, in future research it could make a good comparative study on the conditions of domestic workers who are internal migrant and those that are cross-border migrants.

3.3 Data collection techniques

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were held in the north of Pretoria, South Africa with ten Basotho domestic worker. These interviews took place on Sunday afternoons at a park in Pretoria North. I was familiar with the area and found it easy to locate the domestic workers as I would often see them sitting there almost every weekend. Before I started the interviews I went to the park to speak to the women to build rapport and I asked them about their nationality and what work they did. Most women that were there were

from Lesotho but there were some who were South Africans. I then went back to introduce the study to them and to conduct interviews. The women were interviewed away from their place of work and during their 'off-time' which often lasted for about 4-5 hours from around 13:00 to 17:00 when they had to return to their place of work before sunset.

The interviews were held for about 45 minutes to an hour with the domestic workers at the park. I would conduct two interviews each Sunday. In semi-structured interviews, the "interviewed [participants]' viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardised interview or a questionnaire" (Flick, 2006: 149). Westermarland (2001) also points out that semi and unstructured interviews are methods widely used in feminist research as a way to allow for personal accounts of the participants. This method of data collection allows the researcher to ask questions that are related to the purpose of the research, but they also give the participant the opportunity to express their own lived experience through probing. "Epistemologically, feminist methodology rejects the assumption that maintaining a strict separation between researcher and research subject produces a more valid, objective account. One way in which feminists avoid treating their subjects as mere objects of knowledge is to allow the respondent to "talk back" to the investigator. "(Cook & Fonow, 1986: 9)

Interviewing, as a method of collecting data allows for the participants to communicate their lived experiences and perceptions, is not without its flaws. Alvesson (2002) warns against researchers having a 'romantic view on interviewing'. He argues that "interviewees may have interests other than assisting science by simply providing information. They may be politically aware and politically motivated actors. Many people have a political interest in how socially significant issues are represented" (Alvesson, 2002:113).

The questions were structured according to the six main themes of the study (see appendices 1, research schedule):

- Demographics
- Work experiences
- Decision to migrate

- Working conditions as domestic worker
- Childcare and 'transitional motherhood'
- Motherhood and migration

These interviews were recorded and there would be probing questions when I needed more information. Participants were also encouraged to ask questions and they often did at the end of the interview. The questions they asked were generally to confirm their anonymity in the research and to get assurance that this research would not affect them negatively at work.

3.4 Data analysis

The interviews were audio recorded with very little note-taking by the researcher. The recorded data was then transcribed directly after each interview. The transcribed data was analysed thematically in combination with the notes taken during the interview. A thematic analysis was conducted from which findings and conclusions of the study were drawn (Marshall, 2006: 159).

In the analysis of the data collected, the researcher has attempted to tease out how participants, as social actors, have represented themselves during the interviews with the understanding that "people are not reporting external events but producing situated accounts, drawing upon cultural resources in order to produce morally adequate accounts" (Alvesson, 2002:114). People as social actors have different identities that they bring forth in various social contexts and they also tend to communicate information and represent themselves in a manner that they view to be socially acceptable and desirable. In the beginning of the interview the participants were very measured in their answers and would need constant re-assurance that their names would not be included in the study. As the interview progressed they would appear more relaxed and start talking more openly about their children. Their position as both undocumented migrant workers as well as women working in the largely exploitative private sphere of the home was evident in the beginning of the interview; especially when I needed to re-assure them that their identity would be concealed.

3.5 Ethical Considerations and researcher's positionality

Feminists do not agree with the positivist notion of an uninvolved, neutral and value free researcher. They argue that “[i]t is also essential not to deny one’s experiences and feelings as a feminist, but to use them as part of the process of validating one’s research rather than vice versa – that is we should accept the validity of our own experience as women as the basis for feminist knowledge. The adequacy of feminism is based on the extent to which it enables us to better understand our situation as women and gives us the resources with which to emancipate ourselves” (Alvesson,2005:376).

As a researcher focusing on the issue of Lesotho migrant women that are live-in domestic workers and the experience of transnational motherhood, I believe that it is essential that I reflect on my position as a mother, a South African citizen, a middle-class educated black woman and the author of this paper.

Mother

As a mother researching on motherhood, it is important that I differentiate between the data that I collect from the participants and my own ideas about motherhood. I have attempted to highlight areas where my own voice comes in, in the research process. This is with the understanding that my account is also valid and “involvement is seen as necessary and inevitable: necessary because the researcher must and does identify with the women she is researching, and inevitable because she is a part of what is being researched – she is involved” (Alvesson,2005:369). Notwithstanding that, as the author of this paper, “reflexivity is essential - the researcher must be constantly aware of how her values, attitudes and perceptions influence the research process, from the formulation of the research questions, through the data collection stage, to the ways in which the data are analysed, explained and disseminated” (Abbot et al, 2005:369).

South African citizen

I interviewed women from Lesotho and all of them did not have a work visa to work in the country and were therefore working as undocumented migrants. Some of them were also in the country undocumented because their visitor’s visa had expired. This

brings a different power dynamic to their participation and this may influence the relationship that may develop between myself and them. As a result, it may have an impact on the type of information that the participants feel is appropriate to communicate to me during the interview. For those participants that were not documented, there was a degree of mistrusts towards me. In addition, I had to be explicit when I introduced myself that the 'interview' was not a 'job interview' and that I was not screening them for any potential employment. I noticed that most of the women that were willing to talk to me in the beginning were hoping to get a job from me "The interplay between two people with their own gender, age, professional background, personal appearance, ethnicity and so on makes a deep imprint on the account produced" (Alvesson, 2002:115). I have referred them as "Participant" in this study to conceal their identity. The participants were very concerned about their anonymity being maintained even after I went through the consent form before the interview. I had to continuously re-assure the participants that this research would not reveal their identity or have a negative effect on their work or stay in the country; at times having to read the consent form with them over again during the interview.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter will look at the data that was collected from interviews with ten Basotho women that are domestic workers in Pretoria, South Africa. The interviews were recorded and some observational notes were taken during the interview. The data was then analysed according to the themes that were identified in the research questions. The demographic profile of the study participants will be outlined to give an overview of the women that were interviewed. The analysis in this chapter will make reference to scholarly work on the various themes such as migration, motherhood and childcare. Where they are identified, gaps in scholarly work on these topics will be highlighted to make suggestions for further research on these topics.

4.1 Demographics

Ten Basotho domestic workers between the ages of 28 and 53 years were interviewed for this study. According to the findings, migrant domestic work appears to be a livelihood strategy for Basotho women regardless of age as most of the women that were interviewed started working as migrant domestic worker in their early 20s. Migrant work as a livelihood strategy for households in Lesotho is not a new phenomenon as the country has, for decades, relied on migrant work to South Africa as the main contributor to the country's GDP. Remittances from South Africa to Lesotho make up a significant contribution to the economy. It therefore follows that when men are unable to find work in the mining sectors in South Africa, the women would migrate.

Minor children

As part of the selection criterion, all the women that were interviewed have at least one child under the age of 18 years that lives in Lesotho at the time of the interviews. Considering the age of the children and the number of years that the women have been domestic workers in South Africa, most of the children's childhood experiences

took place while their mothers were domestic workers in South Africa. This has an impact on their upbringing and quality of life. The experiences of the children were not central to this study as I sought to look into migrant women's experiences and how they make sense of migration and motherhood. This was a deliberate choice to have the voices of migrant domestic workers heard – their experiences, feelings and thoughts. However more scholarly work, on how migration affects children that are left behind in migrant sending families and households, needs to be conducted. There is a dearth of narrative on the experiences of children from migrant sending families, especially in the southern African region.

Single breadwinners

Six of the women that were interviewed are widowed and are therefore left as the sole caregivers for their children. This shows how female migration is becoming an option for livelihood strategies in a family or household where men are no longer able to provide for the family. Basotho men have a long history of coming to South Africa as migrant workers in the mining industry. With the increased retrenchment of migrant mine workers, post-apartheid, it would appear that female migration is replacing male migration to South Africa. This resonates with the work done by Coplan and Thoalane (1995) and Seidman (1995) on migration from Lesotho to South Africa where they outline how there was an increased feminisation of migration from Lesotho to South Africa during the post- apartheid era.

Access to education

Globally, domestic work attracts women that do not have post-school qualifications. Domestic work is in its nature undervalued work, that attracts women, mostly poor migrant women with low levels of skills and who are easily exploitable (Bettio et al, 2006). The domestic workers that were interviewed have low educational levels and most of the participants only have primary school education (seven years of schooling) and none of them have a high school qualification or equivalent (completed 12 years of schooling).

During the interview, when they were asked about why they left school at primary level, the women cited a lack of school fees as the main reason for not proceeding to high school. Lack of access to education is one of the contributing factors that lead to women being confined to low paying and exploitative sectors such as domestic work. In a country that is reliant on remittances, 16% of GDP in 2016 of formal remittance flows, (World Bank, 2017) migrant work in general and domestic work in particular seems to be one of the most viable work options for Basotho women that were interviewed. This was further supported by their responses when they were asked about their previous work experiences in Lesotho. They indicated that domestic work in Lesotho paid less than half the wages they received in South Africa and the textile industry that employs a significant number of women in Lesotho was not preferred by Basotho women. They indicated that the wages were much lower than those of domestic work in South Africa, the machines were heavy requiring strenuous labour and that the chemicals they used in the factories affected their health badly. In addition there was very little job security as the factory owners rotated staff every third or sixth month.

In the interview, the women indicated that access to education for their children was a main contributing factor to them deciding to become migrant workers. In Lesotho basic education only became free and therefore accessible to the poor in 2010 – meaning that the women that were interviewed for this study did not have access to free basic education when they were of school-going age. In addition, basic education is only free until grade 7 in Lesotho meaning that children that cannot afford to pay school fees will not be able to proceed to high school. During the interviews, most of the participants said they wanted to afford to take their children to high school and cited this as one of their motivations for becoming migrant domestic workers. Through this narrative, they illustrated how, even though their life chances may have confined them to low-income work such as domestic work, they are using this to gain some form of agency by providing for their children's education. Migrant domestic work would hopefully offer their children better work and life opportunities than becoming domestic or mine workers in South Africa.

Childhood during migration

The children that these women left behind in Lesotho are between the ages of 4 years to 18 years. One woman has five children under the age of 18 years. This means that most of these children have experienced childhood with a mother that was away from home for extended periods of time. Some women also have older children but they were not included in the study because the focus was caregiving and mothering minor children. This is not to overlook the fact that some of the older children may still be financially dependent on the migrant women. Some of the domestic workers indicated that the money they send home to Lesotho also supports other family members, older children, siblings, parents and parents-in-law. They do not only provide for their children but also provide for the needs of the entire household where their children live and are taken care of while they are away working in South Africa.

Second/third generation migrant workers

Lesotho has a history of migrant labour to South Africa and the women that were interviewed reported that they also come from families of migrant workers, where their spouses, parents (including the parents in law) or sibling have been or are still migrant worker in South Africa; either working in the mining, farming or domestic work sector. Migration, as identified by Perbedy (2008), continues to be a livelihood strategy for most households in Lesotho; but this is becoming increasingly feminised. 43.2 percent of the population lives on less than US\$1.25 per day, while 68 percent lives on less than US\$2 per day (UNDP 2009, Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative (2011). Lesotho's economic relationship with South Africa has not changed with the decline of apartheid. The GDP of countries such as Lesotho, in the southern African region, is still largely dependent on remittances. In post-apartheid South Africa, Basotho women are increasing migrating for purposes of work making a significant contribution to remittances sent to Lesotho. This is following a significant decline in the recruitment of Basotho men in the mining industry as the recruitment policies in that industry are geared towards recruiting South African labour (see Neocosmos, 2006). As a result, households are sending more women as migrant workers to South Africa.

The existing networks of Basotho migrant workers in South Africa make it easier for Basotho women to access the labour market in South Africa. The women that were interviewed reported a history of migrant workers in their families, family members that have either worked as domestic workers, farm workers, mine workers or construction workers in South Africa. They spoke about how these existing networks in South Africa also played a vital role in facilitating their decision to seek work in South Africa.

4.2 Childcare and transnational motherhood

One of the main questions in this research explores how migrant women cope with having to take care of their employers' children when they are unable to be home to take care of their own children. All the women that were interviewed have children that live in Lesotho and they are also live-in domestic workers in South Africa –doing work that also involves taking care of their employers' children. The research seeks to explore a number of questions: How do they make sense of the contradiction of being 'transnational mothers' to their children while they are required to care ('present mothers') for their employers' children? These are the contradictions of not 'being there' (physically) for their children so they can 'be there' (provide for material needs) for them. How do migrant women make sense of it? What type of meanings do they give to the idea of 'childcare' and 'motherhood'? Do they see the performance of motherhood as being a 'present mother'? Or do they attach different meanings to motherhood? Is motherhood different for working class migrant women than it is for middle class women?

4.2.1 Childcare, migration and gendered division of reproductive labour

The ten participants have at least one child under the age of 18 years that lives in Lesotho. The ages of their children range from 4 years to 18 years. Most of the women became migrant workers when their children were less than a year old. Two participants have been migrant domestic workers in South Africa for almost 17 years and as a result their children have gone through childhood during the period where their mothers were working in a foreign country and only 'visiting' their home twice or thrice a year for a period of a month at most. This is similar to the scholarly work that

Contreras and Griffith (2012) did on Mexican transnational mothers who have gone to the US seeking work and leaving their children in Mexico.

There were some women who also had children over the age of 18 years, but for purposes of this study, which looks at minor children, they were not the main focus. Although the children over the age of 18 years may not necessarily need the type of care that minor child need; they, like other members of the household are also financially dependent on the migrant woman.

The children of the migrant women that were interviewed live in Lesotho, except for one woman whose five children staying with her aunt in SA. This not only shows how unaccommodating live-in domestic work is towards families and children of domestic workers in democratic South Africa, it also indicate how the immigration policies do not promote the principle of 'family unification' when it comes to low skilled, female migrant workers in South Africa. As was the case with Basotho men that worked in the mines of South Africa and lived in single-male hostels, domestic workers in post-apartheid South Africa live with their employers and are therefore unable to bring their children and partners to live with them. The migrant labour system in South Africa continues to separate families in Lesotho. Similarly, the conditions that migrant domestic workers from Lesotho face in contemporary South Africa mirror those that black women from the so-called Bantustans in South Africa faced during apartheid. There are stark comparisons that can be made. As was the case with black domestic workers during apartheid, they are separated from their children to take care of their employers' children, they live and work in South African undocumented and unable to bring their children with them if they so please. The dichotomies of the central and peripheral economies continue to exist– this time the 'madam' is a black South African woman and the 'maid' a migrant women from Lesotho. The 'global reproductive care chain' continues to exist post-apartheid (Cheng, 2014).

The 'global care chain', as is evident through the flow of domestic workers from Lesotho to South Africa, also create a situation for the emergence of more child-headed households in societies that send migrant women as domestic workers. The concept of the 'global care chain' (see Hothschild, 2000 and Piper, 2009) is not only a north-south phenomenon where Filipino women are migrant workers in Canada or

Mexican women are migrant workers in the US. In the southern African region, it is a south-south phenomenon where children from Lesotho and other countries such as Zimbabwe have to go through childhood without a physically present mother in order to have their migrant mothers provide for their basic need and education. It is what Hothschild, 2000 also describes as the 'care drain' and what Neocosmos (2013) illustrates, borrowing from Mamdani's concept of the 'citizen' and 'subject' (1996), that the 'subject' are no longer black South Africans but rather citizens of neighbouring countries who come to South Africa as undocumented migrant labour.

Children of migrant women that are left in Lesotho are taken care of by female relatives. This includes older sisters, daughters in law, mothers in law and mothers. Two of the women indicated that their children were taken care of by their parents in law. One of the women still had a husband in Lesotho but explained that he is not the primary caregiver and that her mother stays with her children and the husband visits the children occasionally. Two of the women also said that their children stay alone in Lesotho and do not have an adult care giver, in this case they had older sibling who are 19 years who stayed with them. In her report on the impact of internal migration on women and different class groups, Fakier (2009:23) argues that there is a continued 'domesticity' even when more women migration to seek work. By this she argues that housework is continuously relegated to women – even during periods of increased female migration. Fakier's work was on the internal migration of women from Kwa-Zulu Natal to other parts of South Africa, however her argument is relevant for this study and resonates with the findings in this study where the caring of children, in Lesotho where more women are migrating, still remains the responsibility of 'other mothers' or females in the household or community.

The gendered division of labour in migrant sending families do not change even if the primary care giver (the mother) becomes a migrant worker. As previously argued, the increased migration of women in the southern African region does not necessarily mean that women are moving away from 'feminised domesticity' - referred to as the 'continued relegation of housework to the women' (Frakier, 2010). When a woman migrates, another female in the household or extended family takes over the role of childcare – even when the father of the children remains in the country of origin. This also re-iterates the argument made by Oyewumi (2003) and Magwaza (2003) when they refer to different family and household arrangements in African societies where

'co-mothering' is a common practice. The concept of 'co-mothering' assists in showing alternative views to western notions of 'the family'. In African and other Asian society families are more complex than the western idea of the 'nuclear family'. However, this idea of 'other mothers' does not interrogate the role of men in care work and 'co-parenting' that includes males. It seems to take for granted the patriarchal divisions of labour in the household and the unpaid care work of women and girls.

Migrant domestic work in the region needs to be contextualised within the broader understanding of how black South African households deal with childcare. The discourse on childcare options for black families in South Africa is not the focus of this study, but it is outlined briefly to contextualise the 'global reproductive division of labour' between South Africa and its neighbouring countries that increasingly employ women from neighbouring countries as domestic workers. There are high levels of urbanisation in South Africa; black South African families that live in the cities no longer have access to the social capital of extended families that live in townships and rural areas. The progress made in South Africa in increasing the levels of employment for women has not been followed with policies for improved child care support for employed mothers. As a result, unpaid childcare that would otherwise be offered by grandmothers, aunts and sisters is replaced by paid (migrant) domestic work.

In the context of increased urbanisation and more women entering the labour market in South Africa, migrant women from rural areas in Lesotho, as well as women who migrate internally from rural areas in South Africa, become the 'second labour market' for South African families in the urban areas. Scholars of the impact of migration on sending and receiving countries use the concept of the 'dual labour market strategy' but it is often limited to the economic costs and benefits of the two countries. Feminist scholars argue that to understand the gendered nature of migration, the social implications and lived experiences of the process of migration must be looked at from the perspective of women and children. Children of migrant women have to survive the effects of their primary caregivers (women) selling their reproductive labour at the expense of being present caregivers to their children. Migrant domestic workers play an important role in South Africa as the providers of reproductive labour (care-giving). Ironically they sell their reproductive labour to South African families by denying it to their children as an effort to ensure that they can provide for them. They have to deal with the contradictions of not being there (physically present) for their children, so they

can be there (provide financially) for them. Similar to the argument made by Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) the concept of 'childcare' is not fixed; Basotho women are not able to perform childcare in the normative middle class manner of being both a physically present mother and a mother that is also able to provide for the material needs of their children. Similarly, children of Basotho domestic workers do not have a 'normative childhood' that middle class children with present mothers who can also provide for them have. It's a contradictory motherhood – to leave your children in order to provide for them (Contreras & Griffith, 2012).

4.2.2 Giving meaning to 'childcare'

The meaning of 'childcare' differs from society to society and is also informed by the circumstances of the family and the caregiver. The dominant discourse of 'childcare' is that of a 'present mother'. This, like many other dominant narratives on social reality, is informed by a western middle-class understanding of child care. Where a middle class caregiver (woman) cannot be a 'present mother' they are able to pay another woman to be a caregiver to her children (this is not without its contradictions and challenges that one gets from a society that still dictates that childcare is the main responsibility of the (biological) mother). Migrant women then fill the childcare gap in middle-class families which requires them to renegotiate their ideas of motherhood and childcare. As illustrated in this study migrant women have to navigate narratives of 'motherhood' and 'childcare' that are coloured by their positions in society – such as their gender, class nationality, marital status and occupation. Migrant domestic workers cannot afford to construct motherhood in narratives that promote the 'present mother' that a middle-class woman is able to – however they seem to face the same expectations of being 'present mothers'.

When asked about the meaning of childcare and also how their community in Lesotho make sense of it, the women largely cited 'providing for their children' as the main marker of good childcare. This included providing shelter and food; what was mostly emphasised during the interviews was the provision of education of their children. Despite how they rationalised their need to migrant, they also indicated that being away from their children is a painful experience. Working as a migrant woman involves

leaving your children in the care of other relatives and sometimes leaving them to take care of themselves. Although they reported that providing for their children was the most important thing for them, it also appeared like they felt as though they don't have a choice. With these emotional challenges to being a migrant mother, it is important to highlight the exploitative wages that they earn in addition to the sacrifices that they make by being away from their children. The highest paid domestic worker in the research was earning R1800 a month for working a 7-day job that starts from around 5 am and ends around 7-8pm. Migrant domestic workers have to deal with earning below-minimum wages, enduring long working hours and a 7 day working week and still see their children on 'visits' home that last for a month at most and only happen twice or thrice a year. Their sacrifices, of being away from their children to earn an income, are exacerbated by low and exploitive wages, long and slave-like working hours as well as the anxiety that comes with being an undocumented migrant worker in South Africa.

The perceptions of people in their sending communities were also explored. When asked about it one of the women responded:

"I do not know what they think, they may think that taking care of a child may be to stay with them, I also think so – but what is the use of staying with a child when you cannot assist them- looking them in their eyes all the time...it is better to take care for them, making sure that they are fed and clothed and can attend school – that is taking care of a child" (participant 1).

Some women tried to make sense of being away from their child by finding solace in that their mothers are raising their child for them,

"It does not sit well with me that I am away from my child. It is better that she is with my mother and not a stranger, but it still doesn't sit well with me. She is 15 years old, I left when she was 9 years old. I am not fine when I am separated from her." (participant 2).

Another woman shared the same views,

"it is not nice but it is better because my daughter is being raised by my mother who also raised me" (participant 3)

In the study I also asked questions about the contradictions of taking care of the employers' children, as live-in domestic workers which also denies them the opportunity to be home with your own children.

It does not sit well with me [that I am taking care of other children, while hers are in Lesotho], but there is nothing that I can do because I cannot stay at home" (participant 2).

One of the women who has five children, the youngest being 8 years old spoke about the difficulty of taking care of other children when she is unable to take care of her own children,

“ I wish it was my children I was taking care of, sometimes I mistakenly call them by my children’s names” (participant 5)

another one said,

“ I cannot do the same things for my children that I do for the children that I take care of – even when my children are younger than them” (participant 7).

One of the women was very emotional during the interview and expressed that her working conditions and being away from her children caused her to become ill and she needed to take medication to deal with her blood pressure,

“I am not good; I am not good at all. You take care of these children and then you think of your own. You end up not thinking of the children you take care of and you get sick” (participant 8)

The other paradox about taking care of other children so that they can afford to take care of their children is that these migrant women can only visit their children during the school holidays when their employer’s children need them the least. Although this allows them some time to be with their children in Lesotho, it also takes away their ability to get involved in their children’s education – such as helping them with school work or interacting with the teachers when there is a problem. Therefore, migrant domestic workers work hard to keep their children in school, but they are unable to participate in their education.

“I do not know how they are doing at school. We get home [at Lesotho] and the schools are closed, we cannot meet the teachers” (particiapant 8).

Another woman spoke about how being away from her children also affects her performance at work and her ability to take care of her employers’ children,

“Sometimes I get impatient with them, I cannot take care of a child and mine are alone” (participant 9).

With the challenges faced by migrant women that take care of other children while their children are being taken care of by ‘other mothers’ in their families, there are various ways in which they try to cope with this. The use of cell phones to communicate with their children was one of the major coping strategies that they used; when they could afford it.

"I call them when I have airtime. Sometimes it can take as long as a week before I speak to them" (participant 9).

So despite them using cell-phones to keep in touch with their children, this is still once or twice a week due to the cost of calls. How the women construct the idea of 'motherhood' is also an important contributing factor to how they cope with their situation.

4.3 motherhood and migration

The construction of motherhood and the meanings attached to 'being a mother' was one of the other major themes in this study. The performance of and meanings attached to childcare and those attached to motherhood are closely related. With this theme I look into the different constructions of motherhood and how, like childcare, the different lived realities are negotiated in the context of migrant work. In addition to how they make sense of motherhood the women interviewed were also asked about what meanings their communities attached to 'motherhood'. This was to tease out the personal and societal perception and values attached to motherhood and how it is negotiated in the context of increased female migration in Lesotho. I also asked them how they think their motherhood as migrant women is different from the motherhood of other women who stay with their children. Emphasis is placed on the 'subjective views of motherhood' (Van Dooren, 2009:20).

Most women made sense of motherhood as being able to provide for the basic needs of their children, this was a common thread that ran through the interview when they tried to rationalise their situation. However, through the interview they also indicated their desire to be mothers that live with their children and wished they didn't have to be away from them for extended periods of time in order to provide for their material needs. As is the case with migrant women from Mexico in the study by Contreras and Griffith (2012), migrant women from Lesotho have to give up the quality of life that comes with being migrant mothers so that they can provide for the needs of their children.

Participant 1 first indicated that being a mother meant providing for her children but when she was asked about perceptions held by members of her community about

motherhood she gave a response that illustrated her desire to be a mother that also lives with her children:

“I do not know what they [people in her community] think, they may think that taking care of a child may be to stay with them, I also think so – but what is the use of staying with a child when you cannot assist them- looking them in their eyes all the time...it is better to take care of them, making sure that they are fed and clothed and can attend school – that is taking care of a child”. (participant 1)

The decision to migrate and leave your children in the care of ‘other mothers’ so that you can provide for their basic needs, participant 1 said that she also tried to rationalise her being separated from her children, despite the sadness that she feels,

“You do not feel well – but you also remember that you left your children for a particular reason – so that you can work and they can get clothes and food and get educated”. (participant 1)

Participant 2 indicated that taking care of her children meant providing for them and says that her community also shares the same views on childcare and motherhood,

“where I live my community encourages you to look for work, they do not want people to stay home and suffer. They encourage you to look for work so that you can educate your children. They do not look down on women who are migrant workers”. (Participant 2)

Although the community’s views and acceptance of the women migrating in order to provide for their children may make it easier for her to deal with the challenges of mothering from a distance, she also indicated that being a single mother also has the added challenges to being a migrant mother because there is no one to help her financially with raising her daughter.

Participant 3 also faces similar challenges of being a single migrant mother however both women highlighted the need for financial assistance and did not mention the need for the children’s fathers to help with other forms of childcare when they are away on work.

“My motherhood is not nice; maybe other women enjoy it because they have people to help them. I am a single parent, I am a woman who does not have a man, and there is no financial assistance”. (participant 3)

She also mentioned that her community does not make a distinction between migrant mothers and those that stay with their children. This shows how communities in Lesotho are accepting of the process of migration of women and accommodate it in their conceptualisation of ‘motherhood’.

“where I stay they do not differentiate between a mother that stays at home or a migrant mother, what is important is how you carry yourself and how you run your household” (participant 3)

Some women felt that staying with their children was more important and one of the women that I interviewed indicated that she is a better mother even as a migrant woman compare to those women that stay home and are unable to provide for the needs of their children. An affirmation to her decision to migrate,

“Those mothers in Lesotho that stay with their children cannot provide like I can – even if they stay with their children” (participant 6)

One of the women didn't feel like she was a mother because she did not stay with her children. This illustrates the desire to be present mothers despite her rationalising her migration and the community valuing the benefits of migration for the financial provision of their children,

“when I am not with them it is as if I am not a mother to them. I only hear about their needs over the phone, when they are sick and about their school requirements”. (participant 8)

Unlike some of the participants she didn't find solace in providing for her children and for her motherhood meant being a present mother.

Participant 9 describes motherhood as being with her children and also expressed deep sadness and ill-health suffered from not being with her children

“I am happy when I am with my children, I can give them money but I still miss them. It is better when they are in front of me and we are together.” (participant 9)

She finds being a migrant mother as emotionally challenging,

“it is lonely and boring, you are always missing them and carrying them in your heart...we think about our children, it causes a lot of stress. At the end of the month you wonder if the money you have sent is enough...it stresses you and makes you sick. (participant 9)

Her healthy is affected badly by how she deals with being a migrant mother and a domestic worker that cares of other children,

“I am not good, I am not good at all. You take care of these children and then you think of your own. You end up not thinking about the children you take care of and you get sick”. (participant 9)

When asked about how she feels about being a migrant domestic worker, she responded

“I have accepted that this is my job, it does not sit well with me that I have left my children, but I need to accept it, I have accepted.” (participant 9)

The migrant women are embracing their ability to provide for their children and they attempt to use that to compensate for the pain of being separated from them for extended periods of time. When they try to cope with the longing to be with their children they are reminded of their children's need for care as they care for their employer's children. They attempt to construct alternative meanings of motherhood in an environment where they are constantly reminded of the need to be 'present mothers'. Their hired motherhood for their employers' children requires them to construct a positive view of the migrant mother (to their children) while they are constantly reminded of the value of being present mothers to them. This is a constant contradiction that needs to be renegotiated. At times it is bearable for them – when they are reminded of the financial benefit of migrating and at times the longing to be with their children causes them to be ill. Migrant mothers cannot mother in the conventional way, economic deterioration and family survival requires a different motherhood (Cheng, 2004:136).

4.4 Work experiences

Live-in domestic work and motherhood

The ten migrant women that were interviewed are live-in domestic workers in the northern suburbs of Pretoria, South Africa. This was not a criterion that the researcher followed but from collecting data it appeared that Basotho women that were interviewed preferred live-in domestic work. (A 'live-in' domestic worker is one who resides with the employer – either living in the same house or in a 'backroom' or staff quarters in the same premises.) This was also true for most of the Basotho domestic workers that were at the parks where the participants were recruited from. When conducting preliminary interviews to determine eligibility, all of the women that were from Lesotho that I spoke to were live in domestic workers. This is contrary to the research work that I conducted with migrant women from Zimbabwe who seemed to prefer to be 'live-out' domestic work and also work for more than one employer and do 'piece jobs' for different employers during certain days of the week (Moeletsi, 2011).

Live-in domestic work brings with it certain dynamics to how the domestic workers deal with motherhood. When a Mosotho woman migrates to work about 700km away from her household and children and becomes a live-in domestic worker she relinquishes certain life options and maximises on others. Although the conditions of live-in domestic work were not explored for purposes of this study, the manner in which the women expressed their meaning of motherhood (to be a providing mother), also provides an understanding of why they would all choose and prefer live-in domestic work.

The participants indicated that migrant domestic work was not their first choice. Some expressed a desire to be self-employed as seamstresses and informal traders or be able to work in factories in Lesotho provided that jobs were available and the wages were comparable to those in South Africa. Domestic work is an opportunity for Basotho women to maximise their income and have access to more money to send home to their children. In addition, live-in domestic work brings with it particular dynamics to the experiences of migration and motherhood. (For purposes of this study, 'live-out domestic work' is understood as when a domestic worker has her own accommodation, often a backroom in the nearby township or informal settlement, and they commute daily between their place of work and the place they would have rented out.) As live-in domestic workers, Basotho women do not have to deal with the added costs of renting out a backroom, buying food, electricity and covering the travel costs of commuting between work and their place of residence every day. With an average monthly salary of R1500, domestic workers would not be able to send as much money back home as they would if they were live-out domestic workers. They would not be able to be 'providing mothers' and therefore perform their construction of what a 'good mother' is to their children. Being a live-in domestic worker increases their capacity to not just be mothers, but to be good mothers who can provide for the needs of their children.

Live-in domestic works also bring with it added challenges to domestic workers. Firstly, they are more prone to being exploited by their employers since they are 'always at work' and there are no clear working hours unlike live-out domestic workers that report for duty at a certain time and have to leave to their place of work afterwards. Secondly domestic workers cannot consider having their children live with or visit them whilst they are at work since they reside in their employers' homes with her/his children and

spouse. It further alienates them from the possibilities of being 'present mothers' even if it's to children who are visitors or who chose to follow their mothers and also reside in the country undocumented. By choosing to become live-in domestic workers, Basotho migrant women that were interviewed illustrate how they give meaning to motherhood during the experiences of (undocumented) migration; motherhood that sacrifices having their own space to maximise on the exploitative salaries that they get as live-in domestic workers.

Additional research will need to be conducted on the dynamics of live-in and live-out domestic work and how it affects the agency and work experience of domestic workers. For example, it creates different dynamics with the relationship with the employer, the type of work they do and the relationship with their children and how often they can see their family (this is discussed in detail in the section on work below). It also has an impact on the 'invisibility' of domestic workers who are also undocumented. They are confined to the private households of their employers and it makes them less detectable by law enforcement officials.

A lifetime of domestic work

The participants have worked as domestic workers in South Africa for periods ranging from six to seventeen (17) years and they do not seem to have intentions to do other work than to be migrant domestic workers. Only one of the women interviewed had less than six years of work experience as a migrant domestic worker and had only worked for two years. Eight of the women interviewed have worked in Lesotho, either as domestic work, working in clothing factories or as informal traders selling vegetables before choosing to work in the country. Two of the women had their own small businesses as dress-makers before choosing to become migrant domestic workers in South Africa. Becoming a domestic worker in South Africa was not a first option for most women, however once they got a job in that area they seem to remain in domestic worker for as long as seventeen years. This is despite the fact that this type of work keeps them away from their children for extended periods of time. It illustrates how limited the alternatives of work for women in Lesotho is and how female migrant domestic work is becoming an important livelihood strategy for households in Lesotho. There is currently a generation of children in Lesotho that will grow up in

families where they have 'providing mothers' that are also 'visiting mothers'. This highlights the importance of this research project and other similar scholarly work that looks into the meanings and experiences of motherhood in an increasing feminised migration process.

4.5 Decisions to migrate

Becoming a migrant domestic worker was not the first choice for the women that were interviewed. Most of them worked as casual labourers at the clothing factories in Lesotho. The clothing industry is one of the biggest industries in Lesotho. In 2000 the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA) was signed and Lesotho was one of the 36 African countries that have duty-free access to US markets. The clothing industry is the largest private employer; the civil service being the highest employer with 40 000 employees. According to the Lesotho Textile Exporters Association 85% of employees in the clothing industry are women. This is an industry, that when it is operating optimally and adopts good labour practice, could be an important employer of women in Lesotho that may have an opportunity to be both providing and present mothers. The developments within this industry have a direct impact on the migration of women and their choices to become domestic workers – an alternative and preferred, it appears, form of employment for Basotho women with low skills. The decision to migrate was a financial choice for Basotho domestic workers.

Lack of alternative employment in Lesotho

Basotho women that were interviewed reported that they did not work for long periods of time at these factories and some respondents cited reasons such as working conditions with heavy machinery and the health hazards from the chemical used to treat fabric, especially in denim manufacturing factories. Some of the women also indicated that there was very little job security at the clothing factories where they worked. They would be employed for two to six months at a time and then they would be laid off and a new group of workers employed. This was for a salary of about R500 a month. The participants indicated that there was a 'waiting period' of about a few months until they could get employed at the factories again. Although becoming a

migrant domestic worker, away from your children, is not an easy decision to make – it offers better wages for them, more than they would make in their country of origin with the skills that they have.

Some of the women also tried to enter the space of informal trading and selling vegetables, brooms and hats; while others were seamstresses. This, they said, was not viable for them as most clients would take their goods on credit and would not pay them back. Before choosing to become migrant domestic workers some women worked as domestic workers in Lesotho but they left their jobs because they were only paid about R700 a month. The meaning that domestic workers give to motherhood correlates with how they make sense of the decision to migrate. The decision to migrate was to get maximum financial gain, so was the decision to become a live-in domestic worker. Furthermore, the meaning of motherhood in an increasingly feminised migration system is one where financial provision and sacrifices made to maximise financial income are very important.

4.5.1 Breaking the cycle of migrant work through education

The decision to migrate was often associated with significant changes in the household that required additional income. The household strategy theory, as discussed by Osihi (2003) is supported by the findings -- that the decision to migrate was not taken to just maximise the life opportunities of the migrant women but also that of her family. In most instances migration was either preceded by a spouse passing away or losing their jobs - some returning as mine workers from South Africa. The women also affirmed the argument made by Coplan and Thoalane (1995) and Seidman (1995) that there has been a decrease in male migration to mining sectors and a replacement by female migration to South Africa in the post-apartheid era. This has fed into the increased 'feminisation of migration' to South Africa from the neighbouring countries.

Female migrant work and child education

Migrant work would be considered by Basotho women when their children have to start with high school and remittances earned from migration is used as a way for the family, especially children of migrant women, to get better life opportunities. In Lesotho, education is only free in primary school (until the 7th grade) and the cost of high school education was cited as one of the main reasons for Basotho women to seek work in SA. These are some of the material conditions that women negotiate as part of their decision to migrate. Most women who were interviewed did not have the secondary education that they were trying to afford their children and this appeared as the main motivation for women to seek migrant domestic work. By giving their children the opportunity to access secondary education, these domestic workers were also allowing their children better life opportunities than they do -- and hopefully not to become migrant workers in South Africa.

4.5.2 Agents and networks as gateways to employment

The Basotho women that were interviewed had at least two family members that have been migrant workers in South Africa. They used these networks, including members of their community who have worked in South Africa to get their first jobs. Most of them got into contact with their potential employer whilst they were still in Lesotho as this was facilitated by a family member or friend in the country. The way in which Basotho women first come into the country also makes it impossible for them to bring their children with them. If they do not have a job whilst they are still in Lesotho, they have to navigate the precarious condition of work seeking at an agent where they live with a number of women in a room as they await to be picked by a potential employer. Two of the women indicated that they first came to the country and found work through an 'agent'.

"We arrive there and live there and people come there to look for domestic workers. We pay the agent when we get employment, we pay them R400. This is deducted from our first salary. I stayed there for one day before getting my employment." (participant 4).

One of the other women also came through an agent but she needed to pay R100 upfront in addition to the payment that the agent would receive upon her employment.

“I did not know anyone here, my friend referred me to an agent in Mabopane [township north of Pretoria] and said they would help me find employment, they deducted R400 from my first salary. When you get there you pay R100 to stay there.” (participant 9)

Agents are used in addition to existing social networks to gain access to employment. Basotho women are mostly live-in domestic work and cannot accommodate first time migrant work seekers while they are seeking employment. Therefore 'agents' become a useful alternative, especially for women who come to the country before securing employment when they were still in the host country. This makes it more difficult for domestic workers to bring their children with and consider other ways of mothering during the process of migration for domestic work.

4.6 Working conditions as domestic workers

The interview also explored the current working conditions of the migrant women. This was to explore how their condition of work as live-in domestic workers share their experiences and meanings they give to motherhood. When asked about their working hours, most of them laughed and said that their working day ends when their work is done or when the family that they work for has gone to bed.

“You do not charge per hour because you are at the house full time. You will determine for yourself and you will stop when you are tired. Working hours do not matter.” (participant 4)

All of the women interviewed said they work 7 days a week from about 6am until late in the evening – they work for an average of about 10 hours a day; with salaries range from about R1500 (being the average salary) to about R1800 a month. (Only one of the 10 women chose not to disclose her salary.) Their work includes cleaning the house, doing the laundry (washing and ironing), cooking and taking care of children. The salaries that these migrant women get (about R5 per hour) are much lower than the minimum wage that is set by the Department of Labour which was R10.59 per hour. This is the type of exploitation that Basotho domestic workers have to endure in order to provide for their children and live out their meaning of a 'good mother' – one who will endure exploitation while they are separated from their children for extended periods of time in order to provide for their material needs.

Domestic work is, alongside farm work, one of the most exploitative industries in South Africa and also one of the few industries that are excluded from the new South African Minimum Wage Dispensation. Despite an effort to increase minimum wages

in South Africa, this excludes domestic workers and poor women, from rural areas and neighbouring countries, will continue to face exploitative labour in order to provide for their children. Migrant women are made to work seven days a week for half of the minimum wage that is legislated for a 40-hour week. There are minimum wages for the domestic sector and labour laws that protect workers, despite their migration status. However, this has not been enough to protect the rights of migrant domestic workers who continue to face exploitative labour practices that resemble the racialised apartheid domestic work industry. In post-apartheid South Africa, the exploitative employer is also the black South African exploiting migrant women from countries such as Lesotho. The mother who is separated from her children, and needs to negotiate alternative meanings of motherhood, is not the black South Africa woman from the Bantustan who works in white South Africa; it is now a migrant women from neighbouring countries such as Lesotho who has to leave her children in order to provide for them.

The condition of work for domestic workers are so limited and exploitative that even if a migrant woman may have saved up money to go home to see her children more often than she does, the employers do not afford domestic work sufficient time off to see her family. The participants indicated that they only get leave or time-off one weekend in a month when they are allowed to visit friends, for those that have family or friends nearby, or to run their errands. They only get to go home two to four times a year to visit their families in Lesotho. This is for a week or two at a time, often during the South African public school holidays (April, June, September and December). However, this is not always the case as some women only get about three days to visit home in Lesotho. When asked if she gets time off over Easter holidays, for example, one woman answered:

“(laughs)...no they will not allow it, if you force to go, they will give you the weekend only. Sometimes if you are given 3 days to go home during Easter, they release you in the evening and you spend those days on the road. When you get home, it is time to start travelling back. You do not have time with your children. On your day off, when you have to leave (the place of work) for Lesotho, you must clean first and you end up leaving in the evening and half your day is gone.”(participant 4)

The working conditions of migrant domestic workers are not only exploitative, but they also deny them the opportunity to see their children – even when they have ‘time-off’. A return trip between Maseru, Lesotho and Pretoria, South Africa costs about R700 –

this is almost half their monthly wages. Even if the women save up to visit their children, the weekend that they get off once a month is not enough to make that 700km one-way trip to Maseru, Lesotho.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

The research set out to investigate how ten Basotho migrant women, who are domestic workers in South Africa, give meaning to their experience as mother in the context of migrant labour. This was explored through semi-structured interviews that were guided by thematic questions exploring issues of migrant work, motherhood, childcare and transnationalism. The research was embedded within the feminist theoretical frameworks and tools of analysis. It emphasises women's lived experiences with migration and meanings of motherhood and childcare that they create within the context of transnationalism.

The interviews took place outside the place of work for the migrant women. They were interviewed over weekends, mostly Sunday afternoons, when they were taking a break at the local parks in the northern suburbs of Pretoria. The interview was recorded and the participants' identity was concealed to protect the identity of the women – who were all undocumented migrant workers in South Africa. The recorded interviews were transcribed and thematic analysis was conducted to tease out the main trends from the 10 interviews. The five themes of analysis, that also followed the themes in the interview schedule covered (1) demographics, (2) motherhood and childcare, (3) conditions of work (4) decisions to migrate and (5) nationalism and immigration policies. The theme on 'nationalism' was added on after the process of data analysis when the researcher made the link to the patriarchal nature of the current immigration regime and how it showed continuities to previous apartheid policies that sought to keep migrant women out and only encourage the migration of single men from the region.

Migrant mother, providing mother

According to the findings, migrant women from Lesotho that were interviewed give meaning to motherhood and childcare by emphasising their need to be 'providing mothers' more than they need to be 'present mothers'. They recognise the need to be, and communicate their desires to be both 'providing mothers' and 'present mothers' but they are unable to do both due to lack of work opportunities in Lesotho and the limitations that come with being an undocumented live-in domestic worker.

The households and communities that they come from also recognise the need for female migration and affirm the role of a 'providing mother' as opposed to a 'present mother' who is unable to provide for the needs of her children. This however does not mean that they do not value being 'present mothers' but that they feel they are not in a privileged position (as poor women and also as undocumented, migrant live-in workers) to aspire to be present mothers. They do not have the 'luxuries' that middle-class women enjoy – being a present mother who can also provide financially for their children.

There is support and affirmation of transnational motherhood among migrant women and their sending communities, but there is also deep sadness and loneliness that Basotho migrant domestic workers have to grapple with. This is exacerbated by when they have to take care of their employers' children knowing that they have left their children to the care of female relative or sometimes the children are left alone in Lesotho to take care of themselves. This emotional drain of being a migrant mother has caused some women to become physically ill. For these migrant women, being away from their children, to take care of their employers' children, is a paradoxical 'choice' that they have very little agency in negotiating. Firstly because of their low education levels and inability to seek alternative employment (even if they so desire) but also because of the limited job opportunities that exist in Lesotho.

The concept of 'co-mothering' as outlined by black feminists such as Magwaza (2003) and Oyewumi (2003) is appropriate in investigating how non-European, poor and working class migrant women can make sense of their lived realities. This is however not to downplay the challenges that a migrant mother faces. Those of longing to be with their children, the emotional stresses that being a migrant mother brings and the guilt of raising other people's children in order to feed and educate your own. The social capital of 'other mothers' that exists in African communities is however empowering in that it enables women to migrate and seek work and try to escape the poverty that would otherwise exist should they choose not to migrate.

Lesotho's continued dependence on migration

Migration continues to be a survival strategy for households in Lesotho - as it was during apartheid. This pattern is however becoming more feminised. It requires policy makers in the southern African region, especially within South Africa to consider the future of Lesotho and other poor neighbouring countries. Will these countries continue to supply cheap labour to South Africa (as mineworkers, domestic workers and farmworkers) and what is the impact of the future economic growth of those countries when second and third generations are left with limited life-chance of escaping migrant labour to South Africa? Furthermore, as more women are migrating, undocumented and for extended periods of time, it is important to look at the impact that this has on children that are left behind. As shown in this research, some of the children are forced into child-headed households as their mothers migrate to take care of their employers' children. This raises a moral and social question to South Africa as it benefits from the paid reproductive labour of migrant women from the region, while it denies their children of basic parental care.

In order to break the cycle of dependence on cheap labour migration for Lesotho's economy, a regional solution is required where South Africa's economic development policies and goals extend beyond its borders and considers sustainable economic development for the southern African region. The mining and farming sector in South Africa has benefited from the exploitation of cheap labour from Lesotho and a concerted effort from these industries and the South African government is needed to give women from Lesotho viable alternatives to work and not be confined to exploitative migrant domestic work. Furthermore, providing for their children and also being physically present to care for them should not be a distant luxury for women in Lesotho. Firstly, migration policies in South Africa should consider the family and the impact migration has on sending households and communities. Secondly, economies of sending countries should also be able to sustain the employment needs of its citizens and this should be both a domestic and regional goal. South Africa, as a leading economy in the southern African region and one that has its economy built on an exploitative migration system, owes it to the people of Lesotho, for example, to consider regional economic development solutions.

The findings also indicate that an economic bias to migration studies would not unearth the social impact that the migration of women has on the sending societies and households. Further research on the social impact on female migration needs to be conducted – research that looks at their experiences and how gender colours the migration experience. The private lives and working conditions of migrant women, especially as domestic workers, need to be made public interest – to be politicised and interrogated as other working conditions of (male) migrant workers are.

The aspect on childcare was touched on briefly in as far as it highlights our understanding on how migrant women make sense of motherhood. Migration and childcare will need to be researched further as the conditions, voices and experiences of children in migrant sending households are silenced. Issues of increased access for women in the migrant labour market (women who migrate without their children) needs to be interrogated.

This research has also highlighted the challenges of immigration policies in South Africa and also how democratic South Africa imagines their nation-state as one that only accommodates (single) low skilled migrant from the southern African region. Unlike Basotho domestic workers that were interviewed, women only stand a chance of documented migration to South Africa if they are highly skilled. All the women that were interviewed reported that they are not documented workers but are on visitors' visas. This renders them more vulnerable to exploitation by both their employers and corrupt law enforcement officials. There is a need to develop immigration policies that are responsive to the increased feminisation of migration.

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APPENDIX

Table 1: Demographic feature of participants

Participant	Age	Highest educational level (grade)	Marital status	No. of children & age of minor children	No. of years as domestic worker in SA	Monthly salary
1	53	4	Married	5 children, 17 yrs.	12	Not disclosed
2	34	10	Widowed	1 child, 17 yrs.	8	R1500
3	42	7	Single	1 child, 14 yrs.	17	R1600
4	28	7	Married	1 child, 10yrs.	3	R1500
5	39	4	Widowed	5 children, all between 8-18yrs.	17	R1500
6	43	8	Widowed	3 children, 4, 12 & 14yrs.	4	R1800
7	37	7	Married	3 children, 16 & 13yrs.	9	R1500
8	51	Not disclosed	Widowed	3 children, 17yrs.	17	R1800
9	34	Not disclosed	Widowed	2 children, 18 & 8 yrs.	17	R1500
10	40	6	Widowed	3 children, 18, 15 & 10yrs.	10	R1800