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The Same, but Different:
The Everyday Lives of Female and Male Domestic Workers in Lagos, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This current study explores the everyday lives of male and female domestic workers in Lagos, Nigeria. Drawing on narrative interviews with 63 domestic workers, in-depth semi-structured interviews with 12 employers and fiction-based research, it aims to understand the terrains of struggle and negotiation in the places people work, live and move through on a daily basis. This thesis is also concerned with the ways in which intersecting identities of gender, age, social class and ethnicity shape the experiences of workers. To do this, a framework of everyday life is used, drawing on the work of Susie Scott (2009) that consists of rituals and routines (specific practices), social order (rules that organise these practices) and challenging the taken-for-granted (norm-breaking acts). The three empirical chapters are explored in terms of these three themes.

The first one explores how female live-in domestic workers' everyday experiences of control and resistance are shaped by discourses around perceptions of their sexual availability - which is heavily impacted by the fact that they work and reside within the private space of the home. This is followed by discussions on how female live-outs who are mothers challenge the notion that paid domestic workers should only have obligations to the employing household and not to their own households, but what living out then means for these women – long daily commutes and balancing their paid domestic work with their unpaid domestic responsibilities. The final Chapter analyses how male domestic workers challenge the construction of their masculinity by employers as simultaneously safe and dangerous. Combined, they enable me to make sense of everyday life in paid domestic work and why it is important to do so.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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GLOSSARY OF LOCAL WORDS

Agberos   Another name for Area Boys (see below)

Amebos   Gossips; someone who is nosey

Area Boys   Loosely organised gangs of street children and teenagers, composed mostly of males, who roam the streets of Lagos

Boys'-quarters   Servants quarter in the colonial era now used to house male domestic workers

Bukka   Local Nigerian restaurants, also known as a local joint, often found on the side of the road. It is usually a place where everybody knows you can get good food

Come-and-go   Live-out, part-time housegirls

Danfo   Commercial mini-buses

Edikang Ikong   A famous vegetable soup known from South-South Nigeria; can also be spelt *edikaikong*

Face Me, I Face You   Low-cost tenement buildings where tiny rooms literally face one other

Fanico   Washermen, and a few women, who wash laundry by hand in the Banco River in Abidjan in Côte d'Ivoire

Island   Slang for the neighbourhoods of Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Lekki

Iya   Yoruba for mother

Keke Maruwa   Auto-rickshaw/tuk-tuk

Lagosian   People who are identified with Lagos State, either culturally, historically, legally or residentially

Ma   Taken here to refer to the female employer

Madam   Taken here to refer to the female employer

Maiguard   Hausa for security guard

Mainland	Slang for neighbourhoods including Agege, Ikeja, Oshodi and Surulere
Mbodi	Bride fattening, practiced in South-South Nigeria
Nollywood	Nigerian film industry
Oga	Taken here to refer to the male employer
Okada	Commercial motorcycle
Oyinbo	Foreigner
Pidgin	Broken English
Sa	Taken here to refer to the male employer
Shebi	As in; you understand
Wahala	Trouble
Waka	Walk
Wrapper	Female garment
Yapa	To go
Ye-Ye	Useless

Currency Conversion

As of December 2012[1]

United States Dollar to Nigerian Naira

USD 1.00 = NGN 156

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[1] The Nigerian Naira has recently devaluated to USD$1 = NGN300 (as of February 2016). The 2012 conversion rates have been used to reflect the period in which this study was conducted, which also reflects the realities workers were facing at that particular time in Nigeria's economic history

'*Lagos can kill*
Lagos will maim
but Lagos will only spit upon you
what you aim unto yourself or can't run away from.'

-Niji Akanni (2002:138)

1

Exploring Everyday Life in Paid Domestic Work

> Everyday life is connected to places where women and men live, work, consume, relate to others, forge identities, cope with or challenge routine, habit and establish codes of conduct. (Valou and Lykogianni, 2006)

> …research on contemporary urbanisation has focused on the headlines of global cities as control centres of the world economies, and social and economic shockwaves that have ravaged through cities. Less attention has been paid to the changing nature of everyday life in the wake of global changes. (Jarvis et al., 2001)

As the quotes above illustrate, my thesis is about the everyday lives of urban residents, but not just any – I am interested in that of paid domestic workers in Lagos, a labour force that, while somewhat 'hidden' in public policy terms, is a significant part of the ordinary activities of daily life in Nigeria. I go into more detail on the concept of everyday life and how I make sense of it in the next chapter, but through an analysis of daily rituals and routines, the rules that organise these activities and instances of norm-breaking, I provide a specific local exploration of what it means to be a low-paid domestic worker in the country. Specifically, I aim to understand the terrains of struggle and negotiation in the places people work, live and move through on a daily basis – particularly in a context such as domestic service, where unequal power relationships are deeply embedded within these everyday situations. My thesis is also concerned with the ways in which intersecting identities of gender, age, social class and ethnicity shape the experiences of workers. I contend that taking into account domestic employees diverse experiences will contribute to understandings of everyday life – the 'here and now' - in

cities of the Global South – one that consists of a range of power systems, structures and forms of resistance that are constantly shifting and changing.

In order to do this, my thesis aims to address the following question: *How do domestic workers experience everyday life both within and beyond their workplace?* Sub-questions to further help in answering this main one include:

1. *What are domestic workers' everyday experiences inside and outside their workplace?*
2. *What roles do employers' play in organising domestic workers' everyday lives?*
3. *In what ways are experiences of everyday life as domestic workers linked to social divisions, such as gender, social class, age and ethnicity; and other aspects such as living arrangements, parental status and longevity in employment?*
4. *How do domestic workers uphold or challenge assumptions about their everyday lives?*

Having detailed the main questions that my thesis will address, in the rest of this introductory chapter I set out to discuss the objectives and contribution of my research. First, as I aim to contribute to scholarship on paid domestic work through my focus on the everyday lives of domestic employees in Lagos, I find it necessary to situate my study within this larger body of literature.

1.1   A Brief Overview of Paid Domestic Work

Around the world, the social significance and demand for paid domestic work has grown enormously. This is interesting, considering a prediction made in the 1970s that this occupation would cease to exist in the modern era (on the 'end' of paid domestic work see Chaplin, 1978; Coser, 1973; Levenstein, 1962; McBride, 1976 who saw domestic service as 'pre-modern').

Instead of this expectation, as demonstrated by recent research on the subject, it has become an important source of employment for an estimated 52.6 million people globally – possibly up to 100 million due to domestic work often being hidden and unregistered (ILO, 2010:1). With the occupation's resurgence in many developed countries over the past 20 years, feminist scholars writing on reproductive labour have become concerned with the ways in which women's unpaid work in the home has been commodified (Anderson, 2000; Cox, 2006; Hochschild, 2000; Lutz, 2011; Sarti, 2008).

Changes in labour markets worldwide have resulted in a transition towards a service economy and the creation of an environment in which more casual and insecure work has been an integral part of women's increased labour force participation. Particularly in developed countries, where there is a declining public provisioning of care and a rapidly ageing population, 'care deficits' (Zimmerman et al., 2006:15) have emerged as women struggle to combine their paid work and unpaid domestic responsibilities. Coupled with men's supposed unwillingness to increase their contribution to unpaid reproductive

labour, concerns about work-life balance - the need to reconcile the competing demands of paid work and unpaid work (Dyer et al., 2011) – have emerged.

To ease these burdens, middle and upper-class households have adopted the use of 'commoditised care work' (Hochschild, 2000). As scholars have also pointed, this labour tends to be deeply racialised, gendered and classed, as it is provided by ethnic minorities (Rollins, 1985), migrant women (Anderson, 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2000) and, increasingly, migrant men (Bartolomei, 2010; Gallo and Scrinzi, 2015; Kilkey, 2010a) in return for wages. One reason for the large number of migrants employed is the tremendous global inequalities between the North and the South, as well as between Western and Eastern Europe. As a result, many people lacking better opportunities migrate in search of work. However, being migrants – and seen as subordinate - they are said to be disposed to work as domestic and/or care workers in the receiving countries (Sarti, 2008:89). This makes commodified social reproductive labour, as an occupation, highly shaped by inequalities, including gender, class, ethnicity, and 'race' and migrant status.

Domestic work is an ideal setting to study these differences as recognised by Marxist-Feminists (see Gaitskell et al., 1983:6 on the 'triple oppression' of class, race and gender in South Africa) and sociologists in the 1980s and 1990s (Bakan and Stasiulius, 1997; Glenn, 1986; Romero, 1992; Silvera, 1983). It was argued within sociological theories that the personal subordination embedded in employer-employee relations was grounded in race relations (Colen, 1986, 1989; Dill, 1988, 1994; Rollins, 1985), with racial

preferences rationalised on the basis of 'natural' or 'cultural' qualities of specific ethnic minority and immigrant women. As this research has shown, this occupation's location within the private domain of the home, the intimacy involved in the labour relations and the type of caring and affective work performed, manifests itself in different forms of exploitation (Cock, 1989; Romero, 1992; Rollins, 1985).

An increasing number of studies also explore men in this occupation (e.g. Bujra, 2000; Chopra, 2006; Cox, 2010, 2013a; Hansen, 1989; Kilkey, 2010a, 2010b; Kilkey and Perrons, 2010; Manalansan, 2006; *Men and Masculinities* [2010] special issue on male domestic workers; Ray, 2000). These studies have explored male migrant domestic workers performing domestic tasks traditionally associated with women in the households, such as Maria Bartolomei's (2010) study on Congolese men from rural areas working as cooks in the country and Ester Gallo and Fransesca Scrinzi (2015) on male migrant care-givers in Italy. There is also a growing body of research that highlights male domestic workers doing activities typically done by men in homes, such as household and garden maintenance and repair. This includes work on 'hired hubbies' in New Zealand (Cox, 2010, 2013a); male Polish builders in London (Datta, 2008); 'migrant handymen' in UK (Kilkey, 2010a, 201b; Kilkey et al., 2013); and Mexican immigrant gardeners in the USA (Ramirez and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2009).

These studies also reflect the fact that domestic work has not always been a female occupation - Raffaella Sarti (2010) acknowledged that, historically, domestic service was a highly masculinised sphere in European societies. Trends of 'masculinisation' of

domestic work can also be seen in sixteenth century Venice where Dennis Romano (1991:676) found 'an aristocratic style of servant keeping' in which male servants displayed a noble lifestyle (see also Cox, 2006 and Meldrum, 2000 on England; Dudden, 1983; Galenson, 1978; Grubb, 1992 on the USA).

They also indicate that in some places around the world it still is not. In India, for example, men dominated domestic work for much of the twentieth century (Mehta, 1960:42) and in some situations still do (Chopra, 2006; Qayum and Ray, 2010; Ray, 2000). Keletso Atkins (1986) and Charles van Onselen (1982) have also written on the *Amawasha* – Zulu washermen – who had a virtual monopoly of clothes-washing in South Africa between 1850 and 1914.

Indeed, as domestic work was one of the earliest occupations through which African men were incorporated into the colonial economy as house-, laundry- and kitchen-'boys', as well as cooks and washermen, male domestic workers have also been historically quite common in many African countries (Bujra, 2000 for Tanzania and Hansen, 1986, 1990 for Zambia). There have also been studies of men in these occupations in other African countries after independence, such as Raymond Deniel (1991) on 'boy cuisiners' in Abidjan during the 1980s and Maria Rita Bartolomei (2010) on migrant 'boy cuisiners' from Burkina Faso in the same city. Similarly, the practice of using men to wash can be found in Côte d'Ivoire, where *fanico* – the name given to washermen and a few women – make a living washing laundry by hand in the Banco River in Abidjan (Watchtower Online). Even in Latin America, where domestic service is an overwhelmingly feminine

activity, men have long been employed as gardeners, watchmen or chauffeurs (Thomson, 2009:282).

This current literature on domestic work considers the present and shifting terrain of gender in domestic service by including men in their analyses, while acknowledging that, in some circumstances, they never left. They also indicate that while men are often excluded from being part of the process of changing and confronting gender equality – solely because they are male – the range of different positions men occupy means they can also be vulnerable, albeit in more subtle ways than women.

Men's presence in domestic work has profound implications for understandings of gender identity and inequality by, for example, challenging the assumption that only women do domestic or care work. Recognising this does not mean ignoring gender divisions that exist in domestic service or issues of inequality; but instead, as Martin Manalansan (2006:239) has argued, it 'can help nuance and complicate our understanding of the idea and process of "gendering" in the domestic industry'.

This brief overview of paid domestic work across different spaces and time enables me to situate my thesis within this rich body of literature and highlight my contribution to scholarship in this area.

1.2 Research Objectives, Rationale and Original Contribution

As previously iterated, my main goal is to explore the everyday life and experiences of domestic workers in Lagos and how identities intersect to structure this. I do this by focusing on three main aspects of workers' lives – in line with Susie Scott's (2009) framework for making sense of everyday life. Scott (2009) identifies three characteristics of everyday life. These are (i) *rituals and routines*, which refer to descriptions of specific practices, codes of behaviour, habits and other examples that serve to illustrate the theoretical arguments; (ii) *social order*, referring to the underlying structures of rules and expectations that organise these practices; and (iii) *challenging taken-for-granted assumptions*, which refers to the instances of norm-breaking acts.

Based on this framework – which I discuss in the next Chapter – my first objective is to explore some of the significant aspects concerning domestic workers' daily lives. This includes activities all workers' undertake, such as cooking, cleaning or caring; as well as those that are unique to other domestic employees – for example, the commuting of male and female live-out domestic workers. Experiences, I argue, that come about due to intersections between categories of constructed differences of class, gender, age and ethnicity. This enables me to illustrate how, through so-called 'ordinary' activities, social life is organised in paid domestic work and what this says about the wider picture of everyday life for marginalised groups in urban areas.

My second main aim is to gain insight into the roles of employers in shaping domestic workers' everyday lives. This is particularly important in this occupation, as employers continue to hold a significant amount of power over domestic employees' job opportunities and experiences, which often manifests itself in different forms of exploitation. As critical race scholars have pointed out, complex theories of inequality require an analysis of how privilege functions. In looking at employers' strategies of control, I aim to bring to fore the central role their preferences, perceptions and prejudices play in how this sector is organised and, thus, how domestic workers experience everyday life.

Finally, I want to understand the everyday attempts made by the workers themselves to challenge the various forms of employer control they experience. This allows me to examine the complex ways workers maintain some degree of autonomy - the ability to make decisions - over their own lives. Further, it reveals the shifting and changing nature between employer control and worker resistance.

By looking at paid domestic work in Lagos, and trying to address the three main objectives, my thesis also makes the following two contributions. First, my attention to domestic workers' everyday lives in Lagos aims to take into account the point of view and particular interests of low-income domestic employees in Nigeria. This provides a contextualised analysis of this occupation in a country where it is currently under-researched. Second, I attempt to build a case for diversity in discussions on everyday life in this sector, by taking an intersectional approach to understand the ways gender, age,

social class and ethnicity intersect to structure workers' lives and individual experiences.

Overall, through an analysis of the repeated and routine practices of day-to-day life of domestic workers, I argue in this thesis that it is possible to begin to explore the richness and variety of the everyday context in which ordinary women and men live out their lives. I will now look at these objectives in more detail.

1.2.1 Objective One: 'Ordinary' Activities among Paid Domestic Workers in Urban Nigerian Homes

Everyday life may be examined on a variety of scales and through many different lenses. However, I approach it from the node of the home – a space, which Alison Blunt (2005:506) argues is 'shaped by everyday practices, lived experiences, social relations, memories and emotions' (see Chapter 2 for more detail). My decision to focus on the home is largely inspired by feminist economist and feminist political economist debates about the value of social reproductive labour, which tends to take place in the private sphere, and the equal importance of reproduction and production in the society (Elias, 2010; Elson, 1991; Folbre, 1994; Hosykns and Rai, 2007).

As I reveal in Chapter 2, I see paid domestic work as one component of social reproduction - an 'array of activities and relationships involved in maintaining people both on a daily basis and intergenerationally' (Glenn, 1992:4). I am interested in exploring these activities within and beyond the household - such as workers' daily routines of sleeping, waking up and domestic tasks, as well as their experiences as

parents, partners and friends with unpaid caring duties, relationships and needs - to understand how social life is organised within this occupation in Nigeria.

Paid domestic work is defined in this thesis as involving people who are recruited from outside the employing household and paid by wage, or 'in kind' (accommodation and meals), to perform social reproductive labour in and around the home. These individuals may be male or female, either living in or out, and/or working full-time or part-time as househelps, nannies, drivers, *maiguards* (a Hausa colloquial term for 'gatemen'), washermen and cooks. With reference to a domestic employer, this is the individual – whether male or female - who has admitted into their household a person performing domestic work; this need not necessarily be the one who is paying the domestic worker's wages.

The home is an important focus for my analysis of daily activities in paid domestic work for three reasons. First, it is regarded as a key site of social reproduction concerns and responsibilities, such as feeding, clothing and caring of children or the elderly. Second, as discussed earlier, women - and increasingly men - from middle-class and wealthy families are both facing greater demands on their paid work and unpaid care responsibilities, which has led to the increased commodification of domestic labour within the household. The employment of paid domestic workers in this space enables me to examine the home as a workplace and the interconnections between the dynamics of the 'public' workplace and the 'private' home.

Third, by design of its location – the employer's home - this is an occupation where low-class, middle-class and wealthy Nigerians frequently encounter each other. It is also characterised by intimate and distant encounters that leads to the creation of boundaries to separate employers from their employees, while at the same time ensuring the household and its members are maintained daily. As previously mentioned, scholars have pointed out that this labour is increasingly defined by markers of gender, class, 'race'/ethnicity and nationality (Anderson, 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2000). These differences create a hierarchy of inequalities on which social order in the home is based on, and which consequently shape workers' daily activities in this occupation.

1.2.2 Objective Two: Everyday Life and Employer Control

Moving on to my second objective, a central argument of this thesis is that employers, through their preferences and prejudices, play a key role in shaping domestic workers' everyday lives. Employers' accounts of the most suitable worker for the job, such as men being preferred as domestic cooks for their 'professionalism', will be examined to analyse the ways in which these categorical assumptions play a central role in how this sector is organised.

I illustrate how existing preferences prescribe certain traits to particular groups of people and how these are usually reflected in recruitment practices; for example, men from Northern Nigeria tend to work as *maiguards*, while young women from the 'Calabar'

region in the South are employed as housegirls.[2] These stereotypes act to create hierarchies of domestic workers by determining who is naturally suitable for paid domestic work, as well as to justify the most appropriate ways of control, such as restricting female live-in domestic workers' interactions within the home to minimal movement outside the home to ensure they do not get into trouble (see Chapter 6). It also leads to distinctions between the worker and employer, such as divisions of middle-class/elites versus low-income, whereby employer voice is privileged over domestic workers, such as employers being able to hire and fire as they please.

By focusing on wealthy households In Lagos, in a context where employers and employees often have similar racial backgrounds, I illustrate how everyday life is shaped by the constructions of class, gender, age and ethnic differences in privileged households.

1.2.3 Objective Three: Everyday Resistance of Domestic Workers

Finally, while taking a 'vulnerability approach' is useful insofar as it establishes the situations workers are in, which can help in demands for improved rights and the establishment of legal norms for domestic workers (see for example, Pande, 2012, 2014 on the spatial exclusion of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon). However, a sole focus on employer control leads to a focus only on domestic workers as victims. It is, therefore, necessary to see domestic workers not as passive objects, but active beings challenging

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[2] While Calabar is the Capital city of Cross Rivers States in Southeastern Nigeria, Nigerians also use the term 'Calabar' to described indigenes of both Cross Rivers and Akwa Ibom States – as until 1987 Akwa Ibom was a part of Cross River State (Vande, 2012).

oppression. To do so, I draw on the concept of 'everyday resistance' (Scott, 1985) to explore how workers in this occupation challenge employer control. As will be detailed in Chapter 2, James Scott (1985) made visible the small resistances, such as failing to obey the smallest commands, used by the oppressed as a way to control their daily lives in the face of authority.

My thesis aims to get an understanding of the many challenges confronting domestic workers as they attempt to work and, sometimes live, in their employer's home, and the solutions they routinely find in order to overcome daily dilemmas. I analyse the ways in which workers endeavour to manage their paid work (e.g. better pay, shorter working hours and days off), as well as other areas that are significant to them, such as their unpaid domestic work on a daily basis. In doing this, I am suggesting that the economic and social participation of domestic workers should not be studied – or addressed – in isolation from one another.

However, due to their strictly regulated working environment and lack of recognition in society, workers end up adopting complex practices in order to 'get by' (Datta et al., 2007:28). Workers' actions - such as the houseboys who refuse to wash women's underwear - may not necessarily lead to a change in the overall structure of domestic work, but acknowledge the restrictions they face and their lack of choices in their efforts to make a living and survive on a daily basis as domestic workers in Lagos.

Moreover, given the diversity of domestic workers and their experiences – which are cross-cut by gender, class, age and ethnicity – it is inevitable that workers will have different experiences and responses to said experiences. Take the case of live-out mothers, who will be the focus of Chapter 7. Having children in Lagos often means they have to juggle their paid domestic work with their own unpaid domestic responsibilities. Yet, due to their low incomes and long working hours, they often address these concerns by either using informal unpaid care via family or neighbours, or leaving children at home alone during the day.

On the other hand, there are those young, single, female live-in domestic workers who, like their live-out counterparts, also have low wages and work long hours – although, in most cases, wages are even lower and hours longer. Their daily experiences are characterised by isolation within the employing household and a higher susceptibility to abuse and exploitation. Their responses to their own situation, as will be detailed in Chapter 6, are more passive, such as dawdling when sent out, or trying to combine errands with visiting friends or relatives; but they can also be active, such as living out in order to have more control over their lives.

Overall, by studying the specific experiences faced by domestic workers, my thesis unravels the dynamics of this occupation in Nigerian households, and suggests that issues of control (by employers), resistance (by domestic workers attempting to minimise these controls) and contextual factors, such as gender, class, age and ethnicity, which shape these employer-employee relations – are at the core of everyday life in this occupation.

To summarise, I hope to add an empirically-informed analysis to the study of everyday life of domestic workers in urban areas by exploring the ways in which men and women in this occupation get through their daily lives, particularly when the majority of their experience of the city is within the interior spaces of the home of wealthier employers. In looking at the everyday life of paid domestic workers in Lagos, my thesis aims to make two contributions to scholarship on domestic service. First, I want to provide a regional focus by taking into account the point of view and particular interests of low-income workers in the Global South that migrate internally to take up jobs in urban areas. Second, I want to illustrate that domestic workers are not a homogenous category: they differ on the basis of gender, age, ethnic background, family status among other things, which leads to different experiences.

1.2.4 Contribution One: A Focus on Paid Domestic Work in Nigeria

As detailed above, there is a rich body of research on migrant domestic workers, particularly those in Western Europe, North America and the Middle East. However, considering the significance of paid domestic work in the developing world – where between 4 and 10 per cent of people are engaged in this form of employment, compared with between 1 and 2.5 per cent in the Global North (ILO, 2010:6) – it is important to also gain greater empirical knowledge on the occupation that addresses the ways in which domestic workers in the Global South themselves experience life on a daily basis. This is particularly pertinent in the context of Nigeria, where the occupation has been the focus of a rather small range of in-depth studies, compared with others parts of the African

continent (see, for example, Bujra, 2000 for Tanzania; Cock, 1989 for South Africa; and Hansen, 1986, 1990 for Zambia).

While referring to a 'Southern' perspective on paid domestic work might seem perverse in the era of globalisation, in order to move towards a holistic and critical analysis of this occupation on a global scale, there is a need to adopt a lens that takes into account the point of view and particular interests of the Global South. Linda Peake and Martina Rieker (2013) have raised similar arguments in relation to cities, as well as Geraldine Pratt (2013:1922) on 'the invisibility of gender and the Global South in much of recent urban theory'. A 'Southern' discourse on paid domestic work will enable me to properly contextualise and place in a historical perspective the specific process or set of processes that influence this occupation at the local level. For example, it would enable me to capture specific issues, such as rising rates of poverty and unemployment, internal migration and informalisation of labour in structuring this employment. It will also allow me to analyse the locally specific issues, such as gender and age, that shapes the daily life of domestic workers in Lagos.

Situating the 'local' within the larger transnational field of paid domestic work, as I do in this study, suggests that, while there are similar challenges faced by workers who migrate internally for domestic work to those faced by workers who migrate internationally for domestic work, there are also unique challenges they face, such as age being equated with maturity and experience in this study, which can lead to higher wages earned by older workers. These domestic labour relations can also differ considerably across local

contexts due to differences in legislation, welfare systems and established gendered and cultural norms (see also Ray and Qayum, 2009 in the Indian context).

However, in spite of the specific way domestic service has developed in Nigeria and how it manifests itself today, the similarities in the nature and status of domestic work internationally make it possible for me to connect the stories of these men and women to the larger body of research on paid domestic work. For example, there has been scholarship in the context of the work international migrant workers take up, revealing the transnational nature of this occupation, such as the 'new international division of reproductive labour' (Parreñas, 2000), 'the global commodification of reproductive labour' (Anderson, 2000), 'global care chains' (Hochschild, 2000), as well as 'transnational motherhood' (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997) and 'mothering from a distance' (Parreñas, 2001).

Within these settings, Saskia Sassen (2010) observes that the tendency for domestic work to become migrants' work is especially prevalent in global cities, where migrants increasingly fill low-wage service jobs. Sassen (2010:11) argues that the growing demand for female professionals in global cities has led to the creation of 'the professional household without a "wife"' as households 'have to function like clockwork because the professionals have to function like clockwork'. As such, migrants become 'strategic infrastructure-maintenance workers' for advanced sectors in global cities (ibid:11).

This argument in a Global North context could also be extended to cities in the Global South. For instance, as illustrated in Chapter 5 one of the major reasons given by female employers as to why they hire domestic workers is to better manage their paid work with their domestic responsibilities. Here, men and women from rural and poorer urban areas migrate to more prosperous urban centres to take up work in richer households. This is not unique to my research, as several studies from different parts of the world have shown (e.g. Hansen, 1989; Moya, 2007; Sanjek and Colen, 1990), similar situations exist in different developing cities through the regional mobility of domestic workers - as is the case in Nitya Rao's (2011) study on the migration of young adolescent girls from Katon village in Jharkand to Delhi, India.

1.2.5 Contribution Two: Intersecting Identities within Paid Domestic Work

As I reveal in this thesis, while gender is one of the essential hierarchies in organising paid domestic work, it is also necessary to look at other axes of inequality. In Nigeria, social class – a person's position in the economy, in distribution of wealth, income and poverty, as well as in the distribution of power and authority - is a major axis of division between employers and workers. Employers usually belong to the middle/elite class and workers are often found in the poorer segments of society. Paid domestic work, however, is also further organised along the lines of other identities, such as age – life stages of an individual such as childhood, adulthood or old age - which is quite a salient issue in shaping workers' experiences. This reveals the local-specific categories of difference that

intersect with each other to shape experiences.

The concept of intersectionality is vital in understanding the ways in which a diverse range of axes of differentiation and power, such as class, 'race' and gender, interact (Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Crenshaw, 1989, 1991; Yuval-Davis, 2006, 2012). As discussed in more detail in the next chapter, the concept is derived from critiques women of colour in the US and UK made in the 1970s and 1980s about 'overly homogenous political discourse in which all the women are white and all the blacks are men' (Ferree, 2008:84). It was popularised by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) to illustrate how black women experience oppression at the point where their 'race', gender and class meet. Intersectionality enables me to examine how different identities interact to shape the type of domination workers may experience, but also domestic workers' response to such controls.

In my study, I focus mainly on the axes of gender, class, age and ethnicity. I do not suggest that these are the only hierarchical dimensions of inequality that matter in paid domestic work – religion may also carry more significance– but they are given priority in this study for a number of reasons, as outlined below. In terms of my understanding of the concepts, I see these axes of difference as intersecting 'systems of domination that affect access to power and privileges, influence social relationships, construct meanings and shape people's everyday experiences' (Chow, 1996:xix).

1.2.5.1   Differences Among Paid Domestic Workers

While it is the case that most studies on paid domestic work deal with issues concerning female domestic workers - probably because 83 per cent of domestic workers are female (ILO, 2010) - my study examines the everyday experiences of men and women in this occupation. This is to illustrate the heterogeneity and complexity of this occupation, while problematising a popular misconception that domestic service is largely synonymous with women. In addition to providing an in-depth analysis on 'female' sectors of cooking, cleaning and caring, and 'male' sectors of driving, guarding and gardening, my focus on feminised and masculinised domestic labour enables me to examine social constructions prescribing which men and women are suitable for certain domestic service occupations.

For instance, while both men and women are found doing 'female jobs' (tasks traditionally associated with women and the home), they are not interchangeable as only men are found doing 'men's work' (tasks traditionally associated with men and the home). Bringing men into the discussion also enables me to illustrate the clear gender distinctions created and maintained between men and women in this occupation. For instance, owing to their low-class status, all domestic workers have similar experiences, such as unpredictable working hours and job insecurity. However, as illustrated in Chapter 8, men also have a higher ranking and more privileges and resources to assert themselves in this occupation compared with women.

In including men in this study, I am also aware that they may experience power (e.g. in relation to a partner) and powerlessness (e.g. in relation to an employer) at the same time (see also Karkara et al., 2005). 'Masculinity' (Connell, 1987), namely 'the culture-specific ideas, roles and behaviours that men are supposed to live up to' (Esplen, 2006:2), helps draw attention to the many ways of being a man. This concept enables me to keep two things in mind when addressing male domestic workers.

First, there are hierarchies among men. 'Hegemonic masculinities', associated with dominance and power (Cornwall, 1997:11), are located at the top. 'Subordinated' masculinities (Connell, 1995:164), often linked to poverty and marginalisation of a social class, are at the bottom. Second, men's use of, and access to, power depends on their 'race', ethnicity, class and sexual orientation (Connell, 1995; Reid and Walker, 2005; Whitehead, 2002). Thus, not all men have power, which makes 'hegemonic masculinity' oppressive for those men who do not conform to the social expectations of masculinity (Esplen, 2006:2). Moreover, even when men are subordinated, some can be more marginalised than others, such as drivers and houseboys in my study – with the latter seen as even less than a man due to their closer association with domestic tasks traditionally done by women. Thus, my thesis aims to recognise the range of men's experience in this low-income occupation that is often seen as 'women's work'.

This is particularly important because paid work shapes how men think about themselves, how others may judge them and how they relate to other men and women; it is thus important in defining, maintaining and challenging men's masculine identities. In the

context of work, Tim Carrigan et al. (1985:594) argue that 'hegemonic' masculinity reinforces the construction of certain types of work as men's or women's work, or as more or less masculine.

While both forms of labour show that domestic service is a site where different types of masculinities and femininities are produced and negotiated, these are also modified by factors, such as social class, age and ethnicity, which further shape workers' experiences. Looking at age in the context of domestic workers' lives, for instance, reveals how in the analysis of hierarchies in paid domestic service workers have distinctive experiences, needs and concerns at different stages of their lives.

I found that female workers between the ages of 18 and 21 were the most vulnerable to exploitation in relation to their work load, working hours, earnings and days off. I also found the dialectics of gender and age to be especially noticeable in live-in situations, with employers preferring younger women, who in turn might be subjected to atypical and long working hours, be denied any access to informal social networks or family and experience additional threats such as sexual abuse. On the other hand, older workers tend to experience slightly better working conditions. In some households they can dictate the conditions of their work in terms of what they will or will not do, or garner some form of respect from younger employers. This occurs because in Nigeria, irrespective of gender and social class, older people tend to garner more respect as a result of their age. Thus, age can also be seen as a status attribute in this occupation.

Including age in my analysis on male and female adult domestic workers experiences also contributes to the existing, albeit small, studies on paid domestic work in the country (Nnorom and Kunnuji, 2008; Okafor, 2009; Oloko, 1992), which tend to discuss this occupation in relation to child and adolescent domestic workers. For example, Emeka Okafor (2009) explored the use of adolescent domestic workers aged between 12 and 15 in Ibadan in Southwestern Nigeria to examine their mode of recruitment, the nature of their work as well the impact of such work on them. Similarly, Motunrayo Ariyo (2006) explored the demand for, and utilisation of, househelps between 9 and 18 years old in Lagos – also in the Southwest. Notwithstanding the importance of focusing on children, who are extremely vulnerable in this occupation, by examining the experiences of adult domestic workers – defined here as those aged 18 years or more – I am able to analyse how experiences may evolve across time and circumstances. Furthermore, it acknowledges that many children remain in domestic work well beyond the age of 18. As it is, by asking about life stories prior to domestic work, it emerged that some worked as domestic workers from childhood, providing insight into the experiences of younger domestic workers.

Similarly, ethnicity enables me to analyse how experiences may also differ. As discussed in Chapter 5, employers have a preference for domestic workers with some ethnic groups seen as more naturally suited to perform certain domestic tasks, due to characteristics such as their perceived level of cleanliness or honesty. Bearing in mind that employers have perceptions of the most suitable ethnic group for the job, this leads to different experiences on and off the job – even within the same occupation. In Chapter 6, for

instance, I look at the experiences of female live-ins, and how gender, age and ethnicity intersect to affect perceptions of sexual availability, whereby women between the ages of 18 and 30, as well as those from the 'Calabar' region are said to be the most dangerous.

This reveals that while all domestic workers are in some way subject to discrimination and exploitation, other factors, such as their gender and age are *differences that make a difference* in the ways in which men and women experience this sector. My thesis, therefore, aims to highlight the very complex nature of paid domestic work, which is not only classed and gendered, but also rooted within age and ethnic differences. In choosing to look at the multiple identities male and female domestic workers have, my aim is not to show that one group of domestic worker is more victimised or privileged than the other, but to reveal meaningful distinctions and similarities in experiences. This is to ensure that problems that are unique to particular groups of men and women receive adequate attention.

As will be revealed in my empirical chapters, I also attempt to create a space which fully sheds light on this rather heterogeneous sector – involving full-time and part-time work, work inside and outdoor and live-in/live-out arrangements, as well different marital and parental status. I also build on this argument through my findings, which suggest that there is a need to consider distinct motivations for joining domestic service and recruitment methods to study domestic workers' everyday lives, as well as factors such as the length of time working for an employer.

1.3   Outline/Structure of Thesis

Throughout the next chapters, I discuss the everyday lives of paid domestic workers in Lagos, Nigeria. The current chapter provided the research objectives and contributions. In Chapter 2, *Understanding Everyday Life in Paid Domestic Work*, I draw on scholarship on everyday life - including the space of the home as a workplace and practices of control and resistance - as well as the concept of intersectionality. I develop a theoretical framework for exploring intersecting identities and the everyday lives of paid domestic workers in the spaces they work, and oftentimes, live in. By engaging with these bodies of literature, I aim to contribute to a feminist and intersectional analysis of everyday life as paid domestic workers in urban areas. Chapter 3, *Methodological Reflections*, discusses the methods adopted to explore the everyday life of domestic employees in Lagos, including selecting and accessing respondents and key challenges I faced in conducting this research.

Chapter 4, *Contextualising Paid Domestic Work in Nigeria*, provides the context of this occupation in Nigeria, highlighting the socio-economic, legal and policy context of domestic work in the country in order to understand the structures that operate to produce and reproduce inequalities that domestic workers may face. This discussion on the local context of domestic work will be linked more broadly to wider global debates on domestic work, specifically the ILO's Decent Work for Domestic Workers Agenda. This chapter also includes discussions on the extent of migration for domestic work from other parts of Nigeria, as well as data on earnings – both within the occupation and in the larger

urban economy. Drawing on some of my empirical findings, Chapter 5, *Paid Domestic Work in Lagos*, goes further to explore reasons for becoming a domestic worker and people's routes into the occupation.

Integrating findings from employer and employee interviews, secondary data, such as personal columns from social media websites, Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are the three main empirical chapters of my thesis. These respective chapters focus on female live-ins (Chapter 6), female live-outs that are mothers (Chapter 7) and male live-in and live-out domestic workers (Chapter 8) to explore what everyday life means for these category of workers.

Chapter 6, *Sexualisation in the Everyday Lives of Female Live-in Domestic Workers*, examines the particular issues faced by female domestic workers who live and work in the private, intimate and unregulated home. It specifically addresses the issue of what happens when the private home meets the public workplace and does this by focusing on the perceptions of low-class women as sexually available, and how this leads to control of all aspects of workers' lives. It looks specifically at issues such as the control of labour, movement and body, including sexual abuse, as well as specific forms of resistance around employer control

Following on from that, Chapter 7, *Being a Working Mother: Everyday Lives of Female Live-Out Domestic Workers,* uses the case of working mothers to explore the tensions between employers who would prefer their workers to be childless and employees who

are trying to balance their paid domestic work with their unpaid domestic responsibilities. This enables me to highlight how the terrain of struggles and negotiation in domestic work is not static, and changes based on situations.

Chapter 8, *Masculinity in the Everyday Lives of Male Domestic Workers*, further investigates why intersections and diversity within the domestic workforce matters and what the important similarities and differences amongst workers are in relation to their everyday life. It also looks at how employers further act to construct status difference with domestic workers when they are male, and how male domestic workers themselves challenge, support or subvert the ways in which hierarchies interact to shape their everyday experiences.

In Chapter 9, *Concluding Thoughts*, I summarise and discuss the main findings and themes that emerge in the research, with a view to the empirical and theoretical implications of these findings. Additionally, some areas for further research that emerged during the course of the present research are indicated.

2

Understanding Everyday Life in Paid Domestic Work

Having outlined my main research questions and objectives, this chapter, which details my conceptual framework, enables me to develop the tools to help in exploring how paid domestic workers in Lagos experience everyday life. I begin the chapter by briefly detailing my understanding of everyday life and the lens through which I interpret it in paid domestic work – drawing on Susie Scott's (2009) framework for making sense of everyday life.

To reiterate, Scott (2009) identifies three characteristics of everyday life. These are (i) *rituals and routines*, which refer to descriptions of specific practices, codes of behaviour, habits and other examples that serve to illustrate the theoretical arguments; (ii) *social order*, referring to the underlying structures of rules and expectations that organise these practices; and (iii) *challenging taken-for-granted assumptions*, which refers to the instances of norm-breaking acts. Framing my interpretation in this way, as detailed in Figure 2.1 below enables me to explore some of the significant aspects concerning domestic workers' everyday lives, such as the control they experience from an employer and the forms of agency they engage in that directly contests such controls.

Figure 2.1 A Conceptual Framework to Make Sense of Everyday Life in Paid Domestic Work

In what ways are experiences of everyday life linked to social divisions?
Intersectionality

What are domestic workers everyday experiences inside and outside their workplace?

Rituals and Routines

What roles do employers play in organising domestic workers' everyday lives?

Social Order

How do domestic workers uphold or challenge assumptions about their everyday life?

Challenging taken-for-granted assumptions

Source: Author's Own (2016)

As I give particular attention throughout this thesis to the manner in which social identities are played out, I draw on the concept of intersectionality to examine how daily experiences are shaped by multiple intersecting social identities, such as gender, class, age and ethnicity. Moreover, in looking at these features of everyday life, I focus mainly on the space of the home, as this is where a lot of the practices of everyday play out in this occupation. This also allows me to also engage with feminist debates on the binaries between the private (i.e. the home) and public spheres (i.e. outside the home) (e.g. Folbre, 1994; Fraser, 2009). I highlight themes from this body of work that are vital for illuminating my thesis' main concerns with paid domestic workers, such as social

reproduction and its commodification and the home as a workplace to discuss how domestic workers can reconfigure understandings of the public-private divide.

The three main empirical chapters (on sexual availability and female live-ins; on female live-out mothers juggling work and care; and on masculinity and male domestic workers) are organised around these three corresponding themes of ritual and routines, social order and challenges, in order to unpack some of the features of everyday life for different types of domestic workers. While these three empirical chapters can be read independently, and in any order, there is a logical progression, beginning with the most private and heavily monitored experiences of female live-ins to the less restricted lives of male domestic workers.

2.1   Theorising Everyday Life

> The everyday has tended to be associated with the mundane, the routine and the hidden or at least unnoticed. (Pink, 2012:5)

Everyday life is a rather elusive concept with a long history (de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991) which has no clear boundaries. It is also quite difficult to identify purely because it 'seems to be everywhere, yet nowhere' (Sim, 2015:111; see also Felski, 2000; Highmore, 2002a; Sheringham, 2006). However - as the quote from Sarah Pink (2012) above indicates - central to everyday life's definition are its mundane, ordinary, taken-for-granted and routine qualities.

These 'mundane' qualities can sometimes take more negative connotations, where everyday life is seen as the residue leftover after various specialised activities (Lefebvre, 1991). Thus, everyday life is also distinguished from the exceptional moment: the battle, the catastrophe, the extraordinary deed. This association of the everyday with the ordinary often involves assumptions about gender, and particularly women's relationship to the modern world (Felski, 2000) - making women the quintessential representatives of everyday life; to be specific, the victims of the quotidian (Lefebvre, 1987:10; Featherstone, 1992:165).

Such a view of the everyday life as negative – as something to overcome (Favret, 2005; Felski, 2000) – was critiqued by a number of feminist scholars during the 1990s and 2000s. They observed the ways in which theories on everyday life tended to exclude or undermine the perspectives and experiences of women, along with the working classes and youth (Felski, 2000:80; Langbauer, 1992; Sim, 2015:109), and how it also failed to consider questions of difference sufficiently, such as the ways in which gender and class can impact on daily experiences (Favret, 2005; Felski, 2000; Highmore, 2002b).

My understanding of the concept is inspired by these feminist critiques that see the everyday not as a problem, but as a source of value (Felski, 2000; see also Highmore, 2004). Dorothy Smith (1987), for instance, describes everyday life as the realm through which dominant discourses and ideologies may be challenged (see also Sim, 2000:81). The everyday can also be a site of potential resistance, as my findings on domestic workers' everyday resistance reveals. Indeed, everyday life is often presumed to be

mundane, familiar and unremarkable, but these practices are not unimportant and trivial (Pink, 2012:14; Scott, 2009:1). Instead, they could reveal something vital about the 'wider picture' (Scott, 2009:1), such as who can and cannot move and how this 'both reflects and reinforces power' (Massey, 1994:149-150). An example of this is the restricted mobility of female live-ins in Chapter 6 who are isolated and exploited; or the female live-outs in Chapter 7, who, relative to female live-ins have increased mobility as domestic workers, but are constrained as mothers due to their caring responsibilities.

Thus, in making sense of everyday life, I account for *the terrains of struggle and negotiation between domestic workers and employers in the spaces they work, sometimes live in, and move through on a daily basis.* Moreover, I acknowledge the unequal power relationships embedded in these mundane and repetitive activities. To do this, I draw from the work of Susie Scott (2009), whose book *Making Sense of Everyday Life* looks at seven substantive topics on everyday life – emotions, home, time, eating, health, shopping and leisure – and identifies three key characteristics of everyday life.

These are *rituals and routines*, designed to 'make the familiar strange' (Scott, 2009:4) and encourage analytical thinking about how the everyday world is performed, (re)produced and experienced. *Social order* which enables an understanding of why people engage in rule-following behaviour much of the time, and how this creates a sense of social order and continuity. Finally, *challenges* refer to rule-breaking acts and reactions it evokes help in understanding who is seen as deviant or conformist, which values are important and how they are sustained (ibid:7). I will now discuss in more

detail these three key theoretical perspectives, beginning with rituals and routines, and how they help me address my research questions.

2.1.1 Rituals and Routines

First, interpreting everyday life involves making the familiar strange by looking more objectively at phenomena that would otherwise be thought of as unremarkable, such as mundane conversations and decisions about what to eat. This entails bracketing out any prior assumptions about what is 'normal, natural and inevitable' (Scott, 2009:4). Referred to as *rituals and routines*, this looks at how decisions are made, how routines are created and how rules are followed or broken.

Rituals, which can also be understood as repetition (e.g. that which happens 'day after day'), are one way by which to organise the world (Felski, 2000:21; see also Silverston on television and everyday life) and for people to make sense of their environment and stave off the threat of chaos. While acts of repetition, such as sleeping and eating, are often seen as crucial to everyday life, as explained earlier it is also a 'great problem' (Lefebvre, 1987:10), because it is fundamentally at odds with the modern drive towards progress and accumulation. Thus, repetition is seen as the counter force to progression. This is also where the everyday's association with women is most pertinent. Women are so persistently linked to repetition, mainly because they are primarily responsible for the repetitive tasks of social reproduction: cleaning, preparing meals, caring for children. Yet, while much paid work is equally repetitive, only the domestic sphere is deemed to exist outside the dynamic of history and change (ibid:19).

Moving to routine, or what Rita Felski (2000) in her writings on everyday life refers to as habit, this is very closely linked to repetition by the concept of familiarity that ties them together. Habit is the epitome of everydayness – it is repetitive, automatic, distracted and involuntary. It is argued that without repeating habits, there would not be impulse and innovation. Instead, there would be chaos and stress. Thus, routine is used 'to bring order and control to lives that may otherwise seem entirely determined by the contingencies of context' (Highmore, 2004:307). Furthermore, while routines can be 'dictated from above' (ibid:307), individuals are said to be able to establish their own daily routines to give rhythm and predictability to their lives, such as the routines of getting out of bed, getting dressed and washing (ibid:307).

Bearing in mind these understandings of rituals and routines, allows me to explore the sets of rules, norms or conventions employed across different contexts in paid domestic work and what this says about the organisation of social life in this occupation. Specifically, it enables me to analyse the 'ordinary' practices and activities domestic workers engage in, such as cooking, cleaning or commuting that make up their everyday lives. However, as these rituals and routines are often embedded in relations of subordination in the employer-employee hierarchy this makes social order quite crucial in my study.

2.1.2 Social Order

Making sense of everyday life also requires searching for underlying rules and routines that organise these daily rituals and routines. Referred to as *social* order, it means digging deeper to examine the types of structure that are found in small-scale practices: the norms, conventions and habits that make social behaviour appear orderly. This entails asking questions, such as 'Why do we have rules for different situations, how were they established, and why do we (most of us, most of the time) follow them?' (Scott, 2009:5). Social order provides the framework within which people interact with each other; and through the focus on daily interactions (Goffman, 1956 on the presentation of self in everyday life), it becomes possible to get specific, concrete examples of what happens when people communicate with one other.

The process of interaction especially intrigued Erving Goffman (1956), who stressed the importance of studying the small, unassuming behaviours of everyday life (i.e. the micro level) in order to understand the larger underlying pattern of structure of society (i.e. the macro level). As such, small, everyday instances of interaction shape the social world and the way in which people not only live but experience large-scale social systems and institutions.

As social order is the way in which the rules of everyday life are set, this particular characteristic enables me to explore how difference is created and maintained in this occupation. As I explain later on in this chapter, existing literature on paid domestic work

already points to a number of ways in which this already happens mainly through

employer control. As such, when looking at social order I will be exploring the ways in

which employers maintain order in their homes, mainly through their perceptions of

domestic workers which are used to justify any exploitative strategies of control.

2.1.3 Challenging the taken-for-granted

Everyday life is also about people's resistance to social norms and rules. This requires

looking at how social norms are upheld and instances of norm-breaking, as these reveal

the underlying values and assumptions that have been challenged. Rule-breaking acts,

according to Scott (2009), are significant not only in terms of their implications for the

individual (losing face, feeling ashamed, making amends), but also in terms of the social

reactions they evoke. Furthermore, some social rules only become visible when they are

broken, because they are so implicit, such as misjudging a dress code or addressing

someone too informally. Other rules are more explicitly acknowledged, but become more

visible when broken, for example the noisy neighbour who plays music late at night.

To address that in the context of my thesis, I will be considering the many ways that

domestic workers challenge some of the taken-for-granted assumptions in their everyday

lives, such as the constructions of their identities as low-class and dirty - which shape

their daily rituals and routines. As I am interested in everyday resistance, and its

relationship to power and domination, I draw from the work of James Scott (1985) and

his 'everyday resistance' to understand how domestic workers are not merely passive

recipients of control and what they do to alleviate their subordination against the everyday that confines them to the home or poorly paid labour.

The empirical chapters on female live-ins, female live-outs and male domestic workers in this thesis are explored in terms of these three themes. Combined, they enable me to make sense of everyday life in paid domestic work and why it is important to do so. In Chapter 6, I explore how the private space of the home becomes a public workplace for female live-ins and how this is shaped by interactions and discourses (e.g. social order) around perceptions of their sexuality as rampant and uncontained. Chapter 7 discusses how female live-outs who are mothers challenge the notion that paid domestic workers should only have obligations to the employing household and not to their own households, but what living out then means for these women. Finally, Chapter 8 analyses how male domestic workers challenge the construction of their masculinity by employers as simultaneously safe and dangerous.

Having looked at everyday life and its three main characteristics, as one of the other major objectives of this thesis is to explore the ways in which domestic workers' experiences of everyday life differs as a result of their social identities, the question of difference comes into play. I draw on the concept of intersectionality to explore what the routine and repetitive acts of everyday life in this occupation looks like for domestic workers when viewed through a class, gender, age and ethnic lens.

2.2 'Doing Intersectionality'

Intersectionality is a concept that recognises the differences that exist among groups. It seeks to understand the ways in which different categories of social identity interact and operate simultaneously to produce experiences of privilege and oppression (Davis, 2011). Intersectionality is a useful concept for this thesis as it enables me to explore the rich and complex identities people can have at a time, such as the way a female domestic worker can be a young, female domestic worker who lives in and works as a housegirl, and how these different aspects of her identity inform her experiences in this occupation.

Moreover, it establishes power as dynamic and shifting rather than static and fixed. In doing so, it reveals that power cannot be said to operate in the same way across contexts of time and location, with factors such as socio-political and economic histories figuring prominently when defining power relations more roundly (Smooth, 2014:23). This is critical for my study as it enables me to explore privilege and marginalisation within the context of Nigeria and the opportunities made available to domestic workers.

While intersectionality allows me to explore experiences based on different social identities, applying it to this empirical study does come with a number of concerns, such as the question of difference – how many categories should be included – and whether intersectionality should be seen as an additive or constitutive process, to which I now turn to.

2.2.1 How Many To Include?

Beginning with the question of difference, there have been two strands to this concept, which approach it from different perspectives. The first came from the works of black feminists who explored the impacts of race, class and gender on black women's identities and experiences. Indeed, the development of intersectionality was by critical race theorists who used the term to describe how race, gender and class are interconnected (Crenshaw et al., 1995). Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989, 1991) is credited with coining the term in her writings on black women's experiences of triple oppression with employment discrimination and domestic violence. However, its foundations are much earlier in the works of black feminists, such as the Combahee River Collective (1977) and Angela Davis (1981). These works disrupted notions that the category of woman denotes a universal, homogeneous experience; and, instead, argued that race class and gender gives rise to different experiences among women (Lutz, 2014).

Around the same time of Crenshaw's writings, similar work reflecting on different experiences as a result of social identities was also developing outside of the US (Anthias, 1998; Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1983). Unlike the first strand, which saw race, gender and class as the three major social divisions, this approach argued that intersectionality should not be seen as specific to black and ethnic minority women – or even to marginalised people – but as the most valid approach to analyse social stratification as a whole (Yuval-Davis, 2012). Here, other dimensions were added, such as age (Bradley, 1996), disability (Meekosha and Dowse, 1997), nationality (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992) or sexuality (McClintock, 1995). More contemporary discussions

advocate for moving even further away from the original conceptualisation, to thinking about more robust understandings of power differentials that exist among various groups in society (Hancock, 2007).This has led to more additions such as religion, citizenship status and geo-political location (Lutz, 2001).

This second strand has not been without its critiques, as it has been argued that intersectionality no longer has a clear, concise definition. As raised by Wendy Smooth (2014:30):

> …[I]t lacks parameters; it does not specify which categories should be theorised as intersecting; the relationship between the categories; how many categories can be included; and when to stop adding categories of analysis.

There have also been accusations of arbitrariness (Lutz, 2014), such as the 'etc' at the end of most writing on social differences (Butler, 1990) - with Alice Ludvig (2006:247) considering this multiplicity the 'Achilles heel of intersectional approaches'.

In terms of which differences to focus on, Helma Lutz (2002) produced a comprehensive list of differences, which she states is 'by no means complete' (ibid:13) and argues that 'other categories have to be added or redefined' (ibid:13). The 14 'lines of differences' are gender; sexuality; 'race'/skin-colour; ethnicity; nation/state; class; culture; ability; age; sedentariness/origin; wealth; North-South; religion; stage of social development (Lutz, 2002). As for the question, how many, Lutz (2014) suggests race, gender and class as the minimum requirement and adding other categories depending on the context.

In this study, in addition to gender and class, the most salient differences from Lutz's (2002) list are age and ethnicity, as well as parental status - which is not listed. 'Race' has not been included because in most cases the employer and employee have the same racial background.

2.2.2 Additive or Constitutive Process

The second concern centres on whether intersectionality is an additive or constitutive process (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Earlier conceptualisations (i.e. the 'triple oppression' notion) focused on 'the additive or multiplication analogy' (Valentine, 2007:13), whereby someone at the intersection of three systems of oppression – a black, lesbian woman – would be more oppressed and marginalised than a woman at two levels – a black woman. This, however, was critiqued for not differentiating between levels (McCall, 2005).

The constitutive process, on the other hand, encourages an understanding that categories of difference are not simply parallel, but intersecting, as people can sometimes be oppressed and marginalised, and sometimes privileged and advantaged depending on the context (Smooth, 2014:21; see also Valentine, 2007:13). This perspective is evident in my study. Female domestic workers are the most marginalised, owing to the intersection of gender with their low-class status, but women's experiences of vulnerability occurs in different ways.

For women who live-in and are mothers, for instance, an intersection of gender and class with their young age and living status makes them particularly susceptible to isolation

and separation from their children. On the other hand, for women who live-out, and are also mothers, the intersection of their gender and class manifests in entirely different ways. They have to juggle their paid domestic work with their unpaid care work, as well as the lack of service provisions offered to them in their low-income settlements. Therefore, understanding social identities as mutually constitutive allows for multiple ways of experiencing how social categories are linked and informed by one another (Smooth, 2014: 22).

2.2.3 Masculinities

Finally, it would be remiss of me if I did not point out that intersectionality acknowledges differences among women, yet, in this study I am also interested in the experiences of male domestic workers. Recent studies on male domestic workers have already provided insights into intersectionality and masculinity, such as Lena Näre's (2010) research on the intersections of race, ethnicity, gender and class in the construction of Sri Lankan male domestic cleaners and carers by their Italian employers as docile, effeminate, asexual and submissive, and, thus, suited to this occupation.

As explained in Chapter 1, masculinity is 'the culture-specific ideas, roles and behaviours that men are supposed to live up to' (Esplen, 2006:2). Work from scholars, such as Raewyn Connell (2005) have helped to illustrate the wide range of masculine identities that exist, which leads to hierarchies among men, as well as between men and women. Hegemonic masculinity may be the ideal form of masculinity, but there are also subordinated masculine identities, which challenge these dominant understandings around what it means to be a man (Gorman-Murray, 2008). Human geographers have

also added to these studies on masculinities through a focus on the spatial aspects of these gendered identities. Linda McDowell (2013), for example, writes that in capitalist societies, 'the construction of masculinities occurs in a range of institutions and spaces from the family to the school, on the football field and its terraces, as well as in the workplace' (ibid:18).

Although early research on masculinities did not explicitly use the term intersectionality, Connell's (1995) research did emphasise differences, inequalities and hierarchies among men. Indeed, as argued by Ann-Dorte Christensen and Sune Qvotrup Jensen (2014), the concept of intersectionality could 'strengthen the ability to grasp the complexities of gendered power relations' (ibid:68; see also Christensen and Larsen, 2008; Hearn, 2011). Its use could enable a look at how other types of categories of difference, such as class, 'race' and sexuality can influence and shape masculinity (Choo and Ferree, 2010). As such, intersectionality can provide insight into the ways in which male domestic workers are simultaneously privileged and oppressed in this occupation.

Drawing on the concept of intersectionality in this study, enables me to illustrate that domestic workers are not a homogeneous category; they differ, among other things, on the basis of gender, age and ethnic background. I am also able look at the complex and interdependent dynamics of domination (i.e. social order) and resistance (i.e. challenging the taken-for-granted) that occurs within paid domestic workers' everyday life and how these may differ based on their identities, but also the ways in which the dynamics in the employer-employee relations may evolve over time, as a result of factors such as age.

Finally, in using an intersectional approach, I also find that it is important to not ignore its historical origins around black women's lived experiences, as this highlights its critical stance on uncovering the operation of power and privilege that renders individuals and groups marginalised. This is quite crucial in the context of this thesis as it enables me to uncover patterns of privilege and marginalisation within everyday life in paid domestic work.

Having explored both understandings of everyday life and intersectionality, and how they apply to this research, in the next section I discuss additional concepts that are significant to help in answering my main research question on everyday life in paid domestic work – beginning with social reproduction, care and their commodification in the home.

2.3   Social Reproduction

As far back as the 1970s, feminist economists have argued that social reproduction is indispensable to the functioning of the productive (public) sphere (Bedford and Rai, 2010; Elson, 2000; England and Folbre, 2003). The focus then was on the role and contribution of women's unpaid domestic labour (most notably housework and childcare) in the reproduction of the labour force in capitalist societies (Benería, 1979; Dalla Costa, 1973; Dalla Costa and James, 1973). It was known as the domestic labour debate. However, it was severely critiqued for its tendency towards economic reductionism, ignoring specific societies and periods of history, having a narrow focus on household labour, and over-emphasising the importance of women's unpaid housework for the waged male worker (Molyneux, 1979; see also Koffman, 2012:2).

Although social reproduction has been defined in various ways, a notable definition comes from Nakano Glenn (1992) who referred to it as 'the array of activities and relationships involved in maintaining people both on a daily basis and intergenerationally' (ibid:1). This work is traditionally undertaken primarily by women, usually on an unpaid basis, with the private sphere of the home regarded as the site of reproduction. Social reproduction, however, is not synonymous with care – which is a component of it.

Care is another term that does not have a clear consensus (Folbre, 2006) - with Eleonore Kofman (2012) suggesting it be seen as 'a range of activities and relationships that promote the physical and emotional well-being of people "who cannot or who are not inclined to perform these activities themselves" (Yeates, 2004:371)' (ibid:2). These can include social and health care services, as well as cleaning, cooking and general maintenance work (Yeates, 2004) in a variety of settings - hospitals, schools and hotels. Care also involves both physical labour ('caring for'), such as cooking, cleaning and washing; and emotional labour ('caring about') (Fakier and Cock, 2009:354; Hochschild, 2002; Kofman, 2012:2; Yeates 2004: 371).

My main focus in this thesis, is on the care that has been commodified in the homes of middle- and upper-class households, which as discussed in the previous chapter has seen a global increase, particularly in Europe and North America – although similar patterns are found in countries in Asia (Constable, 2007; Lan, 2006) and the Middle East (Fernandez and de Regt, 2014). This has been due to a number of factors: women's

increased participation in the labour market since the 1970s, aging societies and the continued gender division of labour (Folbre and Nelson, 2000).

2.3.1 Commodification of Care in the Home

In Chapter 1, I mentioned that middle-class and wealthy families are increasingly employing migrant women and men as domestic workers in their homes to provide a substitute for their unwaged labour. For women, this allows them to take up more paid work, have more quality time with their family, and/or more space for leisure. For men, who are increasingly expected to be committed and nurturing parents at home, male domestic workers are recruited to undertake tasks, such as household repairs that would have traditionally been done by them (Kilkey and Perrons, 2010; Perrons et al., 2010); as well as in elderly care for older men (Gallo and Scrinzi, 2015). Indeed, using data from the UK Time Use Survey, Diane Perrons, Ania Plomein and Majella Kilkey (2010) observed that the 'overall demand for stereotypically masculinised forms of domestic household work is on a par with feminised forms' (ibid:205).

In spite of the presence of men in this occupation, as I discuss in Chapter 8 there are gender differences between male and female domestic workers, in areas such as working hours and wages. Indeed the literature notes that 'commoditised "male" domestic labour is not particularly poorly paid or as segregated from other parts of the labour market, nor necessarily considered unskilled' (Cox, 2013a:577; see also Perrons et al., 2010). Paid domestic work, therefore, can reinforce already existing hierarchies and inequalities associated with the home (Tronto, 2002; 2005).

However, my findings also suggest that whether it is men or women engaged in this occupation, domestic service is poorly regulated, and for a large number of workers (including some men), badly paid. There are many reasons for this lack of recognition – as will be discussed in Chapter 4 – but domestic work is generally not recognised because of its location in the home and its association with unpaid domestic labour that is 'naturally' provided by women (Bowlby et al.,1997) and often devalued (Kaga, 2012). Therefore, domestic workers are in a context where they struggle to be treated as workers, and not unpaid family members (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Gregson and Lowe, 1994).

The commodification of care in the private domain does indicate three things about the home as a unique space in which to explore the practices of everyday in domestic work. First, the home is not solely the domain of women and can also be a site for the construction and contestation of multiple masculinities (Atherton, 2009; Gorman-Murray, 2008), as recent work on masculinity, domesticity and the home indicate. For example, studies have highlighted changes in men's domestic lives across their life-course as a result of, for instance, age – in the case of Ann Varley and Maribel Blasco's (2000) study on ageing and masculinity in urban Mexico. Current research on paid domestic work has also indicated that while women still perform a significantly higher amount of care work in the home, men are increasingly more involved in unpaid domestic labour (Gallo and Scrinzi, 2015) as observed by studies on male employers of migrant domestic workers in countries, such as UK (Kilkey et al., 2013) and Italy (Gallo and Scrinzi, 2015).

Second, the home can also extend from its private nature to being a public workplace. Indeed, feminist debates have challenged this public-private binary (Fraser, 2009) by interrogating how the divide is socially constructed through regulations around behaviours, norms, duties and interactions within each sphere, as well as transgressions of the boundaries that separate them. While there is existing research on female home-based workers engaged in paid work, such as sewing and cooking (Mallett, 2000), the malleability of these boundaries is more obvious in paid domestic work, which obstructs the construction of the public-private divide. After all, the domestic workers' public workplace is the private home of their employer. However, paid domestic workers in the home present difficulties for considering the home as a workplace, because it is not public in the way other workplaces are (Cox, 2013b). Additionally, many employers rarely see their home as a workplace or themselves as employers. This renders domestic workers invisible, which structures domestic workers' experiences and everyday lives.

This leads me to my third point – that the home is 'a space of belonging and alienation, intimacy and violence, desire and fear' (Blunt and Varley, 2004:3) that is 'shaped by 'inclusions, exclusions and inequalities in terms of class, age, sexuality, ethnicity and race' (ibid:3). This is quite an apt definition in the context of domestic work where the home can be a site of oppression, particularly female live-ins' with their intersecting identities of age, gender and class. Indeed, live-in workers further disrupt the public-private boundary, as they may reside in the employer's home, but it is not their home. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, female live-in workers often do not have any privacy, a space to call their own or even their own free time.

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In Chapter 4, I illustrate how, in addition to not adequately recognising the home as a workplace, there are also difficulties in regulating this occupation; particularly in Nigeria where domestic workers are explicitly excluded from a number of labour and social protection policies. In the past decade, international organisations, such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO), have been working on ways to protect and regulate domestic work worldwide (Kaga, 2012). Yet, looking at workers' everyday lives in this study, their experiences do not reflect this global recognition. The exclusions of domestic workers from public 'interference' usually falls back on the justification that it is in the private and intimate space of people's home. However, as Mark Johnson and Christoph Wilcke (2015) have observed in the context of Saudi Arabia, and other Arab countries, this 'privacy of the household' argument allows states to 'abdicate responsibility for any violations occurring within the household while being centrally involved in constructing and policing the public and private divide' (cited in Fernandez and de Regt, 2014:11).

This section has situated my understanding of domestic workers' everyday life within larger discussions on social reproduction, care and the home, however, as my thesis speaks to a larger body of literature on paid domestic work, in this last section I draw on key themes of employer control and worker resistance to indicate the ways in which my conceptual framework can help to make sense of everyday life in this occupation. Specifically, it reveals the ways in which the two inter-related aspects of social order and challenging the take-for-granted are able to shape daily rituals and routines.

2.4   Everyday Life in Paid Domestic Work: Maintaining Social Order

Numerous studies have explored the role of employers in the exploitation and mistreatment of domestic workers (Anderson, 2000; Davidoff, 1973; Rollins, 1985). They point to social distancing as a common device used among employers to create and maintain inequality (Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Bujra, 2005; Chin, 1998; Cohen, 1991; Constable, 1997; Dawes, 1974; Duden, 1983; Gill, 1994; Palmer, 1989). Through this employers can mark their superiority along race, class, citizenship (Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992) and sexual (Hansen, 1989) lines. Social distancing is nothing new as, historically, employers had their own techniques, such as in nineteenth-century England where employers did not allow servants upstairs unless they had duties to perform (Dawes, 1974 on English upstairs/downstairs life).

Another major form of control in this occupation is maternalism. This is described as the attitude that characterises the relationship between workers and employers based on a 'superordinate-subordinate' relationship, which may 'protect and nurture' but also 'degrades and insults' (Rollins, 1985:186; see also Anderson, 2000:144; Arnado, 2002). One clear example of the concept is in the use of variations of 'girl' or 'daughter' to address female domestic workers regardless of their age (Radcliffe, 1990; Young, 1987), while workers are expected to address their employers with less familial, more formal terms such as Mrs, Miss, Ms or Madam. This is an important component in the 'one of the family' stance (Anderson, 2000; Enloe, 1989; Ray and Qayum, 2009; Thomson, 2009) used to obscure the fact that the relationship is one of employment, where the

workers' ability to negotiate terms and conditions is weakened. There are other elements of maternalism, I found in this study, such as restrictions in the areas of space and privacy for female live-ins, or the giving of 'gifts', such as cast-off clothing, discarded appliances and furniture to live-outs (see Chapter 6, 7 and 8; see also Rollins, 1985:189-92).

Other forms of control identified by scholars of paid domestic work include maintaining business-like, contractual relations concerned specifically and exclusively with job tasks and schedules (Lan, 2003:537; Romero, 1992). However, Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001:207) finds that the contractual ideal may be realisable in housecleaning work; however, as an emotional connection is integral to care work, a clear-cut relation between employer and employee is more difficult.

There is also 'distant hierarchy' (Lan, 2003:531) - 'grounded in the deferential performance of domestic workers'. In her work on Taiwanese employers and their Filipina workers, Pei-Chia Lan (2003:533) argued that while 'maternalism' may involve employers developing an intimate relationship, 'distant hierarchy' requires less intrusion into the employers' family life, enabling employers to maintain a hierarchical distance from their workers. Lan (2003) also suggests that those who spend a lot of time around their workers use maternalism, while 'distant hierarchy' is used when employers have more space in the house and spend less time in their homes, thus allowing 'sufficient physical space… to exist between workers and employers' (ibid:532).

A third alternative is 'personalism', which Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001:207-8) finds differs

from 'maternalism', being 'a one-way relationship' positioning workers as 'needy, deficient, and childlike' and not allowing them any dignity and respect. 'Personalism' is 'a two-way relationship' involving the employer's recognition of the employee as a person – recognition necessary for dignity and respect to be realised. While 'personalism' on its own might not be enough to 'upgrade domestic work', its absence means that the job will be experienced in all likelihood as 'degrading'.

Similar to existing studies, as I reveal in my empirical chapters, control is a fundamental aspect in workers' everyday life. Indeed, Karen Hansen (1989:7) wrote that domestic work 'can only operate smoothly when servants and employers are considered different from each other'. Hansen (1989) argues that this is the only way the intrinsic closeness of this occupation can be more easily resolved.

This being an occupation where class and status difference is constantly being (re)produced, employers, therefore, are increasingly trying to establish boundaries and keep domestic workers in their subordinate position. One of the ways in which this occurs in this current study is through discourses on cleanliness, or the reverse - 'dirt' (Skeggs, 2004), which Anne McClintock (1995) illustrates was one of the earliest ways to combine and condense the notions of class. As 'theories of dirt ... are useful tools for understanding and confronting inequality or marginality' (Campkin and Cox, 2012:5), this is what I turn to next.

2.4.1 Reproduction of Class and Other Inequalities: Dirt and Disorder

By dirt, I am referring to what Mary Douglas (1966) defined in her seminal text, *Purity and Danger*, as a principal means to arrange cultures. Douglas' work revealed how dirt could be seen as the foundation of the establishment of order, because it 'is a matter out of place' (ibid:44). Specifically, dirt implies a condemnation, and an association with it triggers a desire to avoid or remove it, stigmatising those who are involved in it (Simpson et al., 2012:3). As a result of this avoidance, occupations which deal with physical dirt tend to be carried out by members of lower classes (Douglas, 1966), which divides groups into clean and dirty along class lines (Davidoff, 1973).

Dirt is also linked with social categories of difference, such as gender and race (Campkin and Cox, 2012; Hantzaroula, 2008; Ozyegin, 2010), with poor men and women, ethnic minorities and immigrants most likely to be the ones that clean (Campkin and Cox, 2012:5; Simpson et al., 2012:6). Dirt then is used to 'justify social ranking of race, class, and gender' (Palmer, 1989: 140). Nowhere is this more evident that in paid domestic work that has historically been identified as 'dirty' work (Anderson, 2000; Campkin and Cox, 2012; Cox, 2012). Phyllis Palmer (1989) has written compellingly about dirt, domesticity and racialised divisions among women in the US context, and notes how white middle-class women employ women different from themselves to do the 'dirty' (house-)work so that they remain 'clean'.

In the context of my study, employers may hire workers to clean and maintain their households – both inside and out – as an indication of their status, but the belief that

domestic workers are literally 'dirty workers' (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 413) because they do the 'dirty' work, means that employers try to create distance from the dirt and those who deal with it. Being 'dirty workers' subjects workers to a lot of widespread exploitative practices, such as the views that female live-ins are carriers of disease and so are subjected to health tests to ensure they do not have any infections that could be transmitted to household members – particularly children (see Chapter 6).

Through notions of dirt, it is possible to begin to see how employers control their workers through a reproduction of class and social status by transferring the 'dirty' work to their domestic worker. However, as I indicate in my empirical chapters, ideas around cleanliness are not the only way that employers construct difference and justify their control. Domestic workers are also constructed as sexual – owing to the association with dirt (Palmer, 1989), which I discuss in Chapter 6 with regards to female live-ins and Chapter 8 on male domestic workers.

The ways in which employers adopt different methods in their attempts to maintain social order in the home, indicates that power 'is everywhere' and 'comes from everywhere' (Foucault, 1998:63). Understanding social order in this context indicates that employer's power can be used for different reasons and at different times (Mahmood, 2011). This is evident in my study where male and female live-in domestic workers experience control of their 'dangerous' sexuality in different ways. Male employees are often not allowed inside households to limit their interaction with female members of the households. On the other hand, female domestic workers are allowed inside homes, but they are often

excluded from certain spaces in the house, such as bedrooms to ensure sexual relations do not happen between them and male members of the household.

Finally, while the vulnerability domestic workers experience through employer control is critical - as it brings international attention to the issue (Pande, 2014). It is also important to highlight the attempts made by the workers to resist exploitative conditions (de Regt, 2010; Fernandez and de Regt, 2014; Lan, 2003; Moukarbel, 2009; Fernandez, 2011). This is what I turn to next.

2.5 Everyday Life in Paid Domestic Work: Rule-breaking Acts

As mentioned previously, I draw from James Scott's (1985) 'everyday resistance' to make sense of the ways workers attempt to 'challenging-the-taken-for granted' in this occupation. In his work on peasant resistance in South-East Asia, Scott (1985) argued that powerless people rarely have the resources or opportunity to resist those in power openly, and so use more common 'everyday forms of resistance'. Scott (ibid:29) defines these as 'the ordinary weapon of relatively powerless groups', such as foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander and arson.

While such acts are 'everyday' because they are commonplace – making 'no headlines' (Scott, 1985:xvii) – they constitute resistance because they 'deny or mitigate claims made by appropriating classes' (ibid:302). Furthermore, everyday resistance may be invisible, but it still manages to help protect the powerless from further repression. It can often

bring important gains to the poor, such as helping low-paid workers 'assert their humanity and put rice on the table' (Kerkvliet, 1986:121).

I use the concept because it is important for understanding everyday actions as forms of resistance and provides a useful category for highlighting the diverse range of practices of subordinate groups, however uncoordinated and limited they might be. Specifically, there are four reasons why Scott's framework on everyday peasant resistance is relevant to my study.

First, 'everyday resistance' is more likely to be carried out by those with 'little leadership' (Scott, 1985:6), resisting individuals or institutions, such as moneylenders, landowners, government officials, or even a general condition (see also Kerkvliet, 1986:108). As will be discussed in subsequent chapters, domestic workers' efforts to challenge employer control in this study are still limited to individual struggles, since most workers are not unionised.

Second, 'everyday resistance' requires 'little or no co-ordination or planning' (Scott, 1986:6-7). Instead, it could involve forms of 'passive non-compliance, subtle sabotage and deception', such as female live-in domestic workers performing tasks quicker when employers are not around in order to ensure they have adequate rest periods.

Third, everyday resistance 'make[s] no headlines' (Scott, 1986:8) as there is rarely any dramatic conflict with those in power (see also Adas, 1981 on 'avoidance protests';

Kerkvliet, 1986:109). In my study, domestic workers try as much as possible to not leave evidence of what they have done, such as live-outs putting cheaper brands of oil in named brands to pocket some money for themselves. This is because the workers' safety lies in their acts remaining discreet.

Fourth, these diverse forms of resistance go from mild (e.g. workers dawdling when sent out) to strong (e.g. workers opting to live out to free themselves from the degrading and dehumanising conditions of domestic service), representing what they think is possible based on their situation.

While I choose to use Scott's (1985) framework, many have criticised his theory of resistance since it was first published (see for example Field, 1994; Gupta, 2001; Gutmann, 1993; Tilly, 1991). There is a possibility that many of the shortcomings of his theory could also be levelled at this study. As such, I will address three critiques that are most relevant to my study, namely the dichotomy between public and everyday resistance, the risks of labelling everything as 'everyday resistance' and the overemphasis on class. I will also discuss how my thesis attempts to address these critiques.

2.5.1 Dichotomy between Public and Everyday Resistance

One critique levelled at Scott (1985:32-3) is concerned with his dichotomy between the everyday forms of resistance (i.e. informal, often covert with immediate *de facto* gains) and the more dramatic public confrontations (i.e. formal, overt and concerned with systematic *de jure* change) (see also Stillman and Villmoare, 2010:496). Asef Bayat

(1997:56), among others, has voiced concerns with regards to Scott (1985) referring to disenfranchised groups' everyday resistance as 'simply hidden, quiet and often individualistic'. This, for instance, does not account for the dynamics of the activities of the urban poor in the Global South (Roy, 2014). Instead, the urban poor engage in Bayat's (2000:46) 'quiet encroachment' which is 'silent, protracted by pervasive advancement of the ordinary people… in order to survive and improve their lives', as well as the more public and collective resistance. An example is the way rural migrants, the urban poor and the middle-class poor in Cairo 'quietly claim cemeteries, rooftops and state/public lands' (ibid:47).

Thus, if 'disenfranchised' people do not only adopt everyday forms of resistance, a question that could be levelled against this thesis is my choice to focus on individual acts of resistance in domestic work, especially when, in many parts of the world, domestic workers are collectively organising to combat exploitation and improve their working conditions. Indeed, there is a long history of domestic workers organising in trade unions, sometimes starting as associations, such as in Brazil. Terezinha Gonçalves (2007) writes about domestic workers in the country organising for rights and recognition in the country, beginning with the first domestic worker's association – Brazilian Black Front in the 1920s and 30s – to the National Federation of Domestic Workers (FENATRAD) founded in 1997 (Tijdens and van Klaveren, 2011). In 2013, a constitutional reform known as 'PEC das domesticas' was established for the first time (Acciari, 2014) giving domestic workers rights in areas such as a maximum workday of eight hours and overtime pay (see also Fish, 2006 on domestic workers' unions in South Africa; ILO,

2010:77–86 for examples of domestic workers organising around the world, as well as WIEGO for collective action amongst informal workers).

A notable, and recent, exception to the lack of collective organising in Nigeria comes from the Federation of Informal Workers' Organisation of Nigeria (FIWON), an umbrella organisation for self-employed Nigerians in the informal economy, which attempted to organise domestic workers into a union in July 2011 (The Vanguard, 2011). FIWON organised a one-day workshop, 'Building a Union to Fight for Domestic Workers' Rights and Respect at Work: Challenges and Opportunities', in which twenty domestic workers came together to call for job security and improved working conditions to enable them to live decent lives and contribute to national development (The Tide, 2011).

In spite of this, I argue that in countries such as Nigeria factors such as isolation within their workplace (i.e. the employing household), lack of time off and freedom of movement, especially for female live-ins, still exist. These, together with the lack of legal protection (see Chapter 4), makes it extremely difficult for domestic workers to organise at present. So, although a study on individual resistance may seem old-fashioned in an era of mounting collective mobilisation among the informally employed, I suggest that, as studies of everyday life need to be contextualised and understood through the lived experiences of those who are living it, in this study I am only truly able to make sense of worker acts by looking at them through the lens of 'everyday resistance'. Still, while it may be a different, less obvious kind of resistance – one that occurs in certain situations and is not confrontational or sustained by formal leadership or organisations. It is still,

nonetheless, resistance.

2.5.2 What is 'Everyday Resistance'?

Another critique of Scott's concept is that it risks labelling too many other expressions as 'resistance'. Sherry Ortner (1995:190), writing on 'ethnographic thinness' in resistance studies, asks what is or is not resistance? For instance, if a poor man steals from a rich man, is this resistance or a survival strategy? I attempt to engage with this critique by offering an analysis which focuses especially on workers' individual subjective experiences of the forms of resistance enacted in their performance. As not all expressions of difference or individuality should be labelled as 'resistance', the first challenge of investigating 'resistance' in the context of domestic work then becomes defining what it is. I suggest that understanding and analysing resistance in relation to what is being resisted can address this confusion on what resistance is or is not.

Thus, taking up the two major propositions from an overview of resistance studies carried out by Jocelyn Hollander and Rachel Einwohner (2004:538) – that resistance includes a sense of *action* and *opposition* – I see everyday resistance as an oppositional act. Here, I am suggesting that there is a relation between power and resistance that is played out in different contexts with sometimes unexpected results, which makes it impossible to define and understand resistance without relating it to power. For example, in this study, a number of employer strategies are centred on control over workers' movements within different spaces or over their time. In this context, 'everyday resistance' involves manipulating these spatial and temporal constraints.

Power and resistance also change over time to adapt to each other. As discussed by Hollander and Einwohner (2004:548), 'domination leads to resistance, which leads to the further exercise of power, provoking further resistance, and so on'. As such, employers may find different ways to control, but workers may also learn and find new ways to resist. Thus, employer control and worker resistance are mutually interacting and evolving. Consequently, I also suggest that power and resistance are intertwined, with resistance not possible to understand, or define, without its relation to, and on-going struggle with, power(s).

2.5.3 Class-bias

A third possible limitation in Scott's formulation is his overemphasis on class, at the expense of other possible forms of identities, such as gender and ethnicity, which actors have access to at any one time. This is something that Christine Chin and James Mittelman (1997:32) note in their assessment of resistance to globalisation, when they argue that Scott forgets that superior-superordinate relations, such as manager and worker, are 'embedded in whole ways of life' and 'class is but one (albeit important) modality of identity' in these relations. Although Scott's work was written as an account of class relations, various studies have shown that the concept can be applied to people in particular occupational niches, such as factory workers and street vendors (Kerkvliet, 2009) and domestic workers.

Similar critiques have been used against Scott for his neglect of gender in differentiating the peasantry, such as Gillian Hart (1991:94) who, in her analysis of class formation in

rural Malaysia, called for 'a major rethink' of everyday resistance from a gendered perspective, as gender shapes the struggles within the labour processes in the local community and household (see also Agarwal, 1994:83). Feminist scholarship also highlights the ways in which women challenge dominant power relations, such as spirit possession of female factory workers in Malaysia (Ong, 1987) or the use of sexually subversive poetry by Bedouin women in Egypt (Abu-Lughod, 1986). As such, it becomes necessary to analyse resistance in the context in which particular identities, such as gender, are expressed in order to understand the different types of practices people engage with. For instance, a form of resistance could be the ways in which 'certain identities may be emphasised or downplayed' (Adib and Gurrier, 2003:430), such as male drivers in Chapter 8 who downplay the feminine (i.e. domestic work) and emphasise the masculine (i.e. hazardous driving) aspects of their jobs as a way to re-establish their masculinity.

Having outlined the three critiques of Scott's concept that could apply to my thesis, there is one aspect of Scott's (1985) framework that I diverge from. Specifically, Scott (1985) defines resistance not by the particular 'act' performed, but in terms of intent – the actions of an actor who intends to resist regardless of the outcome of their actions. As Scott writes, resistance includes:

> …any act(s) by member(s) of a subordinate class that is or are *intended* either to mitigate or deny claims… made on that class by superordinate classes… or to advance its own claims vis-à-vis those superordinate class.

Unlike Scott, I do not see resistance as based solely on intention (see also Vinthagen and Johansson, 2013:20). Instead, I see resistance as a practice, not because it is difficult to

identify intent, but because I am more interested in understanding what people actually do. This suggests that an analysis of resistance is incomplete without a discussion of agency (bearing in mind, of course, that resistance is but one form of agency), which Laura Ahearn (2001) sees as 'the socioculturally mediated capacity to act' (ibid:112). Indeed, for Ahearn (2001), agency is not simply individual free will or a synonym for resistance, but as a socio-cultural product that may differ from society to society and in its relationship to notions of personhood, oppression and freedom (Ahearn, 2011).

Bearing in mind the 'powerlessness' (Datta et al., 2007:409) that domestic workers may often face daily, I use everyday resistance to explore the ways in which men and women operate in everyday life. I argue that everyday resistance should be understood as a way of acting – the actual 'art of practice'– be it creative, silent or somewhat hidden. Additionally, if everyday resistance is seen as a practice, then different types of small acts themselves should be central to accounts of resistance. Thus, I explore the diverse ways domestic workers challenge employer social order, such as regularly gossiping, watching TV when employers are out or demanding for a modest wage rise. Although I do not 'romanticise' these acts (see below on romanticising resistance), neither do I see them as insignificant. Instead, I suggest that domestic workers in a subordinate position, with restrictions and limited resources available to them, are able to maintain some degree of autonomy over their working and private lives through their everyday forms of resistance.

Therefore, Scott's (1985) conceptualisation of everyday resistance is used in this thesis to identify everyday forms of challenging the taken-for-granted, similar to research on domestic workers by Nicole Constable (2007) for Hong Kong and Pei-Chia Lan (2006) for Taiwan. Indeed, my research will be contributing to an already existing body of research on the topic of resistance within the field of domestic work through my focus on internal migrants of different ages and ethnicities in Nigeria.

I will briefly look at these studies, such as the ones in the 1980s and 1990s that identified workers' 'strategies of resistance' (Constable, 1997a; Dill, 1988; Glenn, 1986; Romero, 1992; Rollins, 1985). These were small acts used by workers on a daily basis to resist the oppression and exploitation they experienced to attain a certain degree of power and independence in the homes they worked in. Everyday resistance of paid domestic workers fell under two categories, namely 'social psychological' and 'structural' approaches, which I discuss briefly below.

2.5.4 Interpersonal Relations: Social Psychological Approaches

Beginning with the social psychological approach (Dill, 1988; Rollins, 1985), this emphasised interpersonal relationships between workers and their employers. Here, workers' 'strategies of resistance' tend to be indirect, such as silence, mockery or theft (Cock, 1989). This approach was mainly concerned with the 'dialectics of intimacy and domination in the interpersonal relationship' (Romero, 1992:136). The focus is on the various ways workers use resistance strategies to maintain dignity and self-esteem. A

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good example is Rollins' (1985) study on female domestic workers and their female employers in Boston.

Rollins (1985) identifies the ways degrading rituals of deference and 'maternalism' are used to confirm domestic workers' inferiority and their employers' superiority. Deference – deliberately 'pretend[ing] to be unintelligent, subservient, and content with their position' (ibid:227) – protects workers from internalising the judgements employers make about them. In South Africa, for example, domestic workers adopt a mask of deference as a protective disguise (ibid:103). However, putting on an act of deference can reinforce the asymmetrical nature of interpersonal relationships (ibid:231–2; see also Constable, 1997a:205), since the employer still views them as subordinate and is comforted by their deferential behaviour.

Workers, according to Rollins (1985:212-13), maintain a sense of self-worth due to a strong moral system built on 'their intimate knowledge of the realities of employers' lives'. Also vital is their value system, measuring self-worth by 'the kind of person you are', the quality of interpersonal relationships and an individual's standing in the community (on the importance of 'belonging to a community' see Dill, 1988:51, as well as Colen, 1989:187).

This framework suggests that strategies are based on workers' individual characteristics. For instance, in her study on African American domestic workers in Philadelphia and New York, Bonnie Thornton Dill (1994:103) discusses workers' 'stories of resistance',

which include confrontation, chicanery or cajolery. Workers use these tactics to 'establish limits for themselves with a particular household' and define very carefully the level of 'time, commitment and personal involvement' they give to employers. Similarly, in her study on West Indian immigrant domestics in New York, Shellee Colen (1986:64) notes how workers use 'their strength, determination, and networks of support' to cope. 'Strategies of resistance' can also be 'muted rituals of rebellion' (Cock, 1989:103), consisting of silence and mockery of employers, to enable workers to maintain 'personality and integrity'.

Domestic workers sometimes incorporate 'immediate struggles' (Parrenas, 2001:172) – subversive acts, such as frowning to manipulate their employers and make them feel guilty. In Nicole Constable's (1997a) research on Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong, she observes workers refusing dress codes, pretending to be taking baths by just running water in the tub, putting on a Walkman while working to avoid hearing the nagging of employers and lying about train congestion when arriving late (see also Brochmann [1993:113] on 'escape routes' of Sri Lankan female domestic workers in the Gulf).

While this framework on interpersonal relationships shows how domestic workers maintain psychological and material independence from their employers, the approach tends to treat workers as powerless to change their working conditions. In her study on Chicanas in the US, Mary Romero (1992:146) argues that this approach ignores the structure of housework by treating it as an extension of the hierarchical relationship. As

such, she advocated for a shift from 'the social psychological aspects of personalism, asymmetry or domination' (ibid:142) to an examination of the labour process itself. Romero suggest that examining domestic work as a specific instance of labour struggles, such as efforts toward wage rises, makes it possible to eliminate the demeaning and degrading practices of housework and give domestic workers the respect and rights they deserve as workers.

2.5.5 Labour Process: A Structural Analysis

Looking next at the 'structural' approach (Bujra, 1992; Romero, 1992), this focuses on labour processes involving more 'direct' strategies, such as workers structuring work time and tasks to increase control over their work. Even for those researchers who centre their analysis on interpersonal relations, their studies still uncover ways in which workers attempt to control the work structure. Dill (1994), for example, discusses 'building a career', where workers carefully choose to work in households that pay higher wages and provide benefits as a means of increasing their social position. Even Glenn (1986:160), who views the domestic service relationship as a dialectic of personalism and asymmetry, finds that the major strategies domestic workers use include becoming live-outs, having multiple employers, leaving jobs where employers constantly supervise and defining their jobs by tasks done.

While these studies point towards a structural analysis of domestic work, Romero's (1992) work on Chicanas (Mexican maids) in the US and Janet Bujra's (2000) on the micropolitics of domestic labour in Tanzania focus on the key struggles over the control

of the labour process. Romero (1992:161) shows how Chicanas working as day workers resist interpersonal relationships by attempting 'to establish a business-like environment'. They do this by selling their labour services as a 'flat rate' for a specified amount of money to eliminate potential exploitation. Strategies can also include working for several employers, which leads to more independence on the worker's part while reducing employer control. Workers can also establish and maintain an informal verbal contract specifying tasks to minimise supervision, or define themselves as professional housekeepers by scheduling tasks, determining cleaning techniques, selecting the appropriate work materials and setting the work pace.

Romero (1992), however, studied live-out workers who have less exposure to employer control compared with live-ins. As Romero's studies have shown, the shift to day work has been a major way to improve working conditions, giving workers more autonomy to fit in their other interests and responsibilities (Glenn, 1986; Katzman, 1978), particularly if they have several employers. For some domestic workers, however, live-in employment still persists. This is the case in Bujra's (2000:142) study, where those who live in restructure work by not doing certain tasks, such as washing underwear or ironing with an electric iron. Additionally, those who have worked in a household for many years are able to dictate the terms of their work by 'knowing what to do and getting on with it without being ordered' (ibid:143).

I observed cases of these different forms of resistance in my study, but one important dimension of everyday resistance that my empirical chapters address is mobility. Doreen

Massey (1994) writes that different social groups, and different individuals, have 'differentiated mobility'. In the sense that some people are in charge of their movement than others; some initiate movement, others do not; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it. This, as mentioned earlier, allows for an examination of who can and cannot move in this occupation and the role of power in relation to these movements. My findings reveal that there are differences when it comes to mobility. In Chapter 6 on female live-ins, mobility is often severely constrained by employers' restrictions on women's physical movements both inside and outside the house in which they are employed. Nevertheless, this Chapter also provides examples of how women aim to increase their mobility, which could include moving from living in to living out.

Linked to this notion of mobility is the way in which workers at certain stages of their lives are able to actively respond to the structural constraints they face. In Chapter 6, for example, it is older, more experienced female live-ins that are able to move to live-out situations. This indicates, as Massey (1994) argues, that people's position within the 'time-space compression' is highly complicated and extremely varied – some people move more than others and some have more control than others. This is also evident in Chapter 8, with reference to male live-ins who are not restricted in their movements and often roam the streets in the neighbourhoods they work in – even if employers would prefer they did not.

As age is one of the intersecting identities I am exploring, a life course perspective –
referring to the phases of life that people move through over time (Gardner, 2008) – also
enables me to see how domestic workers challenges the way they are positioned or even
strategise to overcome the constraints they face. Already a number of researchers have
drawn on a life-course approach in order to explore how migrants' decision to move and
place preferences change over the course of their lives (Gardner, 2008; Locke et al.,
2013). However, I use it to explore how experiences of everyday life within paid
domestic work may change over time.

Older and experienced workers as I reveal in my empirical chapters may actively choose
an employer to have improved working conditions, not just in relation to wages, but also
the way they are treated inside homes. My findings also indicate that workers' statuses
within the household can change across the life course (Gardner, 2009). Young domestic
workers, for example, are less likely to be able to dictate the terms and conditions of their
work, compared with older ones. This illustrates that domestic workers everyday lives are
subject to change over space and time based on the context and, of course, their gender.

Finally, while I explore individual resistance and the distinctive ways domestic workers'
attempt to reduce their vulnerabilities, I am aware of some of the limitations that come
with its use – with a major critique being that, while such individual acts of resistance are
powerful, they 'rarely transform structures of subordination' (Ally, 2010:17).

2.5.6 Critique of Domestic Workers' Individual Resistance

Using the case of domestic workers in South Africa, Shireen Ally (2010:17) argues that:

> …cynical forms of deference, mocking modes of silence, or various types of "foot dragging" – wasting water while washing dishes or electricity while pressing laundry – simply confirm employers' racist, classist, or nativist attitudes. Workers' "agency" in these cases reinstates and reinforces, rather than disrupts, the logics of their domination.

Similarly, in a study on Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong, Constable (1997a:179) cautions about the practicality of resistance acts by domestic workers as an effective strategy in changing the nature and degree of oppression. This is because 'the overall "success" of Filipina domestic workers in improving the structure of domestic work or the reputation of domestic workers has been extremely limited'. Constable (ibid:206) further argues that 'Filipinas try to live up to their employers' ideals, rather than to contest them'. They engage in activities that are enjoyable, such as birthday parties and outings instead of finding ways through unions and more politicised meetings to alleviate their working conditions. This shows that their resistance is geared towards survival, not change, and so 'resistance remains on a discursive level, expressed quietly and as a form of personal release' (ibid:210).

Unlike Constable (1997a), I suggest that engaging in enjoyable activities is, arguably, as important to a worker's well-being as attending meetings to improve working conditions; with my findings revealing these social and economic acts are of utmost importance to the men and women in this study, painting them as workers, as well as people that may have needs and desires beyond the workplace.

The critiques of studies that focused on domestic workers' individual resistance have led to more recent scholarship analysing the collective demands made by domestic workers to improve their working and living conditions (Eluri and Singh, 2013; Pande, 2012). Despite these growing efforts around the world to organise domestic workers, with limited opportunities to interact with each other, as explained earlier, such efforts remain a daunting task in many countries, including Nigeria.

Bearing in mind the current nature of domestic work in Nigeria, in particular the control by employers, lack of recognition in society and few opportunities for collective organising, while individual action may not lead to a change in the overall structure of domestic work, I suggest that small acts, such as those female live-ins who create their own style by retaining their own forms of clothing when they arrive back to work on their days off, help domestic workers 'get by'. As domestic worker efforts in recent decades to improve their conditions in Nigeria still remain isolated, personalised and limited to individual struggles, direct forms of resistance such as participating in rallies or demonstrations are rare (Moukarbel, 2009). Instead, attempts to improve working conditions remain isolated, personalised and limited to individual struggles.

When focusing on domestic workers' individual responses to employers, one must beware of romanticising these acts. As Lila Abu-Lughod (1990:41), in her study on Bedouin women's everyday forms of resistance, points out, many studies are more concerned with 'accounts of resistance than with an analysis of power itself'.

Abu-Lughod (1990) argues that a tendency to 'romance resistance' may hide the complex relations of domination and subordination embedded in resistance acts. Following Foucault's notion of 'where there is power, there is resistance', Abu-Lughod (1990:42) proposed that a more 'sensible' approach would be 'where there is resistance there is power'. In other words, the study of resistance should become a means of understanding power and power relations rather than solely human agency. As such, this study does not assume workers' resistance necessarily undermine the foundations of power; rather, they highlight workers' relative lack of control in the constraining environment they live and work in to reveal the dynamic and changing nature of everyday life.

2.7 Conclusion

In this Chapter, I have aimed to synthesise a framework drawn from scholarship on everyday life, the home as a workplace and intersectionality that enables me to illustrate the importance of focusing on small-scale and everyday aspects of social life in paid domestic work. Additionally, in adopting an intersectional approach, I have argued that, while everyone experiences everyday life, and social identities play a role in shaping these experiences – gender matters but it should not be seen as the only factor that matters in accounts on everyday life – class, masculinity, ethnicity and age are also equally salient in the way everyday life is experienced by domestic workers. Along the way I have also revealed the importance of concepts such as social reproduction, care, masculinity, agency, mobility and lifecourse in making sense of workers' everyday lives.

In summary, an intersectionality-inspired approach to everyday life in paid domestic work enables me to pay closer attention to the range of existing power systems and structures in everyday life within this occupation. It also allows me to see how intersecting identities might play a role in shaping arrangements around daily routines and rituals in Lagos homes, while also exploring which individual domestic workers might simultaneously experience both discrimination and privilege.

3

Methodological Reflections

Having outlined my objectives, contributions and conceptual framework, in this chapter I discuss the qualitative methods I adopted throughout eight months of fieldwork from November 2011 to July 2012 in Lagos, Nigeria. This involved a variety of qualitative research techniques including narrative interviews with 63 domestic workers (35 women and 28 men), in-depth semi-structured interviews with 12 employers (10 women and 2 men), fiction-based research, use of social media and several hours of participant observation and information gathered through informal conversations with family, friends and strangers. Below I discuss why I chose Lagos, how I went about selecting, accessing and interviewing respondents, the ethical considerations, the way the data was analysed and key challenges I faced in conducting this research.

3.1   Methodology

My fieldwork began in 2010 with a 6-week pilot research project in Lagos aimed at exploring the feasibility of the present study. During this period, I interviewed eight domestic workers (five men and three women) and four 'experts' on domestic service in Nigeria in order to better understand domestic work in the country. The 'experts' were a Child Protection Specialist, the founder of a domestic help recruitment agency, a university professor and the founder of a local NGO. They spoke to me about the

recruitment of child domestic workers, working conditions and worker vulnerability. I also conducted two focus groups with men and women in their twenties, on the househelp phenomena and the abuse of househelps in Nigeria, respectively (see Appendix I). These were conducted in order to explore the views of an age group who, like me, would have grown up with, but not employed, domestic workers. However, a few participants in each focus group had recently begun to use the services of domestic workers.

The pilot was helpful in shaping my research in many ways. For example, I decided against using semi-structured interviews for domestic workers and instead chose to carry out narrative interviews, as I wanted to give workers the time and space to unwind the story of their life in their own ways (see Schütze, 1992). Narrative interviews also enabled me to understand domestic workers' unique experiences and everyday practices within and beyond the households in which they worked in.

Probing was another crucial element I implemented after the pilot as I became more aware of the importance of questioning, at all times, every account in order to understand, but also make myself understood. For example, I went from simply asking 'What is your age?' to inquiring if workers remembered the year they were born or any events from their childhood. As many low-income Nigerians are unsure of their age – due to the absence of an effective birth registration system in the country (see UNICEF, 2007) – this also enabled me to situate their age within the context of their own awareness of major events in Nigeria.

I also decided not to include additional 'expert' interviews. While they provided me with useful background information on domestic work, these tended to centre on recruitment and a lack of recognition from government and only ever in relation to female househelps and children. With my research aiming to look beyond the female, and specifically the girl-child, househelp phenomenon in Nigeria, these interviews often ignored the presence of other types of domestic workers, which I contend leads to an invisibilisation of the different kinds of domestic work in the country I was trying to understand, such as drivers, gardeners and other adult domestic workers.

There is the additional contradiction in that the 'experts' I interviewed often also employ domestic workers themselves, which can blur the boundaries between being a key informant and an employer, even if future research might tackle the potential conflicts between being a policy maker and an employer. However, for this particular research, I decided instead to switch focus and interview employers – a group that were initially missing from my pilot. As I was interested in both employer and employee perspectives, I could not explore one side and ignore the other.

With this in mind, I returned to Lagos in October 2011 to conduct the fieldwork, which took place between November 2011 and July 2012. Leaving Lagos in this latter period did not equate to finishing the research, however. For example, employers who have read a blog post I wrote in 2012 on domestic workers in Nigeria still contact me to ask if they can provide some information on their experiences of employing domestic workers.[3]

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[3] The guest post, 'Domestic Workers in Nigeria' was published in June 2012 on the Nigerian blog, Natural Nigerian http://naturalnigerian.com/2012/06/domestic-workers-in-nigeria/ (accessed 2 July 2015).

There is also my father back in Lagos who might mention an incident that may have occurred with his driver or security guard whenever he calls. Although I have been unable to return to Lagos since completing my fieldwork, as a number of my interviews with domestic workers were facilitated via mobile phones (see later section on Putting Methods into Practice), I am also in contact with a few workers who have access to mobile phones via SMS and the mobile messaging app 'WhatsApp'.

3.2   Researching Domestic Work in Lagos

In line with the suggestion that 'a focus on one region enables a more grounded reading of the practices of domestic servitude' (Ray, 2000:4), I decided to concentrate on Lagos, Nigeria's largest metropolitan area with an estimated population of 10.5 million (UN-Habitat, 2010:52). Being Nigerian, and particularly coming from Lagos, provided me with a good starting point for conducting the research. However, it also had its limitations, which will be discussed later. Furthermore, there were three other reasons that informed my decision to locate my research in Lagos: the city's economic and cultural significance, its association with high levels of domestic service and the diversity of contextual factors affecting the experiences of domestic workers.

Lagos is the hub of Nigeria, having grown from a traditional town with 'little or no significance' (Okediji, 1978:200) to the country's 'centre of excellence'.[4] Writing on

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[4] All Nigerian states have slogans. Lagos is referred to as the 'centre of excellence' because of its reputation as containing the very best of Nigeria's skilled workforce.

West African urbanisation, Oladejo Okediji (1978:201) notes that rapid industrial expansion in the 1950s led to a 'remarkable spatial build up and population growth', which was closely associated with internal migration. This resulted in the city's population growing from 32,508 in 1891 to 665,246 in 1963. Today, it is estimated that around 600,000 people a year migrate to Lagos in search of employment and better opportunities (LPR, 2012:16). As migrants tend to come from rural and urban Nigeria, as well as neighbouring West African countries – notably Chad, Niger, Togo and Benin – Lagos is also said to 'embrace a high degree of ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity' (Okediji, 1978:201) compared with other Nigerian cities.

As many migrants moving to Lagos in search of employment are either unskilled or semi-skilled, and the job market is very tight, this has led to extremely high rates of unemployment and underemployment. Several migrants end up working in the informal economy which, in Lagos, employs almost 80 per cent of the population and contributes around 58 per cent of its Gross National Product (GNP) (Onyebueke and Geyer, 2011:59). While informal work ranges from hairdressing to food selling to carpentry, for many new migrants their first job is usually as a domestic worker in people's homes (see Chapter 4).

This leads to the second reason why I situated my research in Lagos, namely that it has a long history of domestic servitude. There is evidence that, as far back as 1878, freeborn young females and males were brought to Lagos to work as domestic servants (Mann, 2007:186). In 1891, the total working population of domestic servants in Lagos was

1,633 (Sawada, 2011:336). In 1950, 13,286 people were classified as employed in 'domestic and personal service', being 9,567 men and 3,719 women. By 1963, the number of people classified as 'domestic servants' was 11,897, being 7,545 males and 4,352 females (Okediji, 1978).[5] In 2007, the National Bureau of Statistics of Nigeria estimated that the number of domestic workers in Nigeria was 197,900, comprising 98,300 women and 99,600 men (ILO, 2013:34). With around 54 million Nigerians in waged employment in 2007 (NBS, 2007), this suggests that domestic work accounted for around 0.36 per cent of the labour force. This figure, however, is an underestimate in a region where almost every middle-class and wealthy household has a domestic worker. Indeed, personal experience suggests that there is at least one domestic worker in each of these households, with a large household employing as many as six people, suggesting that domestic service is still a significant source of employment in Lagos.

There are two possible explanations for these low numbers of domestic workers in official statistics in Nigeria. First, labour force surveys, or even employing households, may not recognise domestic workers as workers and so they may not be captured (see Chapter 4). Second, it is not uncommon for domestic workers to be related to their employer by kinship and be unpaid (ILO, 2013:35). A case in point is child-fostering – a customary practice where young children are sent to live with relatives in urban areas, and in exchange for domestic chores and childcare would receive educational or

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[5] Figures are based on the 1950 and 1963 population census of Lagos. Okediji (1978:202) argues that the lower figure for 1963 could be due to inaccuracy in the census figures, the voluntary mass resignation of colonial officers from the Nigerian Civil Service (in exchange for cash compensation) on the eve of political independence, which could have led to the loss of employment by many domestic servants, or the lack of standardisation in the census occupational categories affecting members of the group both in 1953 and 1963.

vocational training. In some cases, a monthly sum would be sent to parents (see also Chapter 4 and 5).

While domestic service is clearly not a new phenomenon in Nigeria, it was during colonial rule, which lasted from 1861 to 1960, that it became seen as waged employment, especially for men who were educated and trained to work for the colonial economy.[6] Men assumed the role of domestic servants in the early stages of colonisation, largely due to women's initial restriction from employment in cities and the colonial European elite deeming men more suitable. As the numbers above show, more men than women have been employed as domestic workers in Nigeria, with the current figures on domestic work indicating that there is an almost equal split between male and female domestic workers in the country. There are two additional points to be made here. First, men have been in this occupation since the colonial era; second, there has not been a transition from largely male to largely female domestic workers in Nigeria. This leads to my final reason for situating this study in Lagos, which is that it is an ideal site to study both men and women in domestic service.

With 10.5 million inhabitants and 20 Local Government Areas (LGA), I also had to decide where in the city to conduct the research. In the end, I chose Ikeja as it was the LGA I was most familiar with (see Figure 3.1), and two 'gated communities' within it, Omole Housing Estate Phase 1 in Ojudu and LSDPC (Phase IV) Medium Income Housing Estate in Ogba (see Figure 3.2). In the next section, I explain why I situated my

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[6] Although British colonial rule in Nigeria officially applied only between 1900 and 1960, British administration in the country formally began in 1861, when the British annexed Lagos to protect their commercial interests and made it a royal colony.

research in 'gated communities' in general and why I selected these two settlements in

particular.

Figure 3.1 The 16 Local Government Areas Making Up Metropolitan Lagos and Location of Research Site

Research
Site

Source: © Abubakar Khalifa Abubakar (2016). Adaptation of Lagos State House of Assembly Map of Local Government Areas in Lagos.

Figure 3.2 Location of Gated Communities in Ikeja Local Government Area - Ogba and Omole

Ogba
Housing
Estate

Omole
Phase 1
Housing
Estate
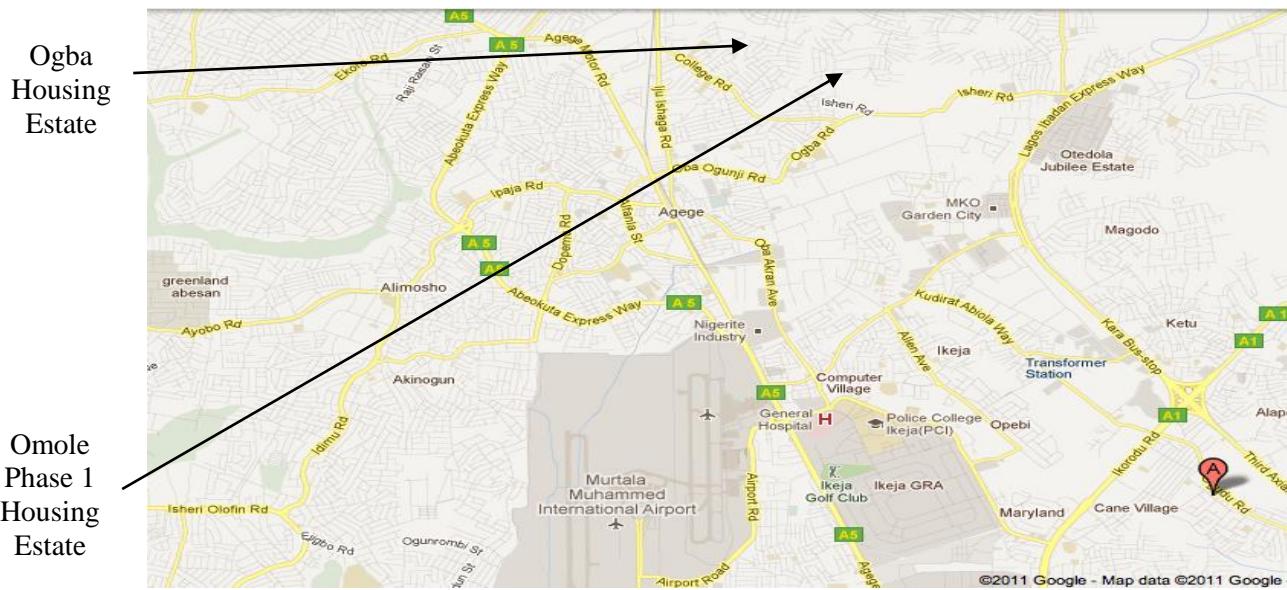
Source: © 2011 Google Maps

3.2.1 Domestic Service and Nigeria's 'Gated Communities'

Known as 'housing estates' in Nigeria, 'gated communities' represent an emergent urban pattern in many cities of the world.[7] Although there is no unanimously agreed definition of the term, gated communities are said to be a response to the fear of crime and desire for status and privacy of its inhabitants (Atkinson and Blandy, 2005:178). Most studies emphasise how these 'walled or fenced housing developments' restrict public access through the use of gates, barriers, walls and fences (ibid:177), or by hiring security staff or installing CCTV systems to monitor access.

Although there is a lack of comprehensive data on gated communities in Lagos, they have become visible features in mainland areas, including Surulere, Apapa and Ikeja, as well as along the coastal suburbs of Ikoyi, Victoria Island and Lekki (see Figure 3.1). In Nigeria, the colonial precursor to contemporary gating was the Government-Reserved Area (GRA), or European Quarters. These were residences for expatriate colonial administrators, executives of foreign firms and selected indigenous staff in specialised occupations, such as the police force. Reflecting the status of their inhabitants, they were fortified and had ample green spaces with services, amenities and recreational areas. After Independence, these GRAs were initially allocated to middle-class senior civil servants (see Olotuah and Bobadoye, 2009).

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[7] Studies on gated communities in developing countries include Brazil (Carvalho et al., 1997), Indonesia (Leisch, 2002) and South Africa (Ballard and Jones, 2011). For a regional perspective see Coy and Pohler, (2002) for Latin America.

Today, the growth of 'armoured housing' (Uduku, 2010) and gated estates in Lagos is linked to growing security concerns, such as kidnappings and armed robberies. Adetokunbo Ilesanmi (2012:110), in his study on gated communities in Lagos, found that the security and privacy they offered were the primary reasons for residents choosing to live there, with exclusivity and the desire for status as secondary reasons.

It is the preoccupation with safety and privacy amongst urban residents that led me to choose gated communities as the major site for this research. Gates and barriers are meant to address the security concerns – crime, traffic and fear of mixing – of its residents. Yet, the need for domestic workers in many of the households in these communities means that 'non-residents' gain intimate access to homes. As I show in my empirical Chapters, this can also lead to profound anxiety and unease within the intimate space of people's domestic environments and everyday lives.

Both Ogba LSDPC and Omole Phase 1 have open spaces, local convenience stores, restaurants, guesthouses, places of worship, clinics, pharmacies and schools. However, I would like to focus on the issue of access, particularly since the Governor of Lagos, Babatunde Fashola, introduced a new law in 2009 stating that all street gates in the city must be left open between 5am and midnight daily. This includes the main gates built at entry and exit points in 'housing estates'. While this measure was implemented to open up exit routes around traffic gridlocked areas, as gates exist to give inhabitants a sense of security, this clearly had an impact on gaining entrance into 'housing estates', especially for non-residents.

The two 'housing estates' in my study had vehicular and pedestrian entry gates manned by security guards, with residents usually recognised by car residential stickers or other forms of identity (see Figures 3.3 and 3.4 below). However, the nature of security differed depending on the time of day and location – both between and within the estates. Hence, the houses were additionally fortified, usually with gates and/or guards and, in some cases, included the use of security dogs and electrified fences.

During the day in Omole, a strict admission policy existed to restrict people trying to come into the estate from its peripheral gates. While guards at the main gates monitoring access seldom stopped any vehicles to enquire as to their purpose in visiting, non-residents trying to gain entry to the estate via the secondary gates were asked for residential stickers. If none was provided, they were redirected to the main gate where they would then be allowed into the estate – usually with minimal scrutiny. At night, however, admittance was strictly controlled and non-residents could only get in for legitimate reasons, for example visiting a resident. All visitors were also required to submit a gate pass to exit provided by the resident they visited.

The issue of accessing these residential areas highlights one of the main reasons behind choosing these two 'housing estates'. My family home is located in Omole Phase 1, allowing me to get in and out with relative ease. I also have acquaintances in Ogba LSDPC, which helped in obtaining access to residents. In addition to my familiarity with both 'housing estates', two other reasons featured in making them suitable sites.

Figure 3.3 Main Entrance - Omole Estate

Source: Author's Own (Photo taken 2012)

Figure 3.4 Additional Gates inside Omole Estate

Source: Author's Own (Photo taken 2012)

First, they are home to relatively affluent households (Omole is a middle-to-high income housing estate and LSDPC a low-to-middle income one) with residents comprising senior government officials, civil servants, successful businessmen and women, and those engaged in paid employment in the formal sector. As a result, most households seek, and can afford to hire, domestic workers to assist in taking care of their homes and/or children.

Second, they are centrally located with convenient access to the Ikeja Central Business District and all the major Lagos throughways, such as the Third Mainland Bridge to the Island, and the Lagos-Ibadan Expressway to other Nigerian States. While most residents have their own cars, the areas are also well-served by buses, *keke maruwas* (three-wheelers), taxis and *okadas* (commercial motorcycles), which are useful for non-residents. As such, most domestic workers aspire to work here due to perceived higher rates of pay and convenient access, which is especially important for live-outs.

3.2.2 'Getting In' and Accessing Respondents

Domestic work is an important part of daily life in Nigeria. However, as previously mentioned, limited information is available regarding details of this employment, even in terms of numbers. This necessitated the need to access respondents using a 'snowball sampling' technique, which is common in research where participants are hard to reach (Flowerdew and Martin, 2005). One of the potential pitfalls of this method is that initial respondents tend to nominate people they know that may have shared similar traits and

characteristics. To reduce this bias, sampling was based on 'multiple snowballs' where several respondents from different walks of life acted as initiators (see Tacoli, 1996:213 in relation to Filipina domestic workers in Rome).

For the present study, domestic workers and employers were approached via my parents, relatives, friends and acquaintances, as well as through the domestic workers working in these households. Anonymity and confidentiality in the interview were guaranteed to all research participants and pseudonyms have been used for all the workers and employers in this study to avoid risk of identification.[8]

My initial interviews were all set up during my first few weeks back in Nigeria, when I 'greeted' a lot of people. Although not customary, it is seen as a sign of respect upon returning from abroad to visit relatives, friends of the family or parents of friends – usually with gifts – to let them know of your return. This 'greeting' was a useful way to inform people of my work. However, the initial introduction of my research met with different responses.

Aunty Bola, who owns and runs a supermarket in one of the 'housing estates', was one of the first people I 'greeted' when I returned to Lagos. I have known Aunty Bola most of my life, as she is the mother of a close friend of mine. During a visit to her supermarket to 'greet' her, she asked me why I was back in the country. On hearing about my research, we spent hours talking about househelps and the advantages and disadvantages

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[8] Pseudonyms have also been used for the four male domestic workers in my family's household and the hair braider I initially contacted, as well as for Aunty Bola and Aunty Mary.

of hiring male or female househelps, the recruitment process and why she only employed, as she called them, 'come-and-go' maids (i.e. part-time, live-out domestic workers). To Aunty Bola, my research was a way to uncover 'the multiple exploitation happening in Lagos homes today', and as such, she assured me of her willingness to help recruit as many employers and domestic workers as possible for the survey.

Like many of the people I 'greeted' when I first returned to Lagos, Aunty Mary, a self-employed trader and friend of the family, also wanted to know why I was back in the country. Her response, however, was in sharp contrast to Aunty Bola's. She asked me why I was speaking to househelps – whom, she felt, were the problem. According to Aunty Bola, my focus should be on employers who will 'open my eyes' and reveal the 'wickedness of maids'. She spoke of stories in which nannies infected children with AIDS or kidnapped children, or house-girls who 'bewitched' Ogas [male employers]. Such stories, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, illustrate the fears that employers have of domestic workers.

With respect to domestic workers, I started close to home. My family currently employs four male domestic workers – Hassan the houseboy, Ali the security guard, Abbas the driver and Garba the cook. I asked if they would be willing to help with my project and tell other domestic workers about it. Like the employers, I was met with different responses – Garba laughed, Ali said he'd get as many *maiguards* as he could, Abbas instantly started telling me about how he got his current job with my parents and Hassan thought what I was doing was interesting and worthwhile. In the end, Ali and Hassan said

they'd be willing to help in my recruitment drive. While they themselves were not interviewed for this study, they became very important for contacting and accessing male domestic workers.

Another useful, and unexpected, contact was Aminat, a hair braider. She had just finished her first year at a polytechnic in Lagos. On this particular day, I was having my hair braided and we were talking about various things, including our studies and how we both had to work part-time to fund our education. During our discussion, she mentioned how she never expected to be where she was given that she was a housegirl when she first came to Lagos at the age of 14. Being a former housegirl and knowing both former and current housegirls, Aminat was an invaluable aide in enabling me to gain access to domestic workers, particularly female domestic workers, because potential interviewees had already heard about me, and my study, from someone whom they knew and trusted.

These multiple contacts then recommended other domestic workers and employers to me as possible respondents. I must point out here that on the selection process, domestic workers were not recruited by employers but by other domestic workers. In many cases – and when a mobile phone was owned – I was introduced to other domestic workers via an introductory SMS/Whatsapp message.

Through this sampling method, I managed to enlist 75 interviewees, comprising 63 workers and 12 employers (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2 in Chapter 5). I will now discuss how I went about gathering information via narrative interviews with workers and semi-

structured interviews with employers. Being the most commonly shared language of communication in Lagos, English or 'pidgin (broken) English' were used in both types of interview. Their use in this research was relatively free of complications.

3.3   Interviewing Participants

> Human geographers researching everyday life seem increasingly hesitant about interviews. (Hitchings, 2012:61)

The quote above from Russell Hitchings (2012) suggests that human geographers are invariably more cautious when researching daily practices; choosing instead to focus on other techniques, such as videos to 'reveal the intricacies of what people do' (ibid:66). However, Hitchings (2012) considers the value of using interviews to research routine practices indicating that they 'offer such an efficient means of understanding how it is to embody certain practices' and enable an understanding of what might be needed 'in initiating positive change' (ibid:66).

Similar to Hitchings (2012), I use interviews because I believe that getting people to speak about their daily experiences can enable the intricacies of everyday life to come out in unexpected ways. Through them, I aimed to explore domestic workers' everyday lives and how employers shape these, for instance, through delegating routine practices such as cleaning; but also how domestic workers negotiate such controls, such as houseboys and washermen who refuse to wash women's underwear. As Hilary Arksey and Peter Knight (1999:2) argue, qualitative interviewing is a valuable research method for exploring 'understandings, opinions… attitudes, [and] feelings'.

In choosing to focus on interviews, I did, however, adopt different methods for domestic workers (narrative interviews) and employers (semi-structured interviews). While both types of interviews are quite flexible, enabling me to elicit information from respondents, as will be detailed below, there is also variability between them. For instance, while I used a topic guide with a list of questions for the semi-structured interviews with employers (see Appendix II), as narrative interviews are almost totally unstructured I only used a brief set of prompts to initiate discussions.

As a key part of this research was respect of the rights of my research participants, before going into detail on the interview process, the next section looks at the ethical considerations of this research.

3.3.1 Ethical Considerations of Confidentiality, Anonymity and Informed Consent

Participation in my study was on a strictly voluntary basis and relied on participants' informed consent. In order to do this, before the interviews respondents were told about the research topic, purpose and objective, questions to be asked, approximate interview duration and recording technique – audio tape recording and/or note taking, in accordance with their preference – and how the research findings would be disseminated. This was also repeated during the interviews.

This process, however, was met with different responses. While male domestic workers showed no concerns, some of the female workers were initially sceptical about the tape recording of their stories. This was due to fear that I would 'report them back to Madam'. In these cases, I would reassure workers of their privacy, stressing that the information would be treated as completely confidential (Nesbitt-Ahmed, 2012a).[9] Some workers and employers did not want to be tape-recorded so, in these situations, copious notes were taken and immediately transcribed. Interviewees were also made aware of their choice to refuse to answer sensitive questions or terminate the interview at any time. To reiterate, anonymity and confidentiality in the interview were also guaranteed to all research participants and pseudonyms have been used for all the workers and employers in this study to avoid risk of identification.

Consent was then given, usually verbally, to account for different levels of literacy, once participants had received all information and after I had responded to any further questions they had. Both employers and domestic workers being interviewed gave their informed consent, and in no situation did I obtain consent to interview domestic workers from their employers.

Finally, to limit any possibilities of domestic workers losing their jobs, the employers and workers I interviewed were from different households. While there were limitations to this approach – such as, not being able to closely observe workers and employers within the same house and corroborate their accounts of each other – at least the research did not

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[9] A short blog post was written on my fieldwork for the Africa at LSE blog, which was presented at an LSE Africa seminar in 2012 http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2012/12/12/reflections-on-researching-domestic-workers-in-lagos-nigeria/ (accessed 4 March 2016)

pose a direct problem to domestic workers. Interviews were also always held in a location of the interviewee's choice.

3.3.2 Narrative Interviews with Domestic Workers

I conducted semi-structured interviews with domestic workers during the pilot and felt that they were not an adequate means by which to interview the 63 domestic workers in my study; I wanted them to tell me their stories in their own context and language, rather than mine. Therefore, I chose to collect the different stories and perspectives of domestic workers via narrative interviews – unstructured and in-depth interviews – enabling life stories to be told without previous preparation or practice. As argued by Sandra Jovchelovitch and Martin Bauer (2000:3), narrative interviews 'envisages a setting that encourages and stimulates an interviewee to tell a story about some significant event in their life and social context'. This, in turn, helped redress some of the power differentials inherent in the research enterprise as it enabled workers to be their own 'leaders' in telling their stories (Elliot, 2005:17).

Having decided to use the narrative method, one of the questions that became important for me as a researcher was: How could I facilitate storytelling in the interviewing process? Indeed, an initial concern was whether, when telling their life story, domestic workers would have to be encouraged to bring up any experiences within their everyday lives, both within and beyond their employers' homes, such as the connection between their paid work and private lives.

This led to the dilemma of giving domestic workers the freedom to tell their life story in their own way, while at the same time being able to obtain stories of their lives within, and beyond, their employers' homes. However, this concern proved to be unnecessary, due to a number of steps taken before the interviews. When I initially met workers, and in order to get their informed consent to participate in the study, I explained that the aim of my study was to find out about their everyday lives as domestic workers in Lagos. Additionally, before the start of each interview, I reiterated the aim of the research. Crucially, interviewees were told that they would not be interrupted, as I would provide only limited responses and they may take as long as they wish to tell their story.

In order to grasp their life experiences, while enabling workers to talk about themselves in an 'off-the-cuff' (Schutze, 2012b:16) manner, each interview began with a single question which acted as a stimulus for workers to tell their story. The following stimulus, adapted from Markieta Domecka et. al's (2012:26) study on Euroidentities - a project concerned with the extent to which ordinary people possess a sense of being European and identify with the continent or with European political and social institutions, was used:

> I would like to find out something about the ways in which domestic work plays a role in the daily lives of people who have experiences working as househelps, nannies, drivers, *maiguards* and so on in Lagos. It is only possible for me to get a sense of such experiences for your lives by you sharing with me what has happened in your life. It would be great if you would tell me your whole life history as I am very interested in hearing it – that includes your personal and private experiences. Please tell me how your life has developed, how it started and how it has unfolded until today – step by step.

Domestic workers were then allowed to respond freely and decide what and how much was going to be said. Once they finished their narration, I would then ask some additional questions concerning the interviewee's biography, usually in reaction to themes the domestic worker brought up, as well as more explicit questions relating to their everyday experiences. In most cases, a follow-up interview was conducted, which showed domestic workers that I was interested in hearing more about their lives. This also helped build their confidence to tell their stories, which provided more narratives (see Elliot, 2005 on the benefits of conducting multiple interviews with respondents).

Interviews were held at times that were convenient for the domestic workers – usually in between workers' other activities, such as running errands. Interviews lasted between 30 minutes and 2 hours depending on their time availability and willingness to talk. Interviews always took place in a location chosen by workers so as not to interfere with their work. These were usually in public spaces – fast food restaurants, shopping malls and churches – or in outside spaces in the employer's home 'to ensure, as much as possible, the freedom to respond truthfully' (Esim and Smith, 2004:26).

Through this method, domestic workers were able to recount events in their preferred order, which enabled me to gather evidence about their everyday lives and the meanings they attach to their experiences. In addition to demographic profile (age, sex, ethnicity), workers spoke about their life prior to becoming domestic workers, events that led to them entering this occupation, strategies for finding employment and relationships with members of the employing household. Work histories, with particular emphasis on

experiences as workers (types of tasks done, salary and working conditions) and issues of life beyond work – childcare, friendships and social networks - were also shared.

Many stories I heard were very sad ones – long working hours, no days off and restrictions on contacting or visiting family – highlighting workers' exhaustion, loneliness and isolation. Other stories described the feeling of joy that came with having a free day, or with the improved treatment and freedom that seemed to increase the longer workers stayed with the same employer. Stories about what domestic workers do when employers are not looking – putting cheaper brands of oil in named brands to pocket some money for themselves, asking for time off to visit 'sick' relatives and taking it as holiday, or simply taking longer to run errands – highlighted the agency, albeit small, domestic workers used in their daily struggles against what they often perceived as oppressive working environments.

3.3.3 Semi-Structured Interviews with Employers

While not as in-depth as my research on domestic workers, I interviewed 12 employers using semi-structured interviews. Because of the dynamic of the 'employer-employee' relationship, I aimed to include male and female employers from different socio-economic backgrounds, who were single or married, and employed either male or female workers who lived-in or lived-out and worked full-time or part-time.

In terms of the smaller number of employers, as compared to workers, there are two reasons for this. First, the majority of existing studies on domestic work in Nigeria I

reviewed focus on the employer's perspective. However, I wanted to go beyond that to give more attention to the domestic worker's voice in studies on this occupation in the country. Furthermore, while my study in most cases echoed some of the points present in those existing studies, it also went beyond that to draw out certain issues that had not been covered in the studies, such as men's rationale for employing domestic workers.

Second, even with these smaller numbers, there became a point where adding more employers to the study only addressed the issue of numbers than the issue of quality and adding something new to my research – particularly with reference to female employers. Indeed, Bryan Marshall et al. (2013), who examined 83 qualitative studies in a leading Information Systems journal to identify optimal ranges of interviews for various types of qualitative research, among other things, argue that for sampling size in interviews the maximum should be where additional interviews fail to produce substantial new insight. Having said that, I would have preferred to include more male employers (only two of the employers were male) as the focus on female employers as the key domestic actor has possibly meant an incomplete understanding of the dynamics of the domestic power relations. However, this still enabled me to explore, albeit in a limited way, the power of the dominant (employer) man over the subordinate (employee) man in the home.

In trying to decide which member of the employing household would be interviewed, as explained in Chapter 1, a domestic employer is not defined as a woman, but as the individual who has admitted into their household a person performing domestic work. As such, if there was more than one adult present in the household, then I would interview

the person who was both available and showed willingness to being interviewed. It would have been interesting to do a household case study, wherein I interviewed all members of the employing household in order to understand the relationship between different members of the household and domestic workers. However, at the time of research, this was not a methodology I considered.

Interviews with employers were useful in tracing the process through which Nigerian families recruited domestic workers, the reasons for employing domestic workers, the rationale behind choosing workers (for example, on grounds of sex, age and ethnicity), different types of daily treatment and working conditions from the employer's perspective, and the opportunities made available for domestic workers to engage in relations beyond that as an employee.

Being more flexible than structured interviews or questionnaires, this approach enabled me to gather descriptive data while probing deeper into employers' understandings of domestic work. These interviews did involve a degree of structure – a list of questions and topics were designed from a topic guide, so as to address the more specific issues concerning employers – and I did follow a script. To a certain extent, however, questions did not always follow on exactly in the way outlined on the schedule. Thus, I would modify the topic guide, omitting certain questions and adding others. I was also flexible during interviews – asking questions that had to be covered, but also following the flow of the conversation and adding new questions or changing the order of questions as appropriate. As with domestic workers, interviews were held at appropriate times for the

employers. However, all took place in their homes, usually in the living room on sofas or armchairs, and lasting between 45 minutes and 1½ hours.

As these interviews were less in number and more restricted in scope, I supplemented them with the use of novels, movies, music videos, newspapers, blogs and social media.

Beyond Interviews: Fiction, Movies, Newspapers and Blogs

Beginning with fiction, I found novels to be extremely helpful in grasping the experiences of workers in Nigerian households, as well as the views and perceptions that Nigerian employers (and Nigerian society) may have of them. In their chapter on Arts-based research (ABR) practice, Gioia Chilton and Patricia Leavy (2014:409) highlight that '[f]iction as a social research practice is a natural extension of what many researchers and writers have long been doing.' For instance, 'fiction writers and qualitative researchers both seek to build believable representations of existing possible worlds' and also aim to 'truthfully and authentically portray the human experience' (ibid:409).

Ben Highmore (2002) also suggests that theories of everyday might also be found 'in the pages of a novel' (ibid:20). Similarly, Lorraine Sim (2015:113), in theorising the everyday, argued that feminist writings on everyday life 'need to look to alternative genres and discursive modes, such as literature, life writing, the essay… in which to locate "unofficial" studies and representations of the everyday' (see also Lewis et al., 2005 - one of the first scholarly articles to argue for the value of fiction as an important

form of development knowledge). Therefore, I used fiction not only because it was 'accessible, engaging and pleasurable' (Chilton and Leavy, ibid:409), but as it was also helpful in exploring, in a different way, the complexity of lived experience from both the domestic worker and employer's perspective.

I drew on novels, such as Chinua Achebe's (1966) *A Man of the People*, which portrayed African men in the kitchens of the missionaries or other colonists as cooks and stewards, as well as Buchi Emecheta's (1994) *The Joys of Motherhood*, where the father of the female protagonist, Nnu Ego, sends her to Lagos to marry a man, Nnaife, who earns a living as a 'washerman' for an English family. These novels helped me further substantiate my claim that men worked as domestic workers in colonial Nigeria, while also enabling me to derive perspectives of what being a domestic worker in colonial Nigeria might have been like, as many colonial studies I found were from other African countries.

Another useful classic text was Flora Nwapa's (1966) *Efuru*, a novel about an independent, but 'cursed' woman living in a village in colonial Nigeria. Below is an excerpt from the novel (ibid:37), where Efuru asks her mother-in-law to help her get a maid to help her look after her baby. Her mother-in-law found her a ten-year-old girl, who was the daughter of her mother-in law's cousin. Here, child fostering in colonial Nigeria is introduced, as well as the different perspectives employing households may have on domestic workers and how to treat workers:

> 'What bothers me now is a maid. I want a maid to help me look after Ogonim while I trade with my husband.'

'A maid? You want a maid to look after your only child? She will kill her. I advise you not to have a maid. You will regret it.'

'I shall get a good one. I want to help my husband. We have been losing much money.'

'What is that to you? What is money? Can a bag of money go for an errand for you? Can a bag of money look after you in your old age? Can a bag of money mourn you when you are dead? A child is more valuable than money. So our fathers said.' As if these were not enough, Efuru's friend began to narrate all the atrocities of maids.

'You know Nwanta, don't you?'

'Yes.'

'You know that her first son is blind in one eye.'

'Yes.'

'A maid was responsible for it.'

'How?' Efuru asked in horror.

'The boy was playing with a stick. The maid saw him and did not take it away from him. So the stick went right into his eye and now the poor boy is blind in one eye.'

'You know Nwanyuzo, don't you?'

'Yes, I know here very well.'

'You know that her daughter has a burnt face. And I don't know who is going to marry a girl with a burnt face. It was a maid who was responsible for it too.'

Efuru did not ask her how that happened this time. It was not necessary.

'I have maids no doubt, but I know how to treat them with an iron hand. I do.'

I also read about domestic workers in contemporary Nigerian fiction, such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's (2006) *Half of A Yellow Sun* and Chika Unigwe's (2012) *The Night Dancer*. In *The Night Dancer*, for instance, Ezi's husband has an affair with their young maid, Rapu. Here, the fears around female worker's sexual availability are revealed. This, as I discuss in Chapter 6, is a major anxiety for female employers.

Short stories also proved valuable, such as 'Life During Wartime: Sierra Leone, 1997' by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie published in 2006 in The New Yorker online, which gives an insight into the world of middle-class Nigerians and their domestic workers (see also

Adenekan and Cousins, 2014). Adichie's middle-class background is something she has spoken about explicitly. For example, in 2009 she gave a Technology, Entertainment, Design (TED) talk on 'The Danger of a Single Story.' Early in her talk, Adichie tells a story about herself and a houseboy who started working for her family:

> I come from a conventional middle-class family... and so we had, as was the norm, live-in domestic help who would often come from nearby rural villages; so the year I turned eight we got a new houseboy—his name was Fide. The only thing that my mother told us about him was that his family was very poor. (TED online, https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story?language=en, accessed 11 July 2015)

Adichie thus makes a clear class distinction between her family and other, rural, poor families. Adichie brings the figure of Fide into fiction in her short story. Fide – a houseboy from the village – is described as someone who is 'backwards'. He has never seen a refrigerator and spoke a rural dialect of Igbo that was not Anglicised. He chewed rice with his mouth open, washed his employer's clothes in metal basins, and hung them on the line tied from the mango to the guava tree in the back yard. The division in status and behaviour between the lower-class Fide and his middle-class employer is clearly represented here by Adichie, and in turn the class differentiations within Nigerian society. This is something that was quite evident in my study, as will be discussed in my empirical chapters – the ways in which social status and class distinctions were made by employers to establish boundaries in their homes.

I also drew from wider sources beyond fiction – examining information from blogs, videos, Nollywood movies, Nigeria music videos, newspapers and social media sites. One such movie was *Desperate Housegirls*, in which three young women, who work as

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waitresses in a local *bukka*, decide to quit their jobs to become house-girls with the intent to steal and seduce their way to riches. Blogs also provided me with information on the attitudes and opinions of Nigerians on paid domestic work. Below is an entry form a forum on Lagos Mums – a website for busy working mothers in Lagos – in which the writer is asking for advice on how to find the 'right' nanny.

Diary of a LagosMum: Nanny Come, Nanny Go

I am tired! The amount of time I spend interviewing; carrying out medical tests; going over house rules; confirming that the uniforms the last girl left behind can fit new girl (*even with the best intentions to make one-size-fit-all uniforms a woman's body still manages to defy 'one-size-fits-all theory'*); it is a wonder I have time for anything else.

Why is it that only after a few months of new nanny starting that she needs to leave? This is after taking the time for my tots to get used to a new staff and my DH who hates new faces in the house. I find out she can't stay for a host of reasons – everything from she is pregnant to she has changed her mind or she is totally incompetent. I am therefore back on the searching for a nanny circuit…

I call my fellow Mums; ask for recommendations and leads. No one has solutions. Everyone is in some stage of searching for a new/replacement house help or nanny. Please who has any reliable source for proper agencies or sources of domestic staff? And no I don't mean Mr. Pius who looks like pimp himself. There are so many bad stories out there – kidnapping scares, child abuse, pidgin speaking staff which the kids are picking up (imagine the horror of taking your child for assessment for new school and she breaks into pidgin??).

I have asked myself several times and yes I have to work… So finding a nanny is a must. Fellow LMs I am tired! Where do I go? I am willing to pay good money for someone who is worth it! I am not quite ready to go to the route of Filipinos as some of my dear friends suggested… it feels slightly foreign to me (*no pun intended*). Yes though I am stressed I can still crack some jokes.

Help me out Ladies…

Interviews on social media sites, on topics, such as '[What to Consider When Hiring A Nanny](#)' and '[Ways to Manage Domestic Staff Especially Nannies](#)' gave further insight

intothis occupation from an employer's perspectives. For instance, in 'What to Consider When Hiring A Nanny', the CEO of Lagos Mums, Yetty Williams, educates the audience on what to consider before hiring a nanny. Steps include enquiring how reputable is the source of the domestic worker (e.g. the individual or agent providing the workers), how healthy the nanny is (are they HIV positive or not? TB, Hepatitis?) and what are they bringing into the house, background and reference checks (e.g. where do they live, where did they last work?), and prayer.

As can be seen, this research used a variety of qualitative research techniques - interviews, novels, videos and blogs. Moreover, while my research was not initially planned in partnership with the participants of my study - in that domestic workers and employers did not help shape the content and formulation of the interview guides - the participation of the domestic workers in this study helped shape it in many ways. For instance, in choosing to use narrative interviews, my aim was to ensure that I did not lead the interview process. As such, my research established the goal of representing the experiences of domestic workers very much through their own eyes, and expressed in their own voices.

A case in point, my research was initially supposed to focus on the sexual and marital lives of domestic workers. However, through speaking with domestic workers, it became clear from their own experiences that there were other issues, which led to reframing my overall objective of my study, namely to look more broadly at their everyday work and life experiences. In doing this, I feel I have underlined domestic workers' knowledge and

experience as legitimate and significant to my research's development. Furthermore, the domestic worker's voice contributed greatly to the knowledge garnered in my thesis.

My research was also enriched by the use of certain ethnographic techniques, particularly observation when I was in public spaces to get further insight into domestic work in the country. I also used field notes and drew on informal conversations with family, friends and strangers.

3.3.4 Field Notes, Observations and Informal Conversations

In terms of participation observation, as domestic work is undeniably part of everyday life in Nigeria, I found it useful to document my observations of domestic work while in Lagos. I gathered some of my most valuable data during times when I was at hairdressers, nail rooms, restaurants, weddings, shopping centres, markets and social gatherings. When I attended weddings, I was able to observe how domestic workers engaged in the celebrations. On Sundays, when families went out for lunch in restaurants, I noticed domestic workers sitting on separate tables from their employing family and only interacting when they had to take care of the children. It was in these contexts that I directly witnessed interactions between employers and domestic workers and was able to begin to construct the intricate layers surrounding domestic work in Nigeria.

I also had friends, relatives and acquaintances who would often talk to me about domestic work whenever I was 'off duty' and who provided me with some additional insights into this occupation in Lagos. These different observations and conversations I had

throughout my fieldwork were captured in my fieldnotes – with the identity of my informal sources also protected so as not to cause any harm.

3.4   Data Analysis

The data analysis, which was an integral part of my research right from the beginning, occurred simultaneously with my writing-up and continued throughout the research process. This was because I found it useful to start classifying information from the early stages of my fieldwork.[10] In order to manage the large amount of data I was acquiring, I made sure I classified data during the transcription process. Following each interview, if recorded, I transcribed the recordings and, if notes were taken, I immediately transcribed and summarised each participant's narrative in their own words. So as not to lose authenticity, I transcribed in the language participants used during the interviews. This was mainly English for employers and would vary between English or pidgin English for domestic workers.

As already explained, ensuring anonymity and confidentially was maintained was a crucial part of my ethical considerations in this research. However, how could I ensure that the respondents of my research were suitably protected, without distorting the data? As Louise Corti, Annette Day and Gill Backhouse (2000) write, in the context of

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[10] Data was coded and analysed using a combination of Excel and Word, which I do not feel undermined the quality of my data collected. This is because, regardless of whether coding and data analyses are done manually or using qualitative data management programmes, such as NVivo, it is an intellectual exercise and time is needed to think through the data collected.

confidentiality and informed consent in qualitative research, a dilemma is always presented to the researcher in how much detail to reveal.

To ensure appropriate anonymisation, without distorting the data, I removed major identifying details, mainly participants' real names and places of work, during the transcription phase and replaced them with pseudonyms - as such, no real names were used - and were kept in the document (see Corti et al., 2000). For instance, as already explained, this research took place in two gated communities; however, I felt that revealing the names of the particular estates in which workers worked would be problematic. As such, in writing this dissertation I have not included the estates in which each respondent works as a way to further protect their identity. As I also had multiple sources of data - transcripts, observations and fieldnotes to anonymise - to ensure this was done in a consistent manner, anonymisation was carried out only on names and workplaces. I also read and re-read each transcript carefully to ensure that other, more subtle, but obvious clues to people or places were not evident.

Having done this, I then organised the interview transcripts into separate themes and sub-themes (e.g. 'family background' or 'life as a domestic worker') by copying interview extracts to another file under thematic headings. Particularly with information gathered from domestic workers, I drew inspiration from Gabriele Rosenthal and Wolfram Fischer-Rosenthal's (2004:261) analysis of narrative-life story data. I chose this process as I viewed worker narratives as life constructions.

Drawing on their work on biographical-narrative interviews with former members of the Hitler-Youth organisation born between 1923 and 1929, Rosenthal and Fischer-Rosenthal (2004) argue that narrated life stories are constructs of biological experiences. Based on 'a coagulate of the past and future and a creation of the lived present', it constitutes 'selective principles' guiding the stories the narrator chooses to tell in the interview. It also includes how they perceive these narrated experiences today. The consequence, they argue, is that, prior to analysing narrated stories, the researcher must reconstruct these 'selective principles'. To do this, each narrated experience must be identified and localised within the framework of the biographer's overall construction, as defined through the thematic field presented in the interview. Determining which thematic field a particular story belongs to can only be done in a six-stage analytical process.

The first step (*'analysis of biographical data'*) involves extracting data, which could stand independently of the workers' own interpretation, and interpreting them with respect to their possible meanings for the narrator. The second step (*'thematic analysis'*) involves reconstructing the ways in which the structure of the narrated life story was temporally and thematically ordered in the interview in order to interpret the nature and function of the presentation in the interview.

In the third stage (*'re-construction of the case history or life as it was lived'*), the life history is reconstructed – in two separate analytical steps of the narrated life story and the lived life history – taking into account all other biographical experiences. These are then put into the chronology of the experienced life history to reconstruct the perspective of

the past and the biographical meaning the experiences had when they happened. In the fourth stage (*'micro-analysis of individual texts segments'*) all hypotheses – those on the meaning of experiences in the lived life history and those on the biographical overall concepts and evaluations of the life story – developed in the previous steps are checked in detailed analyses of single text segments. The fifth analytical step (*'contrastive comparison of life history and life story'*) provides insights into mechanisms of selecting experiences for the life story, the way they are presented and the differences between past and present perspectives. The last stage is the formation of different types of narratives.

Based on this, I listened to the tapes several times and re-read transcripts critically and analytically, categorising themes and sub-themes with this analytic process in mind. I also wrote down my thoughts and insights about the data. This process enabled me to analyse sentences or paragraphs and identify particular incidents – such as the age when workers first moved into domestic work – and parts of workers' everyday lives that were connected with the relevant themes in question. I was also able to see the ways in which workers talked about the influence of their work on other areas of their lives. I found this a very useful way to understand what each theme meant for the research participants themselves. This enabled me to construct a life history of each participant – from parental background, life prior to domestic work, reasons for joining domestic work and so on.

My time in Lagos provided me with the rich body of invaluable data that informs my thesis. The fieldwork, however, presented a number of problems, such as accessing respondents and determining when and where to conduct interviews. In the next section, I

explore the issues of access, positionality and researching 'at home' that I faced in the field.

3.5   Putting Methods to Practice: Problems and Limitations

Arranging interviews was always going to be a challenge as I was rarely able to set exact dates, times or locations due to the unpredictable nature of workers' lives. However, it was the living situation of domestic workers that added a complicated dimension to accessing domestic workers and securing a safe and comfortable space to hold interviews.

My primary focus was assuring that workers would feel free to discuss their stories in a safe environment. This was much easier for men and workers who lived out because I could meet them away from their employing households. For domestic workers, and particularly women who lived-in – as interviews could potentially risk their jobs and, in extreme cases, safety – the numerous obstacles to meeting and conducting confidential interviews was one of the most challenging aspects of my research in Lagos. My methods of accessing and interviewing domestic workers, especially live-ins, necessitated creativity.

In a few contexts, I met workers when they were sent on errands and either accompanied them, brought them to my home (which was possible for those workers based in Omole) or conducted the interview in a public space. As this brought with it complexities in terms

of location and vulnerabilities on the part of workers, very often the process was facilitated through mobile phones and shared networks. When I knew one worker who recommended me to another, we would exchange numbers and then decide when and where to meet, without having to face the limitations of interviewing in the employer's home. Again, this was easier for live-outs or for those live-ins whose employers allowed them to have mobile phones.

Another major challenge was my positionality, which was shaped in part by my own social status. My identity as a young, middle-class, internationally educated Nigerian, was initially a problem with domestic workers. Similar to Shireen Ally (2010:197), who conducted research on domestic work in South Africa as a middle-class 'Indian' South African, workers instantly identified me as part of the employing class, which resulted in a mixture of reactions. This ranged from welcoming me due to assumptions that I could improve their current working conditions, to being dismissive once they learnt my purpose was not to hire or compensate them. There were also workers who were worried that I would 'report back' what they said to their employers and so reconsidered being interviewed at the last minute. Finally, having never been referred to as 'Ma' or 'Aunty' while in Nigeria – even by the domestic workers in my parents' home – most uncomfortable for me was the deferential manner in which a number of domestic workers referred to me, signalling the power relations operating in their workplaces.

To overcome these hierarchical relations and create an atmosphere of openness between myself and workers, I shared some personal life stories in order to 'partially identify'

(Mies, 1983:122) with workers (see also Cotterill, 1992 on the effectiveness of personal experiences in eroding barriers). With younger female domestic workers, we also talked about music, Nigerian artists, Nollywood movies, fashion and so on. Overall, the fact that I chose to interview workers helped bridge the gap between us. I also believe the fact that I was not going to interview their own employers made them more willing to be open with me.

Domestic workers seemed to appreciate that I cared about them and wanted to listen to their stories. However, being a young woman did impact on my interaction with some workers. My marital status came into question on more than one occasion, particularly with older domestic workers who found my single status to be a disruption of acceptable generational and gender hierarchies. I was, after all, a young, unmarried woman asking much older men and women about some of the most private aspects of their lives. However, I did go into the field knowing this could affect their willingness to talk with me as an 'equal'.

My experience with employers was the reverse. Being seen as 'one of them' (e.g. part of the employer class) did help in accessing employers and getting them to share their views and perceptions on domestic workers. However, I found on more than one occasion that employers could be reluctant to share their experiences in a formal interview context. These interviews were done only through the assurance that responses would not be taped and identities would remain confidential. I believe that the attitudes, perceptions and experiences attained in these non-recorded interviews allowed for access to the

worldviews of employers in a way that would otherwise not have been available in a formal, taped interview process.

Issues surrounding my personal safety and vulnerability were not key considerations when deciding to conduct interviews in 'public' spaces. Upon reflection, this method turned out to be helpful for me in terms of my safety while in the field. For instance, it would have been interesting to conduct interviews in male live-outs' homes and get first-hand insight into their living conditions. However, I have read studies since returning from my fieldwork of female researchers reporting incidents during one-to-one interviews at male participants' homes, where verbal or physical interaction had made them feel uncomfortable, unsafe and, at times, harassed (see Arendell, 1997; Kilkey et al., 2013).

I do not know what would have happened had men told their stories to a male researcher; for instance, only two men spoke to me in-depth about sexual encounters they had had with female employers (see Chapter 8). Nevertheless, I feel my role as a woman enabled men to communicate things they may not have been able to do with other men. For example, prior to entering the field, I feared that cultural constructions of masculinity that silence expressions of emotion and vulnerability (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Messner, 1994) would make it extremely difficult to access the experiences of men beyond that as financial providers. Yet, men did disclose their experiences and feelings about domestic work and being away from their families. It is possible that participants may have omitted

or emphasised certain elements in their accounts because they were talking to a young woman.

Going back to Lagos to do fieldwork presented some immediate advantages. I did not need time to find my way around and, if participants used slang or made use of cultural references during interviews, I understood. I also had access to unsolicited information through informal conversations. However, doing research in one's own city is not without its challenges.

I was constantly aware during the research that my perceptions might be clouded by my personal experience, which might result in an interview being shaped and guided by my individual experiences and views and not those of the participants. I felt this might also affect the analysis, leading to an emphasis on shared factors between workers and me and a de-emphasis on discrepant factors, or vice versa.

To counter this and understand their experiences, I adopted Marilyn Asselin's (2003) thinking that the 'insider-researcher' should gather data with their 'eyes open' and assume they know nothing about the issue being studied. For example, having never experienced what it is to engage in domestic work to earn a livelihood automatically made me an 'outsider' with domestic workers. Furthermore, I hoped that self-awareness as to my personal biases would reduce the potential concerns associated with my somewhat 'insider' position.

To conclude, it is hoped that, in spite of my 'insider' status, my openness throughout this thesis and deep interest in the lived experiences of the domestic workers and the employers who shape this occupation enables an accurate and adequate representation of the everyday struggles of domestic workers for decent working and private lives. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, while this was not a purely participatory action research, participatory research also requires critical reflection and continued analysis of one's research routines and ongoing interpretations. I have been very reflexive throughout the research and writing process by letting the multiple narratives that arose from my interviews with domestic workers speak for themselves rather than imposing a larger, single narrative.

4

Contextualising Paid Domestic Work in Nigeria

Domestic work is undeniably part of everyday life in Nigeria, with some households employing a driver, househelp, nanny, *maiguard*, cook, washerman and gardener. Others hire a woman, who can do household chores and care for the children or a man who, in addition to domestic tasks, might also garden, guard and, in a few cases, drive. Some families employ domestic workers on a full-time basis, while others make do with part-time workers. This chapter provides the context in which the 63 men and women working in homes in Lagos, whom I interviewed between 2011 and 2012, are found.

As the workers in my study continuously experience lack of recognition and protection, in this chapter I begin with the international regulatory environment for protection of paid domestic workers, with particular focus on the International Labour Organisation's (ILO's) Decent Work for Domestic Workers Agenda. I then explore the history of the occupation in the country, starting from its colonial beginnings in the mid-19th century, before honing down to the national level of Nigeria to explore the legal and policy context for domestic workers' rights. I do this to highlight that, while it may not be fully recognised, the country has a long history of domestic service.

Discussing the context in which this rather complex and multi-layered form of work is found enables me, in the following chapters, to understand the conversations on daily life, challenges and more I had with domestic workers and employers in Lagos.

4.1   Decent Work for Domestic Workers

> Legislation and regulatory policy are essential tools for eliminating the negative aspects of informality in the domestic work sector while at the same time ensuring that opportunities for decent work and employment offered by domestic work are not compromised. (ILO, 2012:2)

As I mentioned briefly in Chapter 2, there have been a number of international organisations that have been working to ensure the protection of domestic workers worldwide, including the ILO's Decent Work for Domestic Workers Agenda, and specifically Convention Number 189 (C189) and Recommendation Number 201, which came into force in September 2013. It recognises the social and economic value of this occupation and work towards ensuring the rights and dignity of workers are protected.

Convention Number 189, which gives particular attention to migrant, live-in and young domestic workers, includes twenty-seven global standards for workers' rights. These include effective protection against all forms of abuse, harassment and violence (Article 5); fair terms of employment and decent working conditions that respect their privacy (Article 6); normal hours of work, overtime compensation, periods of daily and weekly rest and pain annual leave (Article 10). The accompanying Recommendation 201 provides practical guidance concerning possible legal and other measures to implement

the rights and principles stated in the Convention, such as paragraph 25, which recognises the need to respect domestic workers' work and family responsibilities (ILO, 2013). Since its adoption, the Convention has been ratified in 21 countries, of which 14 are already in force, with 7 more currently in the process.[11]

While C189 and Recommendation 201 are extremely important to set the standard necessary for domestic workers' protection, this increasing international recognition of the regulation of this sector does not seem to be reflected in the legal and policy provisions applicable to domestic workers in Nigeria or in the everyday lives of the majority of employees I interviewed. As explained in Chapter 2, the challenges of promoting decent work in this occupation is due to issues, such as its association with the unpaid domestic work primarily done by women and its location in the private home of the employer.

These factors are compounded within the Nigerian context, where a cultural and societal attitude of stigmatisation and discrimination of domestic workers exists. Thus, as significant as international standard setting is for the protection of domestic workers, regulation and protection is also based on a society's recognition of the plight of domestic workers; as well 'existing laws and prevailing legislative practices' (ILO, 2012:10)

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[11] The 21 countries which have ratified the convention and have entered into it are Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Germany, Italy, Mauritius, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa and Uruguay. The additional seven countries that have ratified, but the convention is not yet in force, are Belgium, Chile, Dominican Republic, Finland, Ireland, Panama and Switzerland (http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300:0::NO::P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460) Accessed 21 July 2015

among other things. As I indicate below, this sector is still largely 'invisible' and undervalued in Nigeria despite its rich history in the country.

4.2   Paid Domestic Work in Nigeria: From the Colonial Era to Contemporary Times

Domestic service is clearly not a new phenomenon in Nigeria. In pre-colonial times, workers were used on the farmland, such as cocoa and palm oil plantations, in wealthy households or as 'servants' sold or retained by captors (Oyeniyi, 2013). However, it was during colonialism, which lasted from 1861 to 1960, that domestic service became seen as waged employment, especially for men who were educated and trained to work for the colonial economy.[12]

Internal migration in the country followed the colonial construction of road and rail systems that stimulated unprecedented socio-economic and political developments. It also resulted in labour migration, especially of young Nigerians from rural areas, as jobs were created in cities, such as Lagos - as well as in Abeokuta and Ibadan also in Southwestern Nigeria - where colonial administration, trading firms and public and private agencies set up their offices (Oyeniyi, 2013:2). There were also internal migrants trafficked for forced labour, such as farm work, and sex work – although the most common form was the trafficking of young women and children for domestic work under the guise of 'child fostering' (see below).

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[12] Although British colonial rule in Nigeria was between 1900 and 1960, British administration in the country formally began in 1861, when the British annexed Lagos to protect their commercial interests and made it a royal colony.

In Lagos, the growth in numbers of 'domestic servants' during this period has been linked to the surge of rural immigration to the city in the late 1930s and the early 1940s, as well as industrialisation and urbanisation in the late colonial period (Ekpe-Otu, 2009:27). Additionally, there was a 'professionalisation and commercialisation of labour' (Okediji, 1978:201) as 'educated but unskilled youths' who found peasant agriculture unattractive migrated to Lagos in search of opportunities. These migrants formed 'the ranks of unemployed' (Koeningsberger et al., 1964:261 cited in Okediji, 1978:203) that provided services as cooks, stewards, maids, drivers, servants and night watchmen to the colonial administrators and local elite, who increasingly adopted a European lifestyle.

Having a domestic worker was an integral facet of status for Europeans, with 'adult domestics' (e.g. stewards, cooks and drivers) and 'young domestics' (e.g. 'small boys' and 'baby nurses') employed to maintain households (see Ladan, 2005; Lindsay, 2003a, 2003b). In the early stages of colonisation, men assumed the role of domestic servants largely due to women's initial restriction from employment in cities and the colonial European elite deeming men more suitable. In her novel, *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta (1994) gives a sense of this, as the protagonist's husband is a domestic servant employed by a colonial administrator in Lagos (see also Bujra, 2000 on Tanzania; Hansen, 1989, 1992 on Zambia; Oyono, 1990 on Cameroon; and Schmidt, 1992 on Southern Rhodesia on male domestic workers in other colonial African countries).

During this period, 'big men' who included a few local elites (Nigerians and repatriates from Sierra Leone and Cuba) in the then capital, Lagos, also emulated the British and

employed domestic workers. For those migrant men in Lagos from lower tiers of the social hierarchy who could afford it, small boys were hired to assist with domestic needs such as shopping, cooking and washing clothes. Others obtained the assistance of younger male or female relatives who, under the auspices of fostering, in exchange for domestic chores and childcare, would receive educational or vocational training. In some cases, a monthly sum would be sent to parents (see also below).

Many Nigerians adopted these alternative strategies, as the upper ranks of the civil service were barred to them until the end of the colonial period, preventing them from gaining 'big man' status (Lindsay, 2003b:139). However, as from 1954, with the 'Nigerianisation of the Civil Service' (McStallworth, 1961:104), Nigerians began entering the 'senior service' in increasing numbers and gained skilled positions.[13] They also demanded the same prerequisites as comparably placed Europeans, which included provisions for comfortable domesticity. Nigerians' appropriation of the housing and servants previously reserved for European officials can be seen in the memoirs of Augustus Adebayo (1981:53), *White Man in Black Skin,* and who, in 1955, became one of the first Nigerian district officers.

Nigeria gained independence in 1960, and between that time and the oil-boom in the 1970s, people continued to migrate internally to areas where job opportunities existed –

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[13] The first time the expression 'Nigerianisation of the Civil Service' was used came in the publication of the Phillipson-Adebo report of 1954 entitled 'The Nigerianisation of the Civil Service: a review of policy and machinery'. It gave the definition that 'Nigerianisation of the Civil Service means the reduction and, ultimately, the ending of expatriate predominance in the higher levels of the Civil Service' (McStallworth, 1961:104).

although other factors came into play with regards to movement, notably displacement and ethnic conflicts (Oyeniyi, 2013). In the 1970s, there was an oil-boom which led to structural and infrastructural development, as well as even more employment opportunities in urban centres including Lagos (Adepoju, 1977) that continued to attract young people from rural areas (Oyeniyi, 2013).

Economic decline, beginning in the late 1970s, also impelled migration within the country. The government of General Olusegun Obasanjo introduced austerity measures in the wave of the first oil shock in 1977; this was followed by the Economic Stabilisation Act of April 1982 under Shehu Shagari. In 1986, under General Ibrahim Babangida's military rule, Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) were imposed. This, as well as economic recession following the fall in crude oil commodity prices, heavily impacted the country. The negative social and economic consequences of SAPs in the Global South have been well-documented in areas such as education, employment, health and basic services, particularly for vulnerable groups including women, children, and the urban and rural poor (see, for example, Cornia et al., 1987), but it severely affected Nigeria as it led to a declining economy and increasing poverty in the country.

The SAPs, which demanded financial cuts in social security and social protection, led to increasing unemployment rates, as well as a collapse of the public infrastructure (Okafor, 2010:9). This resulted in even more labour migration as people migrated from rural to urban areas in Nigeria in search of employment, as well as migration to and from neighbouring West African countries (Oyeniyi, 2013:3; see also Greenberg, 1997; Potts,

1995). It also led to an increasing number of poor, particularly in urban areas. There was also rising unemployment, public sector cuts, retrenchment of private sector workers and large numbers of unemployed graduates. For those who escaped retrenchment, salaries were irregular with many not being paid for several months. For others who did receive salaries, their income had less value. This led to increased rates of open and disguised unemployment and extensive informalisation of employment, which absorbed retrenched workers and the unemployed.

Conditions of political instability under military rule and neo-liberal economic reforms made the 1990s a particularly tough time in Nigeria. Using the 1990 extreme poverty rate of US$1.25 a day as an example, poverty rates in the country increased from 40 per cent of the population in the early 1990s to 66 per cent in 1999 (Olaniyi, 2009:47). Reduced living standards gave impetus to many households, including those employed in the formal economy, to seek additional income by engaging in multiple modes of livelihood in the informal economy (usually trading) to make ends meet.

Traditional child fostering practices were also affected (Okafor, 2009; Tambo, 2014). While changes in fostering – from the aspect of educative to economic necessity - occurred from the 1970s onwards in the aftermath of the 'oil boom', SAPs had a serious effect on education in Nigeria, particularly through the introduction of user fees that cut off the very poor from access to education. By the end of the 1990s, the Federal Ministry of Education reported that 12 million Nigerian children were school dropouts. During and after the implementation of SAPs, as education was costly and there was a lack of

vocational and economic opportunities, many children were pushed out of school in to work. This was particularly pronounced in rural areas, where children took up employment, especially in the informal economy in urban areas, to provide income for their family and themselves.

Child domestic work increased as poor families relied on the financial contributions of their children in order to secure their livelihood, or even to survive (Okafor, 2010; Oloko, 1992). Due to high levels of poverty and unemployment, parents were also increasingly forced to send their children to foster parents to find relief from the financial burden of caring for a child (Okafor, 2009). Additionally, children and their families would also have been promised employment or education at various urban locations in the country by traffickers - which would have been a further incentive to enter this occupation. However, once in the employing households, children ended up providing domestic service without the promises on education, for instance.

4.2.1 Contemporary Domestic Service in Nigeria

Since its shift to democracy in 1999, the Nigerian Government has initiated a number of political, economic and institutional reforms centred on addressing poverty and improving labour market outcomes among other things. In 2004, the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) was developed to tackle social and political factors that led to poverty and improve incomes (NPC, 2004). NEEDS was about wealth creation, employment generation and poverty reduction. Following the global and financial crisis of 2008, and as a response to rising unemployment, a National

Plan of Action for Employment Creation in Nigeria (NAPEC) was approved for implementation in 2010, outlining policies, programmes and projects for employment creation in 12 key sectors of the Nigerian economy, including Agriculture, Information and Communication and the Informal Economy.

Nearly two decades on, the country has growth rates averaging 7 per cent per year, driven by 'high oil prices, a stable macro-economy and encouraging growth in non-oil exports' (Meagher 2014:169). However, this growth has been accompanied by increasing poverty and joblessness. While in 2004 52 per cent of the population lived on less than USD$1 a day, in 2010 it had risen to 61 per cent of the population (National Bureau of Statistics, 2010:5). At the time of this study in 2011, Nigeria's national unemployment rate was 23.9 per cent, with those between 15 and 24 having the highest unemployment rate at 50 per cent (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011a).[14]

Moreover, recent data indicates that wage employment in the country has fallen from 15 percent in 1999 to 10 percent of the labour force (Meagher, 2014:170). Those in waged employment also have varied wages, as indicated in a socio-economic survey of remuneration across a number of sectors (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011b). The national minimum wage is currently NGN18000 (USD$115) and average wages in 2010 ranged from NGN19798 (USD$127) in wholesale and retail to NGN34544 (USD$221) in hotels and restaurants and NGN80144 (USD$513) in cement manufacturing (ibid:11).

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[14] The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that 60 per cent of Africa's unemployed are young people. The ILO's (2013) Global Employment Trends for Youth 2013 report estimates that over half of young people in South Africa's labour force were unemployed in the first three quarters of 2012, in Namibia (58.9 per cent in 2008) and Lesotho (34.4 per cent in 2008; ILO, 2011a and 2013b).

Additionally, 63 percent of the population is under age 25, and around 1.8 million young people are said to enter the labour market every year (National Bureau of Statistics, 2011:7). However, with limited job opportunities in the formal economy and increasing poverty, many unemployed Nigerians are pushed into the country's informal economy. This sector consists of about two-thirds of the urban workforce (Meagher, 2014:170) and accounts for as much as 90 per cent of new job creation (Okunlola, 2007:12), with individuals making a living in a range of occupations including selling mobile phone recharge cards, unlicensed taxi driving, hawking, street vending, tailoring, bricklaying, hairdressing and retail trade and more. Indeed, Nigeria's Bureau of Statistics (2014) estimates that in 2104, 62.34 per cent of employment in the country was in the informal economy, with 35.95 per cent occurring in the formal economy and the remaining 1.71 per cent in the public sector - indicating that the formal economy is shrinking, while the informal economy is rapidly increasing.

This is the environment - one marked by poverty, inadequate job creation to absorb the growing labour force and precarious employment - that the men and women in this occupation are found. Struggling to find a way to make a living, low-income activities like paid domestic become an option. Yet, as will be detailed below, this occupation is largely unaccounted for and devalued in the country. Indeed, domestic work is often located near the bottom of the occupational hierarchy in the urban labour market due to its low status, lack of guaranteed prospects, job insecurity, indefinite work hours and low wages – although as I indicate in my empirical chapters, these can vary from as little as

NGN1500 (USD$9.60) a month to as high as NGN50000 (USD$320), depending on a number of factors, including a worker's gender and occupation within this sector.

4.2.2 A Prevalent, but 'Invisble' Workforce

As explained in Chapter 2, the low position of paid domestic work as an occupation is linked to its association with the home and the unpaid domestic labour women do within it. Within the Nigerian context, there is also the additional difficulty in gaining recognition from the Government, and some employers, that domestic work entails real work and is not a source of informal help. Added to this is the fact that domestic workers in the country often belong to social groups who are more easily exploited because of their subordinate position within society – poor men and women, ethnic minority groups, young children.

Moreover, similar to global domestic work, this occupation in Nigeria is often a migrant's job, with most domestic workers in urban areas being internal migrants from rural, often poorer parts of the country. This is consistent with an ILO (2013) brief on rural-urban migration in Africa, which also notes that most African domestic workers, working in cities and towns, are internal migrants are from rural and less developed areas within their own countries (ibid:1). This is echoed in my study, where 59 of the 63 domestic workers interviewed come from different parts of Nigeria (see Chapter 5), such as Hausa men from Northern Nigeria working as *maiguards*.

As will be detailed in the next Chapter, coupled with the lack of employment options, domestic work is an occupation that migrants end up doing as it provides an easy

foothold into the urban economy - it does not require specific educational qualifications –
and also provides accommodation for new entrants to the city. Being internal migrants,
however, they face risks of labour exploitation and unfair recruitment practices, which is
not unlike international labour migrants due, in part, to the 'invisibility' of internal
migration in Nigeria. This stems from the fact that it is often associated with urban
unemployment, urban pollution and slum and ghetto development (Oyeniyi, 2013:19).
Yet, while most people who enter this occupation are often migrant – and internal
migration does date back to the pre-colonial periods (ibid) - the above perceptions has
meant very little concern for internal labour migrants; until very recently with the Labour
Migration Policy (see Section 4.3. below on national regulation).

Furthermore, while it is difficult to quantify, Nigeria does have a considerably large
number of internal migrants as suggested data from a 2010 Internal Migration Survey
(IMS) (Oyeniyi, 2013). As explained by Bukola Oyeniyi (2013) in a report on internal
migration in the country, the IMS provided baseline data on internal migration covering
all 36 states in the country and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. It also focused
on migrants, non-migrants and return migrants in 30 clusters (15 urban and 15 rural) in
each state - with a total of 11,100 internal migrants, 11,100 non-migrants and all return
migrants forming the core of the sample population used for the national survey (ibid:6).

The survey, for instance, found that the average age of most internal migrants in the
country is between 14 and 65, with most internal migrants (over 46 per cent) aged
between 20 and 34 (Oyeniyi, 2013). This resonates with my study where 52 workers are

aged between 18 and 57 (see Chapter 5), and 25 workers (almost 40 per cent of my respondents) are aged between 20 and 34. The survey also suggests that more women (52 per cent) than men (40 per cent) are found in the age of 20 to 34 years. However, in my study there is an almost equal split between men and women in this age bracket.

What this does suggest is that the undervalued status of domestic work and the 'invisibility' of the domestic worker in the household, coupled with the connection with subordinated groups in this occupation, often translates into the everyday experiences I discuss in my empirical chapters, such as an employer's unregulated control over domestic workers which results in their long working hours and irregular wages.

All of the above are also a larger reflection of the types of formal protection available to workers in Nigeria which, as discussed above, frequently leads to a denial of their rights. Furthermore, even when domestic workers are routinely identified as an occupational category in official national statistics, they are often underestimated and misclassified. A case in point is the 2007 National Bureau Statistics of Nigeria estimate of domestic workers, which I discussed in the previous chapter as being an underestimate – the number of domestic workers in the country was said to be 197,900, comprising 98,300 women and 99,600 men (ILO, 2013:34). Beyond the 2007 estimates, I was unable to find current statistics on domestic work. This, in itself, reveals the lack of recognition this employment faces in the country.

Although as Joann Vanek, Martha Chen and Govindan Raveendran (2014:1) write, in reference to obtaining statistics on the informal economy, this could be as much to do with the work often seen as unproductive as it is about the ways in which data on types of informal workers in official statistics is collected. They explain that 'more than one question is often required and countries may not include all needed questions' (ibid:1) - such as place of work. This, they argue, is a key indicator in distinguishing domestic workers (employer's home), home-based workers (own home) and street vendors (public spaces). Thus, it is possible that as result of it being regarded as outside 'productive' labour market activity in Nigeria, it will be excluded from such questions, and so not properly counted in employment statistics.

There is an added difficulty in accounting for this occupation. While most domestic work is informal, being performed outside of labour regulations and social protection (Vanek et al., 2014), there are also certain aspects which distinguish it from most activities in the informal economy, such as the nature of the employer-employee relationship and location within other people's home, which makes it quite invisible in labour laws and statistics.

As explained earlier in this Chapter, regulation is essential to address all the above named issues, and while a number of the provisions of ILO C189 are already incorporated in the country's legal and policy spaces, they are, however, currently not being applied towards the protection of domestic workers, particularly those most vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

4.3 National Regulation on Domestic Work in Nigeria

I begin this section by referring to an ILO (2012) report on designing labour laws for effective protection for domestic workers that mentions how important it is 'to ensure that legislative approach and design do not have the effect of implicitly excluding domestic workers from their scope' (ibid:11). The report gives, by way of example, the way in which the definitions of terms such as 'employer' or 'workplace' can amount to implicit exclusion of domestic workers.

I found this 'implicit exclusion' of domestic workers within a number of policies in the country (see Appendix III for a list of laws and policies reviewed). A case in point is Article 7 of the National Health Insurance Scheme Act (1999), which provides access to the Scheme to those employers with a minimum of ten employees. Given that households with ten employees are rare, most domestic workers would be excluded from coverage. Similar segregation of domestic workers can be found with reference to receiving the national minimum wage of NGN18000 (USD$115). While Article 9 of the National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act (2011) defines a 'worker' as:

> …any member of the civil service of the Federation, of a State or Local Government or any individual (other than persons occupying executive, administrative, technical or professional positions in any such civil service) who has entered into or works under a contract with an employer whether the contract is manual labour, clerical work or otherwise, expressed or implied, oral or in writing, and whether it is a contract personally to execute any work or labour.[15]

Domestic workers appear to be excluded from entitlement to receive the minimum wage under Article 2(a) of this Act, which states that the requirement to pay the national

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[15] http://www.nassnig.org/document/download/5860 (accessed 1 March 2016)

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minimum wage under section 1 of the Act shall not apply to 'an establishment in which less than fifty workers are employed' – a situation that applies to almost all domestic workers.

There are, however, policies that recognise paid domestic work, including the Labour Regulations (1936), the Labour Act (1990), the Anti-trafficking policy (2003), the Employee Compensation Act (2010) and the Labour Migration Policy (2013). These occur in the areas of definition (Section 73 of the Employee Compensation Act [2010] and the Article 91 of the Nigerian Labour Act [1990]); internal (and international) trafficking of children and young women (Article 22 of the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act [2003, amended 2005]), forced labour (Article 73 of the Nigerian Labour Act [1990]), as well fees that recruitment agencies charge (Articles 5 and 6 of the Labour Regulations Act [1936]).

For example, Section 2.5 of the Labour Migration Policy - on the promotion of migrant workers and their welfare - notes that special attention will be given to 'certain vulnerable categories, such as women domestic workers… who continue to suffer abuses and malpractices at the hands of employers, government officials and the general population' (ILO, 2010:12). In its terminology and use of the word 'worker' as opposed to 'servant', it is also the only policy I found that referred to domestic workers in a more positive fashion, suggesting that it as a form of work and not informal help. Yet, its sole focus on women domestic workers invisiblises other categories of domestic workers, such as men who may also experience vulnerability – even if it may not be as extreme as the situation

of female live-in domestic workers that experience isolation and exploitation as discussed in Chapter 6.

In terms of definition, for example, the Nigerian Labour Act (1990) provides one with Article 91 referring to a 'domestic servant' as:

> ...any house, table or garden servant employed in or in connection with the domestic services of any private dwelling house, and includes a servant employed as the driver of a privately owned or privately used motor car.[16]

This is important as the definition recognises that the home is the location where a lot of this work is performed, as well as the fact that the types of jobs done by employees can sometimes occur outside households (e.g. driving children to and from schools). As I reveal in my empirical Chapters, domestic work can take place both in, and for, the household, as such this definition suggests that legislation can be extending to include the activities undertaken by domestic workers for their employers beyond the private home. On the other hand, the definition does not consider the multiple employers workers may work for, such as the part-time live-outs in my study; as well as those domestic workers that may perform domestic tasks in multiple households, such as those female live-ins in Chapter 6 that are loaned to friends and relatives of employers.

Another example is the Labour Regulations Act (1936), which seems to have some provision towards the remuneration of domestic workers, which is in line with Article 12 of ILO C189 on minimum wage for employees. Article 11 makes reference to 'domestic servants' and Article 9 stipulates regular payment for performing 'some specific work…

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[16] Labour Act Source: http://www.nigeria-law.org/LabourAct.htm (accessed 15 August 2015).

at a daily, weekly, or monthly rate', although no requirements are given regarding the form(s) of payment. Article 10, meanwhile, mandates that these wages, no matter the interval of payment, 'shall, in the absence of any written agreement to the contrary, be paid not later than eight days after they become due' (Omehia, 2011:241).

As heartening as it is to see domestic work being mentioned in a number of policies, closer inspection reveals exclusions, as well as loopholes, which can exempt employers and the State from ensuring that domestic work is protected and regulated. Moreover, even with such laws, due to the status of domestic workers in the country, which includes a lack of respect, there are no formal mechanisms in place to enforce them. Besides, employers' themselves may not even be aware of the existence of such laws.

4.3.1 Exclusion of Paid Domestic Work in National Legislation and Policies

A case in point is wages and the possibility of non-payment of domestic workers. Article 88.1(d) within the Labour Act authorises the Minister to make regulations:

> …imposing upon persons who have accepted the services of any worker or domestic servant without paying wages therefore the obligation to provide for the maintenance of the worker or domestic servant during sickness or in old age.**[17]**

While this obliges employers who do not pay wages to their domestic workers to provide for their maintenance in sickness or old age, it also explicitly allows an exemption from paying a minimum wage, or any wage at all, to 'domestic servants' during their period of employment.

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[17] Labour Act Source: http://www.nigeria-law.org/LabourAct.htm (accessed 15 August 2015).

Another example also comes from the Nigerian Labour Act - Article 54 which concerns maternity protection, and articulates the right of women employed:

> … in any public or private industrial or commercial undertaking or in any branch thereof, or in any agricultural undertaking or any branch thereof… to leave her work [with authorisation] given by a registered medical practitioner stating that her confinement will probably take place within six weeks … and for the six weeks following the birth of her child'.[18]

Provisions are also given for mandatory rest periods for nursing new babies at the workplace. These requirements clearly do not address domestic workers, as their work does not fall into the sectors listed above (e.g. public or private industrial or commercial undertakings or agriculture). This is not unique to Nigeria. According to the ILO (2013:1) 'more than a third of domestic workers are excluded from maternity protection laws' – even though maternity protection has been recognised by international labour standards as critical to domestic workers. For example, the Maternity Protection Convention (Revised), 1952 (No. 103) recognises that domestic workers 'require protection during pregnancy, maternity and nursing periods' (ibid:2).

This exclusion within the Act denies the fact that domestic workers are women and mothers with family responsibilities. Indeed, half of the women in this study (17 out of 35) are mothers. This is echoed in existing statistic which suggest that around half of domestic workers are of childbearing age, likely to have young children or experience pregnancy while being employed (ILO, 2013). As will be discussed in Chapter 6, the absence of formal protection, for example, has a negative impact on pregnant domestic workers, who may face dismissal or a loss of income if they are found to be pregnant. This illustrates some of the challenges female domestic workers experience on the job in

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[18] Labour Act Source: http://www.nigeria-law.org/LabourAct.htm (accessed 15 August 2015).

relation to either starting a family of their own or providing adequate care to their own children once they are in this occupation (ILO, 2013).

As revealed above, Nigerian legislation and policy, does give effect to a number of ILO's C189 standards for regulating domestic work, but there are several important gaps. For example, no national legislation or policy was found mandating a specific weekly rest period or hours of work for domestic workers. There is also scope within a number of policies for inclusion, as argued by Patrick Taran and Katherine Youtz (2014) in a review of Nigerian legislation and policy regarding C189. For example, Article 54 of the Labour Act could be reviewed and revised to ensure that domestic workers rights to maternity leave are not denied. Similarly, Taran and Youtz (2014) call for a review and revision of Article 88(1)(d) of the Labour Act and the National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act to ensure that domestic workers are included and are paid at least the national minimum wage, in accordance with Article 11 of C189.

4.4   Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the context for this current study on paid domestic work in Lagos by focusing on the larger legal, policy and socio-economic context for paid domestic work in Nigeria. The chapter argued that, there is growing international recognition for domestic workers' rights, and that there are also elements of Nigerian laws and policies that recognise the paid domestic worker. Ultimately, however, domestic work is generally not recognised as an occupation due to its association with women's

unpaid domestic labour, its location in the private sphere, and the fact that, in Nigeria, it is often performed by social groups, such as internal migrants, women and children, who traditionally and currently have the least entitlements and capability to uphold their rights. It is within this context that I explore everyday life in paid domestic work.

5

Paid Domestic Work in Lagos

This chapter looks at paid domestic work in Lagos from the perspective of the men and women I met. I draw from my interviews with domestic workers and employers, as well as other secondary data sources, such as the media and novels. I attempt to situate workers' narratives for moving into, and securing employment in, domestic service within the broader legal and socio-economic context discussed in the previous chapter. My interviews with employers further enable consideration of the various reasons why people employ domestic workers. By drawing on both workers' and employers' narratives, I highlight the ways in which workers' reasons for, and routes into, joining domestic service and employers' hiring needs for domestic workers can interact to ultimately affect a worker's everyday experience.

I begin by giving an overview of the 63 workers in terms of their demographic characteristics, the types of jobs they do, and their living conditions, as well as the 12 employers I interviewed. Describing whom I interviewed provides an indication of the type of people who are likely to be found in domestic work, as well as those who employ them.

5.1   Who are the Workers in this Study?

As Table 5.1 illustrates, of the 63 workers I interviewed, 35 are female and 28 are male. These men and women are from 19 different Nigerian States (see Figure 5.1 below), two neighbouring West African countries and represent nine different ethnic groups (seven of which are Nigerian).

Figure 5.1 State of Origin of Paid Domestic Workers in this Study
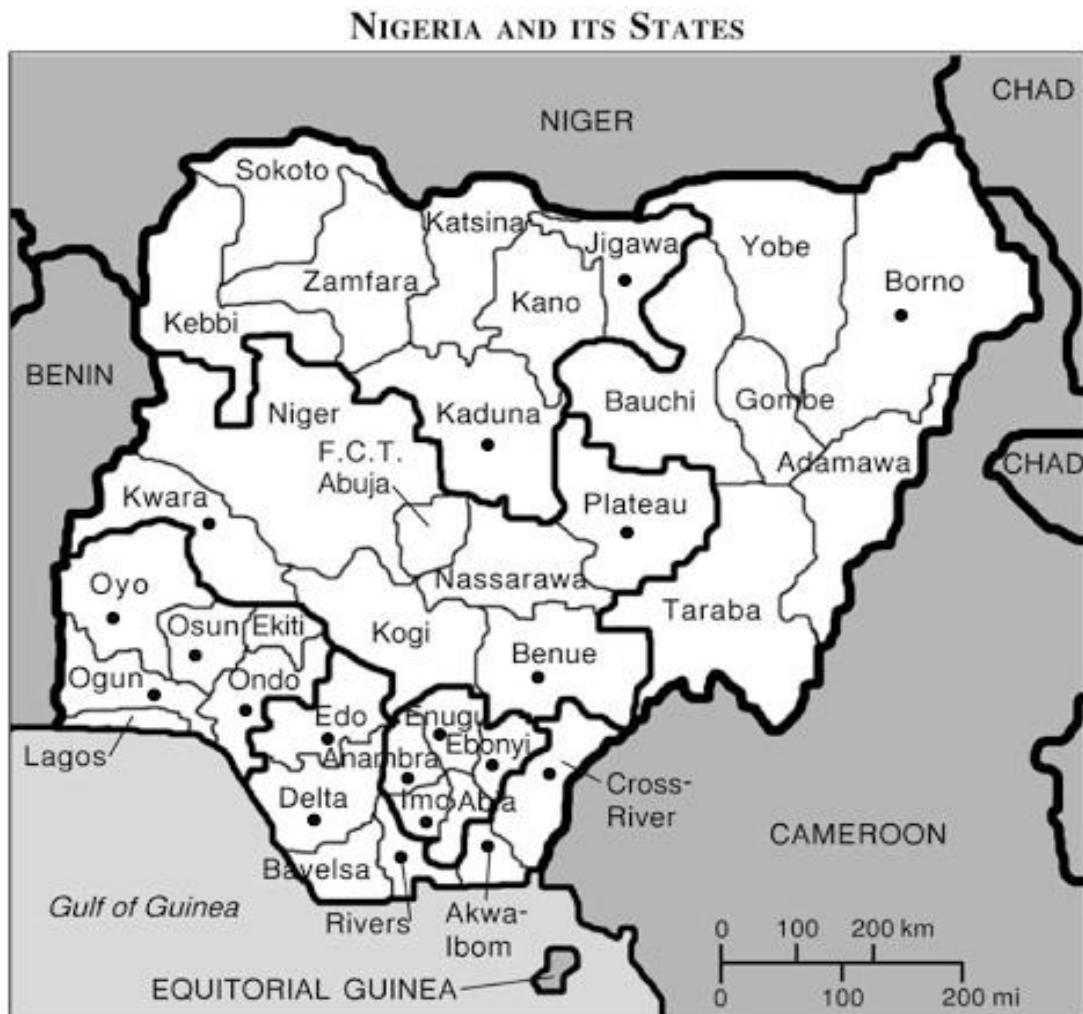
Source: Sklar et al. (2006:103). Image modified by Author to include black dots indicating State of Origin of domestic workers in study.

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There are three major ethnic groups in Nigeria: Hausa-Fulani's in the North, Yoruba's in the Southwest and Igbo's in the South East. In this study, 13 workers are Yoruba from Southwestern Nigerian States of Kwara, Ogun, Ondo, Osun and Oyo State; six are Hausa from Northern Nigerian States of Borno, Jigawa, Kaduna, and Plateau State; 12 are Igbo from Southeastern and South-South States, including Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Edo, Enugu, Imo, Delta and Rivers.

Twenty-eight workers are from minority ethnic groups - 17 of Efik origin and three are Ibibio from Southeastern States, such as Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers; three are Ijaw, from Edo, Delta and Rivers States and the remaining five are Tiv from Benue State. The remaining three workers are from neighbouring West African countries – two come from Benin Republic, while one comes from Togo – they are of Adja and Ewe ethnicity respectively. This suggests that paid domestic work is undertaken by both major and minority ethnic groups in the country.

This occupation does, however, take a particular form in Lagos in terms of ethnicity. This quote from Balogun (56, male employer, civil servant) captures the ideas employers have about the best person for the job:

> You see, the house-girl is Calabar, the gateman Hausa, the gardener is almost always Igbo, while the driver is Yoruba. (Balogun, male employer, 56, civil servant)

Table 5.1 Characteristcs of Male and Female Domestic Workers in Survey

Selected variables	Male (28)	Female (35)
Age		
18-24	3	15
25-34	10	7
35-44	7	4
45-54	2	2
55+	2	1
No response	4	6
Ethnicity		
Major Ethnic Groups		
Yoruba	8	5
Hausa	6	0
Igbo	5	7
Minority Ethnic Groups		
Efik	6	11
Ibibio	0	3
Ijaw	1	2
Tiv	0	5
Non-Nigerian		
Adja	1	2
Ewe	1	0
Educational Qualifications		
None	4	13
Primary	11	11
Secondary	12	7
Tertiary	1	0
No response	0	4
Marital Status		
Single/Never Married	11	23
Married	13	5
Divorced	0	2
Widowed	0	3
Co-habiting/in a relationship	4	2
Number of Children		
None	16	18
1	0	8
2+	12	9
Living Arrangements		
Live-in	11	23
Live-out	17	12
Terms of Employment		
Full-time	22	32
Part-time	6	3

Source: Author's Survey (N = 63)

That particular ethnic groups are sought for specific occupations translates into quite distinctive job patterns, as shown in Table 5.2 below.

Table 5.2 Predominant Sex, Ethnicity and Age of Domestic Workers in Survey

Occupation	Predominant Sex	Predominant Ethnic Group	Predominant Age Group
House-helps	Female	Efik/Ibibio	18-24
Drivers	Male	Yoruba	25-29
Maiguards	Male	Hausa	Varied
Nannies	Female	Igbo	30-34/35-39
Washermen	Male	Efik or Igbo	Varied
Gardeners	Male	Igbo	Varied
Cooks	Male	Efik	35-39

Source: Author's Survey (N = 63)

This is not peculiar to my study, as this notion of employer stereotyping has been taken up in the literature on migrant domestic work, with evidence that certain migrants – based on nationalities and religions among other things - are often preferred for certain tasks (e.g. Constable, 1997a; Lan, 2006; Yeoh and Huang, 1998 in Asian countries; de Regt, 2009 in the Middle East; Anderson, 2002; Bakan and Stasiulis, 1997; Pratt, 1997 in the Global North). Gender and ethnic discrimination has also been observed in African countries – in Senegal, maids and laundresses in the cities are young women and girls from the Sereer community; in Ethiopia, many from the Wollo community work as domestic workers while, in Niger, domestic work is performed by descendants of black slaves (ILO, 2013).

Workers in this study also vary in age from 18 to 68 years. However, caution should be taken with age since not all domestic workers know their actual age with certainty, and as many as ten out of the 63 workers are unable to tell me their age at all. This, as already discussed in Chapter 1, is not uncommon among low-income Nigerians, where there are

high numbers of unregistered children due to the absence of an effective birth registration system in the country. As indicated in Table 5.1, women between the ages of 18 and 24 are the largest number of workers in this study. Interviews revealed that one of the reasons for the presence of younger female workers was employers' belief of their supposed submissiveness and willingness to follow orders. Young women are said to be 'easier to control' and less likely to 'cause trouble' (Rachel, 38, female employer, housewife). Obedience is another significant quality as Theresa, a 53-year-old female employer of Igbo origin, who works as civil servant, comments:

> The younger ones are more obedient. Older ones do not like to take orders and argue a lot, whereas they [young ones] will not argue with you. They will just do what you tell them to do. They are not opinionated.

Obedience can also be linked to fear, in that young girls 'straight from the village' are also 'frightened and still young enough to learn' (Rachel, 38, housewife). Or, as 35-year-old female employer, Adama, who works as a teacher, put it, 'they are afraid of you and of doing wrong, [so] they do as they are told.'

Finally, as some employers believe it is 'all about them willing to learn' (Eno, female employer, 29, banker), they also assert that young workers can be trained to follow rules and regulations. Employers often contrast these characteristics with more mature women who are typically 'very big-headed' (Rachel) and 'used to doing things their own way' (Eno). Yet, as 17 workers were over the age of 25 this is indicates that there are instances where 'older' workers may be valued, as will be discussed in Chapter 6 with a preference of older women as female nannies.

Seventeen workers have no formal education, 22 have some level of primary schooling, and 19 have up to secondary education – indicating that while this is an employment option for those with low-levels of education, not all domestic workers are poorly educated. Only one worker has tertiary education.

Finally, 34 are single, five are divorced or widowed, 18 are married, and six are in relationships. Additionally, 34 have no children, while 29 do. As will be revealed in the main empirical chapters, the family status of workers has an impact on how they experience everyday life. For example, mothers who live-in face isolation and separation from their families, while mothers who live-out have to juggle their paid work with their unpaid domestic responsibilities. Being a single worker with no children is seen as an added bonus to employers, who assume they are less likely to be distracted or have social ties and, as such, will be more committed to their work.

Indeed, only two women state they are not married, but dating. However, this is usually kept secret from employers as employees risk losing their jobs if the employing household finds out they are in intimate relationships. Nneka, a 28-year-old of Ijaw origin from Rivers State who works as a part-time housegirl and has no children, explains that her employer has met her boyfriend – she saw them talking outside the employing household – but she introduced him as her cousin. Finally, as already noted above, a nearly equal amount of female live-ins and live-outs have children.

The 63 workers in this study are also found in seven different domestic service occupations – namely househelps, nannies, cooks, washermen, drivers, gardeners, and *maiguards* – which are gendered with men and women often doing quite different jobs. Specifically, women are employed as nannies, men are employed as cooks, washermen, drivers, gardeners and *maiguards*, and both men and women are employed as househelps. Chapter 8 goes into more detail on these gendered divisions that are usually based on assumptions, such as men's professionalism versus women's natural skills.

There is also an almost equal split in my study between live-in (34 out of 63) and live-outs (29). Although full-time work is more common in my study, nine workers work part-time. In terms of the distinctions between these categories, when it comes to living arrangements, workers can either reside with their employer (live-in) or live in their own residence (live-out).

While there is a clear distinction between living in and living out, the existing literature tends to use the terms live-out and part-time interchangeably. However, as Neetha N. (2009), writing on domestic service in India, rightfully points out, 'live-out work is based on a worker's place of residence, while part-time indicates duration of the work' (ibid:491). Based on this, while all live-ins are 'full-timers' (i.e. live and work in one household), live-outs can be either 'full-timers' (i.e. work in one household throughout the day and return to their residence at night), or 'part-timers' (i.e. undertake tasks in different households and return to their residence once tasks are done).

These different types of employment arrangements - full-time live-ins, full-time live-outs and part-time live-outs - tend to attract different types of workers. Live-in employment might be preferred by newly-arrived migrants to Lagos as it provides a readily available solution to accommodation problems and minimises the distance between homes and employer demands. It is also a preference for employers as constant availability is one of the most common reasons offered as to why they want workers to live in. Underlying this narrative of availability, however, is the control they want in terms of having someone who can be easily directed to do what they want and whose probability of leaving the household is minimal.

This control goes some way in explaining why younger, single women are the most likely workers in my study to live in, as explained earlier - they tend to be seen as more submissive and more willing to take orders. Indeed, 23 of the 34 live-ins in this study are women. Of that, 12 are between the ages of 18 and 24, seven are between the ages of 25 and 53, and the remaining four are unsure of their age. Older, and experienced, workers tend to opt for living out or part-time work due to the higher degree of freedom associated with it.

With employer preference being quite important in structuring this occupation, this makes it important to know who the employers in this study are. Indeed, in their study of labour market segmentation in Los Angeles, Roger Waldinger and Michael Lichter (2003) suggest that employers hold categorical (both in terms of gender and race) assumptions about the most appropriate worker for the job, which in the context of a

racialised society means that '…entire ethnic groups are ranked according to sets of socially meaningful but arbitrary traits' (ibid: 8).

5.2   Who are the Employers' in this Study?

With reference to employers in this study, majority are from major ethnic backgrounds – seven are Yoruba, two are Igbo and the other three are Hausa, Edo and Urhobo – with the latter two being minority ethnic groups in South-South Nigeria (see Table 5.3). Ten of the employers are women, with the other two being men and they ranged in age from 27 to 72. Nine of the employers are married, one is single and two are widowed. While only one employer has no children, the other 11 either have one child or seven. The family status of employer's is also important, because as revealed in Chapter 7, while domestic workers enable employer's to be 'good' parents, employer's on the other hand, restrict workers' from the same – ensuring that domestic workers should mainly work.

Employers are also found in different types of occupations – from self-employed to civil servants, with two employers being housewives and one retired (see Appendix I for more detail). The average monthly incomes for employers range from NGN100000 (USD$640) to NGN550000 (USD$3525), which is in sharp contrast to domestic workers in this study, whose reported monthly wages range from as little as NGN1500 (USD$9.60) a month to as high as NGN50000 (USD$320), with some workers also receiving payment 'in kind' in the form of food, accommodation and gifts. Seventy-two-year-old female employer, Damilola, whose house-girl is paid 'in-kind', explains how her house-girl does

not have to worry about where to live, what to eat, what to wear or medical expenses if

she falls ill, as these are all taken care of. This indicates that from Damilola's perspective,

'in-kind payments' are equivalent to receiving a salary.

Table 5.3 Characteristics of Male and Female Employers in the Survey

Selected variables	Male (2)	Female (10)
Age		
25-34	1	2
35-44		3
45-54		2
55+	1	3
Ethnicity		
Major Ethnic Groups		
Yoruba	2	5
Hausa		1
Igbo		2
Minority Ethnic Groups		
Edo		1
Urhobo		1
Educational Qualifications		
Primary		1
Secondary	1	3
Tertiary	1	5
Other (Vocational)		1
Marital Status		
Single/Never Married	1	
Married		9
Divorced		
Widowed	1	1
Number of Children		
None	1	
1		1
2+	1	9
Type of employment		
Self-employed		2
Waged employment	2	5
Other		3

Source: Author's Survey (N = 12)

Yet, while many workers in my study, as in other parts of the world receive low wages,

low pay is not an inherent characteristic of domestic service since at least 14 workers in

my study earn above Nigeria's minimum wage of NGN18000 (USD$115). However, as will be detailed in Chapter 8, only two of these 'higher' paid workers are women, revealing a gendered hierarchy in earnings – with justifications such as men's 'acquired' skills versus women's innate ones given as to why they are paid more.

Wages vary because, as detailed in Chapter 4, there are no formal mechanisms in place to enforce a set wage. This leads to a situation where salaries, as well as other working and living conditions, are often negotiated within the often arbitrary informal labour market, and determined by community norms and values (Romero, 1992). Employers are then able to determine workers' wages – usually in consultation with other employers and dependent on the economic and social characteristics of the employers (Neetha, N., 2009), their status, their generosity and their degree of satisfaction with the worker, as well as the characteristics of the workers themselves. The 'appropriate' wage to pay a worker in the country can also be gleaned from online forums and notices plastered in different parts of the city – in front of shops, for instance.

The adverts below are some that I found on- and off-line during my time in Lagos, which further indicate the type of worker required for particular jobs, but also the typical wages such worker receives. It is also interesting to note that of all the workers, housegirls are the only ones where a wage is not included in these adverts – further indicating that they are the most likely workers in Lagos to be unpaid.

Examples of Personal Adverts for Domestic Workers in Lagos

An experienced driver to live with car owner in VGC [Victoria Garden City]. Owner will provide Accommodation. Salary N30,000 [US$182]. Driver will feed himself. Yoruba driver preferred.

Driver that lives around Anthony area of Lagos, And MUST BE A YORUBA by Tribe. He must be experienced and have vast knowledge of Lagos route and its Environ. (MUST BE A YORUBA BY TRIBE) … salary 30,000 naira [US$182] if you meet the above criteria, call … for further inquiries.'

Competent and qualified driver needed. Applicants should be excellent in driving with accepted drivers license. Reside in Lagos State (accommodation may be available). Neat and smart. SSCE and OND holders that can speak good English (fluency in Yoruba is an added advantage) and be able to read and write. Should be respectful and have good manners. Should have good knowledge of Lagos and its environs, salary ranges from 30k to 45k [US$182 – 270] per month (depending on age, marital status and experience).'

A live-in househelp between the ages of 16 and 21 needed urgently for immediate employment.

Househelps are needed for urgent employment. Should be above 20 yrs, ready to live with the family, have a prior experience, hardworking, know how to cook, preferably a lady.

Househelp and Housekeeper wanted urgently for immediate employment in Lagos around Iyana Ipaja Area. Salary N12,000/month [US$72]. Accommodation will be provided.'

Experienced female live-out nanny/housekeeper between 20-30 yrs old, she should live within Maryland, Ketu, Gbagada, or Ikorodu, she must be willingly to resume work before 6:30am, Mondays-Saturdays, salary is N25,000 [US$150].'

There is also considerable diversity among employers concerning the type of workers they employ, as well as the length, type and frequency of hiring and employing practices. As previously mentioned, some employers only recruit young women to work as househelps because of their supposed submissiveness and willingness to follow orders,

while others prefer hiring male househelps as they are able to do heavy work, both inside and outside the home. Some employers have been employing a domestic worker for only a few months, while others have done so for over 20 years. There was also a significant variation, even within the same household, of live-ins and live-outs. While one household might employ a live-in house-girl and a live-out driver, another would hire a live-out house-girl, a live-out driver, and a live-in *maiguard.*

As explained in Chapter 3, the employers and workers I interviewed are from different households. However, I was able to gain insight into the types of workers that employers had working in their homes by asking them. Table 5.4 below indicates the different preferences employers have in terms of numbers – some employ only one or two workers, while others have numerous workers – plus the types of workers and living arrangements. Age, marital and family status are not included as not all employers were able to provide me with this information, suggesting that many employers did not know about these aspects of workers' lives. For many, what mattered most was that their workers' personal lives were more or less invisible and did not affect their domestic duties.

While as indicated above, an employer's hiring preferences are quite contradictory, they can also be determined by their circumstances. For instance, although full-time work is more common in my study, as shown in Table 5.1 nine workers work part-time – these tend to be older men who work as 'washermen' and gardeners, although there are also part-time house-helps.

Table 5.4 Employer Preferences for Paid Domestic Workers

Employer Sex and Ethnicity	Type of Worker Employed and Ethnicity
Bolanle (Female/Yoruba)	Live-in House-girl (Tiv) Live-in Driver (Yoruba) Live-out Driver (Yoruba) Live-in *Maiguard* (Hausa)
Theresa (Female/Igbo)	Live-in House-girl (Efik) Live-out Driver (Yoruba)
Tolani (Female/Igbo)	Live-in House-girl (Yoruba) Part-time Washerman (Igbo)
Kehinde (Female/Yoruba)	Live-out House-girl (Efik) Live-in *Maiguard* (Hausa) Live-out Driver (Igbo)
Damilola (Female/Yoruba)	Live-in House-girl (Yoruba)
Adama (Female/Hausa)	Live-out Driver (Hausa)
Balogun (Male/Yoruba)	Live-in House-boy (Yoruba) Live-out Cook (Hausa) Live-in Driver (Hausa) Live-in *Maiguard* (Hausa) Part-time Gardener (Efik)
Biodun (Female/Yoruba)	Live-in House-girl (Yoruba) Live-in Nanny (Yoruba) Live-in *Maiguard* (Hausa)
Idris (Male/Yoruba)	Part-time House-boy (Yoruba)
Eno (Female/Edo)	Part-time Washerman (Igbo) Live-out House-girl (Efik)
Taiwo (Female/Yoruba)	Live-in House-girl (Ijaw)
Rachel (Female/Urhobo)	Live-out Nanny (Igbo) Live-in House-girl (Benin Republic)

Source: Interviews with employers (N=12)

For employers, especially middle-class families with lower household earnings, part-time domestic work is usually more affordable as they may only need someone in the household once or twice a week. This indicates that household earnings can also be an important consideration when hiring domestic workers, with Nigeria's socio-economic landscape, potentially, making it difficult for some employers to employ full-time domestic workers. This is captured in an informal conversation I had at a hairdresser as to why one woman did not employ domestic workers:

Yes, I need an extra hand in the house to help me take care of my little baby while I go to work but we also have to look at the cost of bringing in an extra hand … my husband earns NGN36000 [USD$230] monthly, while I earn NGN26000 [USD$166] monthly. If I were to engage someone and we pay them between NGN5000 [USD$32] and NGN6000 [USD$38.50], then I need to look for other work in order to meet the additional needs of my family.

Part-time work could also beneficial in middle-class households who may have limited space to accommodate live-in domestic workers. This variation in household need for domestic workers is also present in Oludayo Tade and Adeyinka Aderinto's (2012) study on the factors that drive their demand in Oyo State in Southwestern Nigeria. They suggested that newly-weds, especially those families with young children and working mothers, may hire domestic workers to assist in domestic tasks. On the other hand, working mothers between 31 and 50 years are less likely to hire domestic workers - owing to the presence of grown-up children who can help with the workload. However, it was found that transitioning households are more likely to outsource domestic duties, particular as women still work and need assistance with domestic tasks.

As I discuss in the next three chapters, employer preferences are one way in which they attempt to maintain social order through creating difference between themselves and their workers. Exploring employer stereotypes of the ideal gender, age or ethnicity is important as these shape opportunities and everyday experiences in terms of wages, working hours and leisure time among other things (see Mahler and Pessar, 2006 on gendered recruitment practices that structure migrations). This suggests that in order to understand this occupation and, more specifically, the outcomes for domestic workers in terms of their everyday lives, it is crucial to recognise the ways in which employers construct

differences through their preferences.

Indeed, there are countless number of preferences employers have, which I suggest are also as a result of their anxieties. Nigerians employ domestic workers because they are 'a necessity', but when employers recount their fears, such as the nanny who drugged her boss and stole all her jewellery, this suggests that employers also feel they are taking a huge risk by letting someone come into their homes. It is, therefore, extremely important to employers that the person they let in can be trusted – so that domestic workers do not take what rightfully belongs inside the household out. These risks employers identify further illustrate the complexity of a relationship between two different classes in the intimate space of the home.

Having introduced the workers and employers in this study, I will now turn to motivations for entering this occupation.

5.3   Motives for Joining Domestic Service in Lagos

As the workers in my study come from different backgrounds and areas within, and beyond, Nigeria, it is not surprising that multiple motivations exist as to why they choose domestic employment. Workers' narratives reveal that they entered this occupation for various reasons, which ranged from the widespread unemployment and abject poverty that have ravaged most of Nigeria in the last three decades resulting in limited job opportunities, to the need to acquire accommodation in Lagos, which is quite an

expensive city.**19**

5.3.1 Providing for Families and/or Children

In this study, one of the most common reasons for being in paid domestic work is to support families and/or children, with some workers often being the principal income earner. Twenty-one workers stated this as a reason, although this is more common among women than men. Samantha, a 22-year-old single parent of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom State, who lives-out and has been working as a house-girl for five years, moved into domestic work to support her now six-year-old son and family – both in her hometown – as 'financially things have been difficult'. Samantha strongly believes that the only way she can 'give them better life' is by sending most of her salary home on a monthly basis.

Although Samantha indicates that young women sometimes decide on their own to move into domestic work, most of the young female domestic workers in this study are usually socially obliged to provide for their families. Indeed, Bina Fernandez's (2011, 2014) research on migrant domestic workers from Ethiopia in the Middle East noted that the strong cultural perception of responsibility to contribute to family welfare compels large numbers of Ethiopian women to seek employment as migrant domestic workers in the Middle Eastern countries.

Pamela, a 19-year-old single, live-in housegirl of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom State was

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[19] Mercer's 2015 Cost of Living Rankings, which ranked 207 cities worldwide based on a basket of goods and services frequently purchased by expatriates, lists Lagos as the 20th most expensive city in the world. https://www.imercer.com/uploads/GM/col2015/e654123/index.html Accessed 15 August 2015.

'forced into domestic work at the age of six' by her father 'who made all negotiations about salary and work' and collected her salary each month. As argued by Rasheed Olaniyi (2009), who examined child trafficking of female child domestic servants and babysitters in Nigeria from the 1930s to 1990s, poor parents often engaged their daughters in the labour process to supplement family livelihoods and, most importantly, to save money in order to procure marriage items such as beds, utensils, wrappers and so on. In these cases, young daughters are expected to support their families once they reach a certain age. They are usually advised to bear the pain and suffering when they report the hardship and challenges of their work for 'the sake of family' (Olaniyi, 2009).

Abeni, a single woman of Tiv origin from Benue State working as a live-out housegirl and who was unsure of her age, was one such case. Her family felt living and working in people's homes would not only make her 'strong, wise, and exposed', but also provide her with training in terms of cooking and cleaning for marriage. As also argued by Olaniyi (2009:51), domestic work has also been considered a grooming ground for the girls in terms of cooking, house tidying and trading or, ultimately, finding a 'rich' suitor.

Here, especially, is where the boundaries between child fostering and trafficking for domestic work become blurred. As discussed in Chapter 4, poverty, which is closely linked to fostering practices can also facilitate child trafficking. Existing studies in Nigeria point to the fact that it is often househelps from poor rural areas that are trafficked into domestic employment 'through agents or 'middlemen' (Nnorom and Kunnuji, 2008) - although employers' friends and househelps' parents or siblings also aid

in recruitment (Ariyo, 2006; Okafor, 2009). This is echoed in my study, as 18 workers were recruited via middlemen; these were mainly women who were between the ages of 18 and 29 and had been in service for between four to 13 years, indicating they entered domestic service at a very young age (see later section on Recruitment).

As such, other than Samantha, my findings indicate that it was usually mostly older female workers, between the ages of 33 and 55, that have the ability to make this decision on their own. For these female workers, it was often the absence of a male breadwinner to provide for their families that led to enterring the sector. Most of them also have children of their own, whom they have left under the care of grandparents and other relatives – if they live-in.

Chidinma, a 42-year-old divorced live-out nanny of Igbo origin from Anambra State, says she had to 'look for work in people's houses' after she got divorced, as she had to take care of her four children. Chinwe, a widowed 33-year-old live-out cook, also of Igbo origin and from Anambra State, had to 'start seeking another way to provide for the family' five years ago after her husband, a private security guard, was shot by armed robbers while on duty. Finally, Efem, a married 34-year-old live-out nanny of Efk origin from Cross River State, also sought domestic work after her husband – also a guard – was accused of stealing his employer's car and sent to prison in December 2008.

Efem and Chinwe's narratives of their husbands – who both worked as security guards – raise two crucial aspects of domestic workers' daily lives in Lagos. First, as revealed by

Chinwe's husband's death, are the occupational risks of security work – being shot, injured or murdered on the job. While guards are employed to protect households, not all families can afford to hire trained, licensed guards, whose monthly salaries range from NGN35000 to NGN70000 (USD$224 to USD$448). Hence, they hire the more informal *maiguards* who earn around NGN10000 (USD$64) a month and have a higher chance of encountering these occupational risks due to inadequate training and protective equipment. Second, as shown by Efem's husband, who was accused of stealing a car, and is more pertinent to all domestic workers, is the fear and consequences of theft.

With little or no educational qualifications, these three women also feel they have few employment opportunities open to them (see Section 5.3.2 on Limited Alternatives). They all explain the problems they have finding ways to support their family, as they believe they have no skills. They also all feel domestic service is the only occupation that enables them to use the only skills they have – for Chidinma and Efem, who are nannies, it is their mothering, while Chinwe, who 'used to just make small money cooking food for the people in my area', works as a cook. Additionally, as these women have local networks to assist in finding work, it is also seen as the most easily accessible employment option for them.

A number of men in domestic work in my research also reported caring for their families and children as a major motive for entering this occupation - although these are men between the ages of 30 and 68. Their narratives may seem as though they seek employment to fulfil their normative masculine breadwinner roles, but their willingness

to work in so-called 'female jobs' as cooks and cleaners for the sake of their families and children signifies a notion of caring and responsibility, which is not typically attributed to men. Such is the case with Tosin, a married 37-year-old live-in houseboy of Yoruba origin from Ondo State, who copes with the poor conditions of his job so he can 'provide for his children and pay for their schooling'. Ali, a married 35-year-old man of Hausa origin from Kaduna State, who works as a live-out cook, expresses similar sentiments. He works as hard as he can in order to send money home regularly to support his children.

As such, while there is a well-established ideal of the responsible father as a reliable provider for his children (see, for example, Akesson et al., 2012 on Cape Verdian fathers), with the dominant gender roles in Nigeria being that men consistently think of themselves as breadwinners who leave care commitments to their wives, their daughters or other women in their family, my findings suggest that considering men as strictly labourers and breadwinners without care commitments is not completely accurate. What I observed, instead, is the ways in which male domestic workers' fathering practices differed from that of women, with their wages playing a crucial role in this. Indeed, Jason Priblisky (2004, 2012) has written extensively on how Ecuadorian male transnational migrants in New York shape their role as fathers through their specific practices of spending, saving and budgeting.

For instance, 37-year-old live-in houseboy, Tosin, explains that his wife and three children are in his place of residence – Ondo State – and not Lagos. This, he mentions, enables him to live with his employer and save money, which he is then able to send back

home (see Chapter 8 on masculinity and domestic work). This is in sharp contrast to the female live-in mothers whose lives I explore in Chapter 6. A lot of these women speak of not seeing their families since they arrived in Lagos, due to their isolation and limited resources.

5.3.2 Lack of Employment Opportunities and Limited Alternatives

Following on from the above, and similar to global trends, worker entry into domestic service can also be attributed to economic factors, such as lack of employment opportunities and increasing poverty, especially rural poverty, in their home areas – as outlined in the previous chapter.

At the broadest level, a good number of workers – usually from rural areas, poorer urban areas and neighbouring West African countries, notably Togo and Benin – say they are motivated by the prospect of employment and better salaries available in Lagos compared to their hometowns. Fifteen workers in this study attributed their decision to migrate to widespread unemployment and abject poverty in their places of origin. These, however, are more likely to be older workers aged between 22 and 53 – and to be men, who make up ten of these 15 workers. Men, such as Ade, a 28-year-old Yoruba live-out driver from Ondo State who is married with three children, say domestic work is the only option available to them:

> I only work because I need the money. You cannot survive in Lagos without work and money. It is necessary. The money is to survive.

Similarly, 37-year-old Friday, an Efik man from Akwa Ibom State, who is single and has been in Lagos for about seven years working as a live-out cook, describes how he came to Lagos because he could not secure work in his home area:

> My friends in Lagos advised me to come to Lagos where more opportunities for work are available. In my State, the job prospects are too small, it is really difficult to find a job.

As discussed in the previous chapter, in spite of reforms such as NEEDS and NAPEC, Nigeria's urban labour market is currently filled with the older unemployed who lost their jobs through retrenchment, redundancy or bankruptcy, unemployed professionals such as accountants and engineers and the younger unemployed, most of whom have never had a job – including the increasing number of university graduates who lack employment opportunities.

The latter reason is echoed by Femi, a 25-year-old Yoruba live-out driver from Ogun State, who is in a relationship and graduated from Crawford University in Ogun State in 2010 with a degree in Business Administration, but failed to find and secure a formal economy job. As explained in Chapter 4, in 2011 youth unemployment rate was at 50 per cent – slightly over twice the national rate of 23.9 per cent, and as Kate Meagher (2014) notes, in 2010, 25 percent of Nigerian college graduates were unemployed, compared with only 21 percent of workers with primary education or less.

While the Government developed the Nigerian Youth Employment Action Plan (2009-2011) to address youth unemployment through vocational training and the promotion of apprenticeship and work experience programmes, Femi argues that, due to limited

opportunities, domestic work is not only an avenue for those with limited education, but also for those to whom the formal economy is closed. As such, while changes in the urban labour market may affect unemployed people, rural-urban migrants and school-leavers, as 20 workers have some level of secondary schooling; this suggests that, regardless of education, domestic service as an occupation may be chosen by those who are unable to find work elsewhere.

Indeed, of those 15 workers who cite lack of employment opportunities as a motivation to enter this occupation, eight had at least secondary level education. In addition to Femi with his tertiary education, five men and two women had up to secondary level education. A similar finding on the educational make-up of Nigeria's informal economy has been observed by Kate Meagher (2014) in her study on informal enterprise associations in the country. As Meagher (2014) observes, 'more than one-third of weavers and 65 per cent of garment producers were found to have secondary education or better' (ibid:425).

Femi has been trying to get a job, any job, 'in the government, in the bank', but has no contacts in order to do so:

> It is not easy o! In Nigeria it is man-know-man and I have no connections. Upon all my degree, I looked for over one year and I couldn't find anything. And so I heard about a house who needed a driver and I have been driving ever since.

Femi's statement 'it is man-know man' reveals the extent to which, in a market with declining economic opportunities, having personal contacts lends more weight than higher education. This has been revealed in other studies in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Sylvia Chant and Gareth Jones' (2005:194) work on Ghana and The Gambia, where

getting a job is usually a case of 'know who' not 'know how'. In South Asia, Nitya Rao (2009:58) has also illustrated that both money to pay bribes and social contacts, in addition to academic qualifications, are essential for securing jobs, even in the salaried sector.

The seven female domestic workers in this study - not all of whom cited limited employment alternatives as a primary motive - with at least a secondary level of education, also face similar obstacles in securing jobs. Most informed me that the formal economy has never been open to them, with the exception of service sector occupations such as retail and hospitality, and then on account of the assumption that they are able to provide the emotional labour such jobs require more than men.

An example is Tina, a divorced 30-year-old Igbo woman from Anambra State who is working as a live-in nanny. She took up domestic work after changing jobs several times and finding it difficult to find office jobs, as they require skills such as word processing and data entry, which she does not possess. Similar to Chinwe, Chidinma and Efem – who I introduced earlier – Tina also felt that she had few employment opportunities open to her. However, unlike the three other women, Tina at least had secondary level of education.

What I observed with workers such as Femi, Tina, and even Chinwe, Chidinma and Efem, is that, while they are in domestic service – owing to constraints and restricted employment options – either by having at least a secondary level of education (Tina and

Femi) or being older (Chinwe, Chidinma and Efem) they are able to work in the sector of their choice. These tend to be as nannies, drivers, cooks or even part-time 'maids'.

Limited job opportunities and providing for the family are not the only reasons men and women are in domestic service. As indicated by the other 27 workers in this study, there are quite a number of other factors that push people into this occupation, such as low levels of education. This resonates with existing studies on child and adolescents in this sector in Nigeria that point to high levels of illiteracy and poor investment in education by government as push factors into this occupation (see Aderinto and Ikediashi, 2001; Ariyo, 2006; Nnorom and Kunnuji, 2008:2; Okafor, 2009:172)

5.3.3 Low Levels of Education

As explained above, those with at least secondary level of education are in this category of occupation, but 17 workers have no formal education and 21 have up to some level of primary schooling. This indicates that low levels of, or barriers to, education also contribute to people entering domestic work. Here, workers cite their limited education and having no other choice but to engage in this occupation. As explained in the previous chapter, SAPs also affected education in Nigeria. A significant number of workers I interviewed were forced to stop their education in the 1990s as their families found it difficult to pay school fees.

One such case is Etok, a live-out houseboy of Igbo origin from Abakaliki in Ebonyi

State, who is single and does not know his age, and remembers losing his father 'while in primary school'. As his mother - 'a petty trader, could not even feed us, talk less of paying the school fees'- he was unable to continue his education. Similarly, Jonathan, a 25-year-old live-out houseboy of Ijaw origin from Delta State, who is in a relationship and has been a domestic worker since he was around 12 decided to come to Lagos to look for work after his parents died as his relatives 'were not ready to finance my education, then I dropped out in Primary 6'. For men like Etok and Jonathan who left school with minimal employable skills, domestic work in wealthier urban homes was one of the few options that was available to them.

Other reasons behind low educational qualifications include sexism and early motherhood. For example, Joy, a single, live-in housegirl of Tiv origin from Benue State, who does not know her age, was forced to end her primary education because her father believed 'it was a waste of resources sending girls to school'. Funmi, a 19-year-old single parent working as a live-in housegirl from Cross River State, also 'dropped out of school in JSS2 [Grade 8] because I fell pregnant'.

The background of workers' parents is also important, especially for younger employees. Interviewees explain how their parents have little or no formal schooling – although two said their fathers had tertiary education, while another's mother had been to secondary school. Their parents are in different occupations. Mothers are housewives, cleaners, petty-traders, food vendors, farm assistants, seamstresses/tailors, braiders and teachers. Fathers are either unemployed due to illness or inability to find a job or engaged in

different types of occupation – farmer, bus driver, mechanic, carpenter and construction worker. Workers may also come from large families. Doris, for example, is a 21-year-old live-out housegirl and single parent from Benue State of Tiv origin; her father has two wives and 13 children.

As argued by Adeyinka Aderinto and Mitchelle Ikediashi (2001:45) on the backgrounds of househelps in Lagos, 'parents of househelps have poor jobs, earn low income and large families'. They may not be able to feed their children and send them to school and so children may take up other activities in order to take care of themselves, such as work as 'a domestic help in homes of middle-class and upper-class families' (ibid:45). As such, workers' parents' low incomes and educational qualifications make it difficult to feed them, support themselves and their family or even send them to school.

Peer pressure is also important in aiding movement into domestic work, particularly for younger female domestic workers. For Blessing, a 19-year-old single live-in housegirl of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State, one incentive for coming to Lagos was the 'many stories', usually positive, she had heard:

> Since I was small, I always wanted to be financially independent. But to earn a living in my village is not so easy. How much you work hard, it only just enough to eat. The other problem is concerned with my parents. They are approaching seventy and my father need to retired soon. All his hard earnings as a carpenter was not enough. Now is our turn to support them back. If I stay in my village I am not be able to do anything. After thinking, I decided to go to Lagos and become a maid as I had heard many stories.

Younger female domestic workers relay 'hearing stories' to me on several occasions. In these cases, they join domestic service after friends, who are already working in Lagos,

come to visit during public holidays (Eid, Easter or Christmas). During these visits, they inform them of the 'good fortunes' of going to the city and 'the beauty of Lagos'.

5.3.4 It's Cheaper and 'Safer'

In addition to the above, there are also situations when workers talk of entering domestic service in order to acquire accommodation. This is particularly the case with younger men, who speak about stories they heard before coming to Lagos of 'big-men' with 'boys' quarters' (or BQs) at the back of the house.

Writing on the boys' quarters' mentality in the country for *The Daily Trust*, a Nigerian newspaper, Eugene Enahoro (2013) explains that BQs first appeared in Nigeria during the colonial period, when expatriates occupied exclusive Government Reserved Areas (GRA) in which Nigerians were not allowed to rent houses. To solve this, they built BQs at the back of their compounds. Enahoro (2013) argues that this was an idea imported from the slave quarters in the US.

After Independence, as the Government did not provide adequate accommodation for low-income domestic workers, and also stopped constructing BQs. As such, wealthy Nigerians in the newly independent nation – who I already explained in the previous chapter wanted the same prerequisites as comparably placed Europeans - began to build their own BQs in their homes - which is now a permanent feature of Nigeria's residential building plans.

For these young men, then, working as live-in domestic workers provides them with accommodation in Lagos, where housing is expensive. However, female workers, like

30-year-old Tina, who is a divorced live-in nanny, also feels the arrangement will reduce their expenses, enabling them to save more money. Similar rationale was recounted by men in Seemin Qayum and Raka Ray's (2010) research on male domestic workers in Calcutta. One worker in the study explained preferring to live-in a servant's quarter to the uncertainty of a higher paying job in an office, as 'he would have far greater expenditures given the cost of rent, food, electricity, water, and transport—and would give up the security and benefits of working ''inside''' (ibid:100). However, while men live outdoors in these BQs or other spaces, women tend to live indoors in the employer's house. As I will highlight in the next chapter, living and working in an employer's home can have significant negative impacts on workers' personal autonomy and mobility.

Finally, a number of workers find domestic service to be more suitable than other forms of employment in the informal economy, such as street vending. More specifically, they associate domestic service as being lighter, better paid and, in some cases, safer. In terms of safety, some older women speak of female street vendors being routinely intimidated and harassed by police officers. Yet, even if they may find it safer, these same women are also adamant that they will not work as live-ins due to hearsay about male members of the household sexually assaulting women, or female employers overworking and physically abusing their maids. Instead, they prefer to come home daily.

Some men also think domestic service is easier or safer than other forms of employment. For example, a few men moved from construction work to domestic work, especially ageing workers who found the former physically difficult. Thus, even if there is a level of

danger associated with domestic service, such as the occupational risks of being shot on the job as a guard, workers like Muhammed, a single live-in *maiguard* of Hausa origin from Borno State, who does not know his age, says domestic work 'na better than push cart on road', which he finds to be more dangerous and less well-paid than the work he currently does. Muhammed shows that insecurity of the urban labour market, even within the informal economy, is another reason for offering oneself up to domestic service.

The above factors help to explain the supply of domestic workers. However, their demand should not be ignored, particularly increased labour force participation among middle-class and elite women in Nigeria. For example, in 2007, 32.5 per cent of women were employed in the (non-agricultural) private sector and less than 30 per cent in the public sector, with only 17 per cent found in senior positions (British Council Nigeria, 2012:18). As Tolani, a 41-year-old female employer of Yoruba origin, who works as a caterer, suggests, the current state of the Nigerian economy affects all Nigerians regardless of their social position:

> As Nigeria is now, it is necessary for all in the family, including us women, in the house to work. And it is not that the salary is even enough to sustain the family so it becomes necessary to take up multiple jobs. As you see me, I am also selling lace [fabric].

Although more women may be entering the labour market, data from the Core Welfare Indicators Questionnaire (CWIQ), carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics, suggest that, while men spend most of their time employed in pursuits that earn them an income, women spend most of their time doing unpaid care work (British Council Nigeria, 2012:17). As discussed in Chapter 2, patriarchal ideologies, in which men are

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seen as breadwinners and women are still expected to be primarily responsible for childcare, maintaining homes and domestic labour, persist. Thus, while more women are working, they are not necessarily getting more support from male partners. Bearing this in mind, the next section looks into employers' reasons for hiring domestic workers.

5.4   Employer Rationales for Hiring Domestic Workers

With Nigerian women – particularly mothers – not only working, but also engaged in their 'traditional' roles as child carers and home-keepers, one of the major reasons given by employers as to why they recruit domestic workers, is to ensure they have a work-life balance. Many mothers talked about having to combine their work and career development with childcare, housekeeping, personal relationships with their husbands, leisure and social relationships. This is echoed by Motunrayo Ariyo (2006), who interviewed 120 women – 93 of which were 'career women' and 27 'non-career women' – in order to understand the demand for under-aged househelps in Lagos. Ariyo (2006) argues that women's greater labour force participation has meant that one of the main reasons behind 'engaging house-helps' is as a:

> strategy to manage the conflict arising from duties to be performed in the office and/or in shops vis-à-vis the domestic responsibilities as a mother and wife, and other family care or responsibilities which cannot be traded off (ibid:209).

Female employers explain how the nature of their paid work, along with their child and domestic responsibilities, gives them little choice but to hire 'somebody to assist in the

home' (Eno, 29, Igbo, banker, married, two children). Kehinde, a 50-year-old doctor of

Yoruba origin who is married with three children, explains that:

> …even after closing time, the hassle to get home – traffic jams, sometimes car faults – by the time you return to the house in the evening you are fatigued and it is stressful to start cooking, cleaning the house, washing the clothes and attending to the welfare of the home.

Theresa, a 53-year-old Civil Servant of Igbo origin who is married and has four children

also expresses the importance of her house-girl for achieving a work-life balance,

especially as she is expected to undertake the bulk of unpaid domestic and care

responsibilities in her household:

> We [her and her husband] both work and we have three children but my husband does not do any of the housework. He tends to leave the responsibility of the house and the kids to me. So not only do I have to work outside, I also need to work inside. So my house-girl is very crucial for my sanity as she really helps a lot – she cleans, does the washing and she also usually makes the kids their breakfast in the morning and sometimes will do the cooking in the evening if I am running late.

Finally, Taiwo, a 27-year-old designer of Yoruba origin who is married and has one

child, echoes this dilemma of fulfilling expectations as mother, wife and worker:

> To be frank with you, I never thought I would bring an outsider into my house to assist with the housework. I was always adamant 'I can do this on my own', but when I had my daughter and then had to go back to work after three months, I had no choice other than hiring someone to help around the house and with the caring for my daughter while I am at work. It was the only way.

This indicates that, for women, the pressures of work co-exist with traditional

expectations to provide domestic responsibilities at home for husbands and children.

Traditionally, the extended family would have helped to cushion the impact of work on

women's household responsibilities (see Tsikata, 2009:23 in the context of domestic

work in Ghana). Yet, as suggested by Mercedes González de la Rocha and Alejandro Grinspun (2001), even if extended family networks are available, the economic need for all adult family members to engage in income-generating activities limits the capacity of family members to help each other.

Thus, in this situation, domestic workers are meant to just provide extra assistance, especially to working mothers who have the challenges of maintaining the home and doing their jobs effectively. There is an irony and injustice in this because, by employing domestic workers to ensure a work-life balance, in most cases, employers deny their workers any ability to have a life of their own, as will be discussed in Chapter's 6 and 7 on female live-ins and female live-outs respectively.

In addition to spouses not taking up an equal share of domestic and caring responsibilities, similar to most parts of the world, there is still not a corresponding increase in support from the government. Only a few policies in Nigeria make provisions for women's unpaid care and domestic work, such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act of 2004 and the National Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) Policy of 2007, with their provision of free day care centres and crèches for 3-5 year-olds (UBE Act) and 0-5 year-olds (IECD Policy) in all public primary schools (Ukpe, 2013). In spite of this, not all public primary schools have these facilities and IECD centres are mainly concentrated in urban areas, providing services to around 25 per cent of children. These centres also lack adequate infrastructure, finance and personnel – with many of the staff lacking the necessary qualifications for effective child development. Indeed, many

of the employers I interviewed informed me that they are more likely to send their children to private day care centres than Government ones.

Unfortunately, private day care centres are not cheap. While some low-cost day care or nursery schools in Lagos charge NGN7000 (USD$44) per term, private day care centres range from NGN75000 (USD$480) to NGN500000 (USD$3200) per term. Thus, as a strategy to manage their work and domestic responsibilities, employers choose to employ domestic workers – who are cheaper and provide them with a greater level of trust than day care centres with inadequately trained staff. Although as will be discussed in Chapter 6, trust is relative and some workers are more trustworthy than others.

The two male employers I interviewed also explained that domestic workers play an important role in them attaining a work-life balance. Balogun, a 56-year-old civil servant and widower of Yoruba origin with three children, hires a male steward (who cooks and cleans), as he does not have time to do 'such things'. He also sees his other domestic worker, a driver, as a necessity:

> Making a living has made it impossible for us to survive without a driver, especially in cities like Lagos. If I am off to a business meeting and stuck in traffic, I must have a driver to shuttle me between meetings, so that I do not spend too much time dealing with 'area boys' and looking for parking spaces. If my children need to be picked up from school while I am busy, there's the driver to go and fetch them.'

Although Balogun does not mention his status as a widower and his caring responsibilities, he does indicate that he needs someone to carry out both feminine

(cooking) and masculine (driving) forms of household work. Thirty-three-year-old architect of Yoruba origin Idris, on the other hand, is single and has no children, but also explains having no time during the day for household tasks. He lives on the Mainland and works on the Island, and so is usually up by 6am to beat the morning rush hour and back home by 9pm as a result of the evening traffic. He hires a part-time male domestic worker who comes in twice a week.

While two male employers is certainly not enough to paint a full picture of male employers in this country, Balogun and Idris could suggest that men also face a time squeeze and time pressures (Perrons et al., 2010: 205; see also Kilkey, 2010; Sassen, 2010) – similar to women (Cox, 2006; Hochschild, 2000; Parreňas, 2001). It also provides insight, albeit small, into the role of men in driving the demand for paid domestic labour in Nigeria. Finally, as Balogun is widowed and Idris is single, it indicates that single, divorced or widowed men can also consume paid care labour, which as noted by Ester Gallo and Francesca Scrinzi (2015), in the context of male employers of migrant care-givers in Italy, challenge an almost exclusive focus on female employer–female employee work relationships in domestic work (see also Cox, 2006).

Beyond achieving a work-life balance, there are other employers – mainly housewives – who cite household chores, which continue to be heavy, as a reason for recruiting domestic workers. This was also echoed by Ariyo (2006:209), who noted that, in some cases, some women 'hire househelps just because they hate domestic work'. Both Rachel (38-year-old house-wife and mother of two) and Biodun (56-year-old house-wife and

mother of four) spoke about the cultural and social expectations of women in the domestic sphere and how arduous the work is.

Rachel explains to me that she had to negotiate with her husband to reduce the 'burden of roles' because 'the work became too much… wash the plates, clean the house, prepare the food' and she 'needs assistance'. Older employers also explain that the difficulties they face in performing certain domestic tasks, such as cooking and cleaning, is why they employ domestic workers. Thus, regardless of whether employers are in paid employment or not, as domestic activities can be time-consuming, energy-sapping or difficult, women effectively cope with their multiple tasks by hiring domestic workers.

As some of the homes I visited exhibited significant wealth, this suggests that, in addition to domestic workers being employed to alleviate the 'burdens' of working women and men, they are also hired to service their employers' somewhat luxurious lifestyle. In this vein, domestic workers can be seen as status symbols. Managing such spacious and well-decorated homes – which, themselves, are a symbol of an employer's wealth and social standing – is a strenuous task. As such, employers require the support of a whole army of domestic workers to keep their homes clean, ordered and well- maintained.

Having domestic workers has long been a status symbol of the wealthy elites in Nigeria, as previously mentioned. This was also observed in Robyn Allyce Pariser's (2015:271) account of African servants in colonial Tanganyika (present day Tanzania), where European employer's depended on the 'several tasks [their] domestic servants performed

to keep [their] home in shipshape everyday'. As I will discuss in the next Chapter, while these daily rituals and routines allow employers to organise their world, make sense of their environment and stave off the threat of chaos, this often involves in control of domestic workers to ensure they get the job done correctly.

Numerous other reasons exist as to why the employers hire domestic workers, such as helping them out of poverty and security against thefts. In a few cases, loneliness was given as a reason. For example, Rachel, a 38-year-old housewife of Urhobo origin, whose husband travels a lot for his work, needed someone in the house to not only do household chores, but also keep her company, as she is usually alone. Biodun, a 56-year-old woman of Yoruba origin, also a housewife whose husband was not around much, expressed similar sentiments about needing someone to talk to. While 72-year-old widow, retiree and mother of five, Damilola, who is also Yoruba, explains her motive behind hiring a domestic worker is not for domestic tasks, but 'to keep me company in the house'. Employing domestic workers for companionship is somewhat of a disconnect, considering, as will be explored in the next chapter, some workers are usually not allowed any form of social interaction.

Having explored the rationale behind the supply and demand for domestic workers in this study, in this final section, I look into how workers in my research obtained their jobs in domestic service. This is important because domestic workers are also vulnerable to exploitative and abusive practices, during the course of movement and recruitment (ILO, 2013).

5.5   Getting a Job: Routes into Paid Domestic Work

While recruitment is most often executed informally and through personal networks, my findings indicate that it also occurs through trafficking. The latter recruitment process, which is unregulated and highly informal recruitment can, and does, lead to potential problems for domestic workers, including risks of fraudulent job contracts, exploitative working conditions and forced labour. Workers may have little or no say over their terms of employment, and no means to seek redress for non-payment of wages and other abuses. In terms of actors, the recruitment of domestic workers in Lagos is multi-dimensional: via 'middlemen', parents, relatives or friends of domestic workers or employers and through domestic workers and employers themselves.

While the evidence is clearly not sufficient to make a firm conclusion, older workers in this study are more likely to have well-connected, established networks to assist in finding employment, while younger workers with little or no networks – beyond family and relatives – are more likely to be recruited via 'middlemen'. This, in turn, leads to differentiated experiences of domestic work, in the sense that, while all domestic workers tend to have poor working conditions, heavy tasks and long working hours (Vanek et al., 2014), those who find jobs with the support of friends are more likely to have a better experience than those recruited through social networks of families.

Generally, because there are few or no formal channels of information regarding available local jobs in domestic work and about jobseekers, and because employment

relationships in domestic work tend to be highly personalised, prospective employers and workers often rely on networks of relatives and friends, and on 'word of mouth' to facilitate their search. Thus, I am suggesting that workers who use their social networks are generally more likely to get access to different sources of information on work, salaries and working conditions, as well as assistance in providing food and shelter. Yet, as everyone does not have access to these support systems, social networks have a downside for those who have none.

This tends to be the case for workers from rural areas, who are usually younger and pursue domestic service through relatives or 'middlemen', such as 19-year-old, live-in housegirl Pamela – who I introduced earlier – and 18-yer-old single parent, Faith, who is a live-in housegirl. This, in turn, can lead to less bargaining power and, in many cases, the least positive experiences, as they are not involved in any form of discussion with employers prior to employment. Due to weak bargaining power, their wages and working conditions are usually determined and endorsed by relatives or middlemen who either keep their salaries or send them back to their family in the village. For instance, Faith (18, live-in housegirl) is paid 'in-kind', while Pamela (19, live-in housegirl) earns a mere NGN2500 (USD$16) a month. I will now look at the recruitment strategies, beginning with 'middlemen'.

5.5.1 Recruitment via 'Middlemen'

Recruitment agencies (both formal and informal) have played a significant role in recruiting migrant domestic workers to work in private households all over the world. They can take on various forms and shapes – an individual recruiter, a loose network of intermediaries, small or mid-size agencies, multi-national enterprises with global operations – and be involved throughout the recruitment, job placement and employment process (UNODC, 2015). The 'middlemen' who are involved in the recruitment of workers in this study fall in the first two categories – individual and/or loose networks of intermediaries that operate informally.

'Middlemen', who may be female as well as male, play an important role in the recruitment of domestic workers (ILO, 2012), particularly children – with 18 of the workers in this study recruited via this method. Additionally, with 14 of the workers between the ages of 18 and 21, and four unsure of their age, and a further 15 of these workers being female, this suggests that this is a common way of getting into domestic work by young women.

Recruitment via 'middlemen' usually occurs in two ways. In some cases, 'middlemen' bring children from the villages they live in when transporting agricultural products to the city. Friends or family members of the 'middlemen' living in the cities also aid in the process by acting as intermediaries between the 'middlemen' and eventual employers.

Abeni, a live-out housegirl of Tiv origin from Benue State, who does not know her age and is in a relationship, started domestic work as a child and explains the process:

> Mama ['middleman'] carry us inside a truck with firewood, pepper and tomatoes from my village. I no know everybody inside. There are plenty, plenty children. Some sit firewood. I sit on floor. I go carry pepper for laps. Two aunties [older women] sit for inside truck and carry tings wey dem go sell for Lagos.

In other cases, 'middlemen' travel to rural areas with the specific task of recruiting children and placing them in households in the cities. For instance, Tobi, a 22-year-old live-out houseboy of Yoruba origin from Osun State, who is also in a relationship, explains that he got to know Mama ('middleman'), who used to come to buy foodstuff from his mother during market day. One day, she called him to help her carry her purchases to her car and advised him he would 'make plenty money' in Lagos. After speaking to his parents, who were already struggling financially, it was decided he would go to Lagos – that is where he got his first job working in a house.

Here, 'middlemen' move from one household to another, finding volunteers (or relatives) and informing them (or their parents) that working in cities in 'prosperous homes' will give them food, money and clothes. This method is often seasonal, usually taking place during periods such as Eid, Christmas, or New Year – typically when there is a demand for extra help, as there is a lot of work to be done when households are entertaining. In some situations, worsening economic conditions force some parents to put pressure on 'middlemen' to take their children to the city to earn a living; this, in turn, relieves the burden at home, while also promising receipt of remittances.

Once procured, children and young persons are kept at transit camps in the States of Akwa-Ibom, Calabar, Ondo or Oyo. This was the case with Bukola, a 19-year-old single live-in housegirl of Yoruba origin from Oyo State, who was in a 'labour camp' in Shaki, Oyo. Children are then transported via bus, car or truck (depending on the numbers) to various cities where they are in demand. These include Lagos, Abeokuta and Ibadan in Southwest Nigeria; Kano in the Northern part of the country; and Calabar and Port-Harcourt in the South-South. The conditions of transportation are usually deplorable. As elaborated by single parent, Samantha, a 22-year-old live-out housegirl of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom, who came to Lagos in a bus from Aba State, 'packed with plenty children':

> We no get air for breathe in de truck. We dey chop [eat] until we enter Mama's house, which was in Oyingbo. When we reach and, I dey tired and my body dey pain me for all over.

As Samantha goes on to explain, she, and the other children in the truck, were kept in the intermediary or 'middleman's' compound and were expected to work until employers were found for them:

> …inside Mama's house I no chop for more than one day, I sleep small, the place no smell well. In the next day, I start clean Mama's house. I no remember how long I am staying there but I clean everyday.

Once employers are found, they either come to choose the worker they want or have the 'middlemen' take them to their homes. There, they start work, usually as househelps. For employers, workers obtained via this method are preferred because they tend to be new to Lagos, have their families back in their homes and seem to have fewer difficulties with

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being subservient. This makes them attractive, as they are quiet, obedient and often fearful, hence they do not challenge the status quo.

In terms of 'middlemen' commissions, Olaniyi (2009:51) - whose study on the trafficking of children into domestic service in Nigeria I introduced earlier - explains how, in the 1990s, 'traffickers collected… NGN300 [USD$1.90] to NGN500 [USD$3.20] per child and sometimes received gifts of foodstuffs from both parents and employers of the children'. Today, the cost has risen, as Ufom Umorem Ekpe-Otu (2009:30) explains in the context of child labour in Ikot Ekpene, a town in south-eastern Nigeria, where the price could be as high as N3000 [USD$19] per child, especially if children go to cities such as Port Harcourt, Lagos and Abuja. Although Ekpe-Otu's (2009) study does not specify the reasons behind the higher prices charged in big cities, one could assume it is due to some combination of high demand and high wages in these regional business centres.

In my study, the few employers who admit to having employed child workers in the past quote even higher prices. For example, Adama, a 35-year-old female employer who works as a teacher and is a married mother of two, paid the first agent she used NGN10000 (US$62). Kehinde, a 50-year-old female employer who works as a doctor, indicates that the fees to get a house-help can be anywhere from NGN4000 [USD$64] to as much as NGN7000 [USD$45]. This, as she explains, excludes the 'extra month you have to pay the agent for conveying the domestic servant from wherever state they came from'. This indicates that while the Labour Regulations Act (1936) prohibits recruitment

fees, unless with consent of a Governor or Minister (see Chapter 4), this policy is not being enforced.

Regardless of the amount 'middlemen' charge, a significant feature of most workers recruited via this method is that the workers are usually not paid directly. Instead, the money either goes to the worker's parents or is kept by the agent. Similar findings were observed in New Delhi where Neetha N (2009) writes that agents rarely share information on wages negotiated with the workers. They also take a considerable amount off of workers' salary in their first few months 'as brokerage expenses, transportation costs and so on' (ibid:500).

Furthermore, there are cases in which 'middlemen' withdraw workers before the end of their contracts on the grounds that they are going to visit their parents. Informal conversations reveal that workers are usually transferred to new households, and 'middlemen' use this strategy of removing workers before the end of their contract – usually one to two years – to ensure they constantly receive commission from the workers' income. The assumption amongst employers is that 'middlemen' fear that, if the workers stay in a household long enough, they may become attached and not want to leave the employer.

This strategy employed by 'middlemen' also has a direct impact on the workers themselves in at least two ways. First, it reinforces the power 'middlemen' have over workers by denying the worker the autonomy to decide where they can work. Second, it

limits the workers' ability to establish networks within their working neighbourhood. These, often young, workers entering through these means are also often the most vulnerable of workers, with the conditions under which they work often among the most hazardous. Indeed, the paid domestic work literature raises similar concerns, such as the possibility of sexual exploitation by the 'middlemen' in India (see for example Neetha N, 2009 in the context of recruitment agencies in New Delhi) or migrant domestic workers in the Middle East being charged excessive recruitment fees by agents and often receiving lower wages than promised on arrival (de Regt and Fernandez, 2014; UNODC, 2015)

Thus, while 'middlemen' play a significant role in the supply and demand in of domestic workers (ILO, 2013), particularly by facilitating the movement of workers looking for job opportunities in Lagos, abusive recruitment practices seem to flourish. For example, many workers recruited this way often end up residing in their employer's home. While feeding and accommodation (and clothing, to some extent) are almost always provided by the employer (Nnorom and Kunnuji, 2008), many are overworked and deprived of basic food and health needs, social activities and emotional support and care.

Wages also tend to be the lowest – with workers who were initially recruited via this method explaining to me how minimal their wages were in their first jobs, from nothing to as much low as NGN4000 (USD$25). In Ibadan in Southwest Nigeria, for example, Emeka Okafor's (2009) study on adolescent domestic servants recruited through this

method earned between NGN500 (USD$3.20) and NGN5000 (USD$32) a month, with most workers not knowing how much they get paid.

As such, despite 18 workers in my study initially being recruited this way, social networks (be it via family or friends) and word of mouth constitute the favoured method of recruitment among the workers, and employers, interviewed. This is because finding employment through trusted contacts reduces the possibility of going to a house that will 'do bad things'.

5.5.2   Importance of Social Networks

While a few employers have used 'middlemen' in the past, almost all the employers in this study prefer using their social networks as a means to recruit domestic workers due to bad experiences with 'middlemen', 'who only care about money and [are] not trustworthy'. As 35-year-old female employer, Adama, who paid NGN10000 (USD$64) to an agent, explains:

> Once you pay the agent's fee, the maid will only work for a month, collect her salary and then be recalled by the agent who will then take her to someone else who will also pay agency fee and the maid's first month salary before she is recalled. This is normal fraudulent practice done by agents.

Adama's account mirrors the experiences and opinions of other employers who prefer recruiting their workers through 'someone they know'. As employers want someone they can trust, the idea of not knowing the background of the worker is threatening to most of them, particularly if something, such as theft, takes place. Thus, from the employer's perspective, this approach entails a potential employer making an informal request or

seeking assistance through their friends, neighbours, relatives, work colleagues – and, in some cases, domestic workers themselves – in their search for a domestic worker (see also Dill, 1988; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994). For example, Eno, a 29-year-old banker, asked the wife of her driver to find her a trustworthy girl from her area.

For domestic workers, employer networks for finding workers can only be established once workers are settled into domestic work, and have a proven track record of the employer's selection criteria, including reliability and trust. Therefore, first-timers into domestic work are unlikely to secure a job via the employer's informal networks. In this regard, the family, friends and kin ties of workers seeking employment are useful. Thus, from the workers' perspective, this approach involves them seeking a friend or relative to secure employment for them.

Men, especially young men new to the city, tend to be particularly optimistic about the contribution of friends to their getting a job. As illustrated by Musa and Tunde, who both work as drivers, social networks are also important for getting information about employment opportunities and in obtaining food and shelter during their job search (see also Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Rao, 2009):

> To get a job, one has to know someone, without which you spend a long time without a job. I was connected to my current employer by my friend working in the neighbourhood. (Musa, 27, Hausa, single live-in driver from Plateau State)

> It is not easy to find job, you need to have a good and reliable friend/relative to feed, and even accommodate you before finding work. You also need to keep connected because even those that assist you may, in turn, need your assistance later on because our work has no security and has many uncertainties. (Tunde, 30, live-out, married, two children, Yoruba driver from Ondo State)

As employers need to know whom they are employing, friends are also valuable because as prospective workers are 'vouched for' (Chopra, 2006:158). While men tend to be more reliant on friends, regardless of age, women's social networks are usually centred on family, as indicated by the accounts from three female domestic workers, whose family members helped them secure entry into domestic service:

> My husband's cousin works as a maid and she was the one that got me a job with her Madam's sister who was looking for a nanny. (Efem, 34, married, two children, live-out Efik nanny from Cross River State)

> My senior sister helped me find that job. She was already living in Lagos and I came here hoping for a better job and future. (Priscilla, 23, single, live-out, Ibibio housegirl from Akwa Ibom State)

> My sister's husband bring me here to work as maid. (Ngozi, 18, single, one child, live-in Tiv housegirl from Benue State)

There are, however, exceptions to this rule. Etok, a live-out houseboy from Ebonyi State, who was introduced earlier, got his first job via a relative who 'approached my mother and informed her that there was a kind family in Lagos that I can stay with'. While Chinwe – the widowed 33-year-old live-out cook and mother of three from Anambra State – got her job through word of mouth:

> One of our customers, who is driver in one estate, said that his friend's Madam was looking for a house-help. I am too old to be house-help. And that job is wicked work. So I turn it down, but this man care about the well-being of me and my children so he tell me about another place looking for a cook. I cook well, everyone in my area know me for my food, so he go tell am say he found cook and I go dey interview. That was in 2006 and from this driver and some other friends I get information about working conditions and 'big pay' in these big Madam's [female employer] houses. I took the opportunity to earn money and contribute to improving the situation of my family.

Thus, in addition to providing information on work, food and shelter, social networks can also provide information on salaries and working conditions. However, possessing social

networks does not necessarily mitigate the harsh working conditions that are associated with domestic work. Indeed, my findings indicate that, regardless of the mode of recruitment, workers commonly face heavy tasks and long, atypical working hours.

5.6   Conclusion

As I have discussed in this chapter, the motives for worker entry into domestic service in Lagos, which includes lack of employment and educational opportunities and women's increased labour force participation, means that workers will continue to enter this occupation regardless of the experiences they may face once in it. The next chapters go into more detail on domestic workers' everyday experiences and how they are shaped by their different characteristics. They indicate that the situation of domestic workers in Lagos is full of complexity, and highlights how single category descriptions do not reflect the reality that employees have multiple identities and, therefore, may encounter a variety of life experiences, as well as particular sets of opportunities and constraints inside and outside the workplace. Exploring domestic work through the lens of workers' gender, ethnicity and age enables me to capture the commonalities and the differences of experiences in this occupation. It also makes it possible to look at the diverse and heterogeneous everyday practices used by workers on a daily basis.

For now, I am suggesting that workers' identities come into play even before they begin working as domestic employees, as it shapes not only their motivations for entering this occupation, but also their routes of entry. Furthermore, depending on how they were

recruited, their social lives and access to the city beyond that as domestic workers might be limited and constricted; and information relevant to their work and personal life might be inaccessible.

The next three chapters begin to delve into what everyday life is like once in this occupation for female live-ins, female live-outs who are mothers and male domestic workers (both live-in and live-out). They will focus on the three key aspects of everyday life, as outlined in Chapter 2, and the areas of contention between employers and workers in this occupation that shape their everyday lives.

Interlude: The Nanny Craze

The context has been set for the next three Chapters, which explore the everyday lives of male and female domestic workers in Lagos. This interlude might seem like a detour, but it is a necessary one. Scouring Nigerian websites and social media reveals quite vividly the views employers have of their workers and the strategies they adopt to maintain social order in their homes – issues that I cover in more detail in the next three Chapters.

For now, I share a column titled 'The Nanny Craze' by Stella Damasus, a Nigerian actress and singer which appeared on PM News – an online Nigeran newspaper – in April 2012 that highlights the necessary steps an employer *must take* when recruiting a nanny:

> … after speaking to loads of parents we discovered that you must follow most, if not all, of these tips:
>
> As soon as they walk into the house for their first interview please look out for body language. Can they look straight into your eyes when you talk to them or do they look away? How about the way they answer your first few questions?
>
> Please always ask about their experience, how long they have provided such services and their last place of employment. Then proceed to ask for the reason why they left. You are most likely going to hear things like my boss and his family got transferred or relocated, or my boss stopped working or was sacked and sent me back to the village because they could not afford my salary. The funniest one I have heard is, 'my madam was very wicked to me and she did not like me because her husband gave me money to give my mother so she beat me up,' and so on. At this point, you need to ask for references; make sure you have contact details of a member of her family apart from that of the agent which is mandatory. Try and locate the address of both parties in case anything happens.
>
> On that first day, ask them about their history, all they do for a living especially their number of siblings and if their parents are alive because I know of some of them whose mothers died twice and they had to go for burial.
> Chat with your kids and get them to be free around you. Ask them about events of the day but make sure you do that when you are alone with the kids.

Ask your nanny to lead the prayers, at least once a week, regardless of your denomination. Guide the prayer points so he or she will follow that line.

Very importantly get an identity card for them and keep a copy with you. Prepare a document with all their particulars and have them sign it.

1. Take her to your hospital and do an HIV test, pregnancy test and test for any disease that may be serious.
2. Make sure you know at least two persons that are her relatives.
3. You need to know where she lives (family house or her base)
4. Get guarantors and confirmation from the last person she worked with.
5. You might want to take her to your place of worship for prayers.
6. I don't think it's advisable to let her sleep in the same room with your kids till at least after the first month.
7. Try and be responsible for her toiletries and do a routine check through her things. This might sound harsh and old fashioned but you might be shocked at what you might find.
8. If you have a son who is about ten and above you might want him to start doing things himself because they are normally victims of sexual abuse. If she has no reason to enter your matrimonial bedroom then let her stay out of it
9. Short dresses, tight jeans, eyeliners, lipsticks and weave-on, these are things that you might allow unconsciously but think about this – who are they trying to impress, why is there a need for all that when their priority is to the job, which is to take care of children?
10. Do not encourage off days too frequently without knowing where exactly they would be.
11. Look out for skin discoloration and bloating.

These are not meant to scare you but just for us all to be more careful because the world is no longer what it used to be. I am not claiming this will prevent anything, but I believe it's a step in the right direction. And trust me, the safety of our children is worth all the trouble. Good luck to you all'.

Source: (http://pmnewsnigeria.com/2012/04/04/the-nanny-craze-by-stella-damasus/)
Accessed July 5 2012

As mentioned at the beginning of this brief interlude, this column is quite illuminating and also brings up a lot of the strategies employers I interviewed discussed with me. Strategies which - as I discuss in the next Chapters - come about as a result of the perceptions they have of their workers. For instance, testing for sexually transmitted

diseases (STDs) is due to perceptions of workers as carriers of diseases because they do the 'dirty' work (see Chapter 2), but also because they are viewed as promiscuous and dangerous – as I discuss in Chapter 6. Similar rationale is given as to why there is a dress code – nothing too sexy or sultry. Workers are recruited to do a job, care for children, clean homes and so they should not be concerned with their appearance. However, look a little closer at Damasus' rules of engagement and there is also a glimpse into the subtle resistance of workers – using the death of relatives as a way to break free from any abusive practices of their employers, even if a short period

The everyday lives of domestic workers - as I reveal over the next few Chapters - are wrought with these tensions of negotiations and struggles between employers who want to exert control and workers who attempt to resist them.

6

Sexualisation in the Everyday Lives of Female Live-in Domestic Workers

This chapter explores sexualisation in the everyday lives of women who work and reside in their employers' home. Domestic workers are often perceived as having a 'rampant' sexuality, but female live-ins in this study are the most vulnerable to exploitation and abuse arising from these views. This is as a result of their workplace and place of residence being the private, intimate and unregulated domestic space of their employers.

This current chapter, as well as the next two, is organised around three corresponding themes of ritual and routines, social order and challenges, in order to unpack some of the features of workers' everyday lives. As a reminder, rituals and routines refer to specific practices, codes of behaviour and habits. Social order refers to the underlying structures of rules and expectations that organise these practices, while challenging taken-for-granted assumptions refers to instances of norm breaking.

Based on this conceptual framework, first, I explore the perceptions of female domestic workers as sexually available. I then analyse the impact these discourses have on women who live-in by discussing the ways in which views of sexuality manifests itself in control. My findings indicate a number of controlling strategies, which form the basis of female live-ins' daily rituals and routines. These are: control that denies their sexuality, such as minimal social interaction in the home and public sphere; control of their labour,

including working hours and workloads; and control that takes away their sexuality, such as sexual abuse.

I argue that, while employers tend to justify their exploitative practices under the guise of narratives, such as protecting their workers, the control that results from these ideas of (im)morality is often used as a way to construct differences between employers and employees. This enables a separation of the bad, low-class domestic worker from their good, wealthier employer, and allows employers to maintain their higher social standing in Nigerian society. These perceptions, as I go on to reveal, are also part of a larger discourse on paid domestic workers in Nigeria, where the media often portray their sexuality as deviant. I end the chapter by exploring the practices that female live-ins adopt to resist the various forms of control in their daily lives.

To conclude, I suggest that the control that arises from the view of domestic workers as sexually available reveals the ways in which female live-in domestic workers' everyday lives are shaped by constant negotiations between employers' and workers' around this terrain of sexuality.

6.1   'Some of these girls are extremely dangerous': Sexualisation of Female Live-in Domestic Workers

As outlined in Chapter 4, 23 of the 34 live-ins in this study are women, who are more likely to be young and single with no children working as housegirls. Appendix I provides details of the characteristics of the female live-ins in this study.

While female live-ins can also be older – the oldest in this study is 53 years old – divorced and/or widowed, have children and work as nannies, it is these young housegirls that are most susceptible to exploitation as a result of an intersection of their low class status with their gender, age and living arrangement. As explained in Chapter 5, younger female domestic workers are preferred for reasons, such as their submissiveness and obedience. These assumptions often mean that they are the most vulnerable to sexual stereotypes and tight regulations over their labour, bodies and movements.

As also explained in Chapter 2, being lower class means that domestic workers are often deemed worthy of 'doing the dirty work' (Anderson, 2000). Yet dirt has also been linked symbolically to the sexual realm (Palmer, 1989). Phyllis Palmer (1989), in her writings on dirt, domesticity and racialised divisions among women in the US context, suggests that:

> dirt and sex live in close association, and women who clean up things associated with bodies find themselves mysteriously deemed sexual and powerful regardless of their actual social status' (ibid:138).

In this context, dirt is equated with immorality and promiscuity. As existing studies have revealed, domestic workers – especially those who are unattached – are seen as bearers of rampant sexuality (Constable, 1997; Enloe, 1989; Ong, 1991: Ray, 2000). Interestingly, while in Sara Dickey's (2004) study on domestic workers in India, it was noted that 'fears about sexual transgression are almost never mentioned by either employers or servants, since merely mentioning such possibilities can cause great damage to families' and women's reputations' (ibid:477). The subject of female workers' 'uncontained' sexuality was a topic on which employer interviewees did not need any prompting.

Throughout my time in Lagos, everyone seemed to hold an opinion on this, and I was particularly regaled with countless stories about the 'easy virtue' of female domestic workers. From young workers who 'can't be trusted – they steal everything, even our husbands' to the housegirl 'who would have all the bricklayers in the project next door take "turns on her" in the uncompleted building'. As argued by Kimberly Chang and Julian Groves (2000), in their research on Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong, discourses about sexuality are important because it is a commentary on relations of power - between men and women, across race, class and other social identities - and the broader institutional arrangements that permit them (ibdi:73). Thus, sexualised discourses, and the resulting control, are significant in shaping the everyday lived experiences of female live-in employees.

These concerns about female domestic workers have also been found in literature on paid domestic work in various parts of the world. Examples include Lebanon where research has been conducted on the images and perceptions of female domestic workers in Arab households (Jureidini, 2006), and in Hong Kong with female Filipina domestic workers (Constable, 1997b) and Chinese maids (Chang and Groves, 2000).

Similar discourses can be found in historical studies during the early colonial period in Africa, particularly in Southern Africa between white employers and their black workers (Pape, 1990; see also Stoler, 1997). The sexual threat female domestic workers posed to employers is most apparent in Karen Hansen's (1990) work on domestic workers in colonial Zambia, where she notes that many European women resisted the substitution of

African female for African male labour because they 'considered young African girls dangerous and sexually precocious' (Hansen, 1990:128–30; see also Schmidt, 1992). Hansen (1989) demonstrated how 'yellow peril' – 'miscegenation as result of sexual relations between European men and African women' (Schmidt, 1992:224) - was also a way to create 'difference' between the dominant European class and the subordinate Africans.[20] Sexual relations influenced and reinforced the values of those in power with colonial panics about sex and race used to stop the 'uncontrollable sexual' (Pape, 1990:72) native from threatening the fundamental moral fibre and social order of colonial society.

Not surprisingly, the race of employers may have changed, but the historical legacy of the colonial stereotypes that essentialised domestic workers as sexually threatening remains evident in employer-employee relations in Nigeria today. These discourses are pervasive, tainting how female domestic workers are imagined - as women who are willing to carry out the dirty tasks associated with maintaining the household and at the same time as sexual threats to the home. These perceptions, as revealed through my interviews, give rise to anxieties among employers who see female live-ins as dangerous women who can break up homes, have sexual relations with any man or transmit diseases.

Researchers have written extensively about the dangers of domestic workers' sexuality to the household, as well as the society (see for example Yeoh and Huang, 1998, 2010 in the context of Singapore). In Singapore, for instance, Barbara Johnston (2013) in her study

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[20] In this chapter, 'yellow peril' does not refer to the Western fear about East Asian immigrants, culture and economic power

on expatriate women's relationships with domestic workers notes that 'migrant domestic workers are portrayed as opportunistic seductresses alternatively seeking sexual gratification with no relationship prospects or sex with relationship benefits' (ibid:180). Thus, employers – who pass the 'dirty' work on to those they deem worthy of it - are simultaneously imposing a system to minimise any of the threats I discuss below.

6.1.1 Breaking up Homes

Beginning with breaking up homes, 29-year old female employer, Eno, who is of Igbo origin, works as a bank manager and is a married mother of two, makes it very clear that 'some of these girls are extremely dangerous… and if they can, they will do anything to push you out of your matrimonial home'. This fear could be linked to the fact that in some parts of the world, as noted in an ILO-IPEC (2004) study on child domestic workers, girls are sent into paid domestic work in wealthier households in the hopes that 'they may meet a young man who will wish to marry them' (ibid:29). Eno explains:

> In one house, this woman's housegirl eventually took over her home as her husband sent her packing. This is just me showing you how you cannot trust them and there should always be constant supervision. As a wife under no circumstances will the girl be given tasks that will have her in my bedroom, cooking in the kitchen or access to my husband. Anything can end up happening at the times when I am not around.

Eno's insistence on minimising any interaction with her husband via cooking, for instance, could be as a result of food being a major aspect of sexuality in Nigeria. In the country it is believed one way to a man's heart – is through his stomach, as food makes him amiable and easily pliable. Furthermore, there are certain foods believed to transmit sexual messages, such as a vegetable soup known as *edikang ikong* (or *edikaikong*) from

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the Calabar region, which is perceived 'as a love medicine which when eaten would tie the man to the woman who cooked it' (see Ikpe, 1994:41). This fear often means that female live-ins are more likely to assist in food preparation, such as cutting vegetables, than in the actual cooking of food in this study. As Hansen (1989) suggested in relation to food in her study on domestic workers in colonial Zambia, 'Zambian women householders feared that their female servants would mix love potions into the husband's food in order to attract his sexual attentions' (ibid:266).

Interestingly, Ayse Akalin (2007) in her study on migrant domestic workers in Turkey observes that employers are also reluctant to have employees cook, and instead use them for the 'basics ... like peeling or slicing vegetables' (ibid:218). This, however, centres on cooking requiring 'a combination of skills, experience ... and subjectivity' (ibid:218), as well as tastes which a workers' 'foreignness' hinders their ability to 'create the "right" tastes for their employers' (ibid:218). Thus, while both rationales centre on middle-class perceptions of workers, it also reveals the ways in which employer preference and rationale for why they do what they do is rooted in local contexts.

Evidence of female househelps using food to make men fall in love with them can be seen in a 2009 Nigerian song 'Ekaette' by Maya Hunt. The song is about a woman named Ekaette – a common female name from the Calabar region – who works as a househelp. As the chorus below illustrates, the song centres on sexual relations between a male employer and his housegirl, who eventually becomes pregnant:

> Na who give my housegirl belle? Was the question that my wifey was asking everybody. She don get belle and I know deep down that we both got down.

Ekaette belle. My wifey will go crazy to find out I'm the daddy. She won't hear pele. Oh lord, help me o.

As a young Calabar woman, Ekaette possessed many 'good' qualities, such as cleaning and cooking *edikang ikong* that made her both a great housegirl and irresistible to her male employer. With his wife working late, a sexual relationship – one of the female employer's biggest fear – begins. The relationship ends when Ekaette eventually ends up being pregnant, with the male employer's wife trying to find out who made her housegirl pregnant ('Na who give my housegirl belle?'). However, the song concludes with the male employer's friend saying he also had sexual relations with Ekaette after tasting her food.

This song encapsulates the fear female employers have of the female live-in cooking meals that their husbands might eat, while also perpetuating the image of the sexually uncontrollable female domestic worker who will engage in sexual relations with her male employer and any other men associated with the employing household. The song also highlights the intersection of class, gender, ethnicity and age in discussions around sexual availability in this occupation – as Ekaette is a young, low-class woman of Efik or Ibibio origin. This suggests that while all female domestic workers are sexual, some are more sexual than others – with young Calabar women, like Ekaette, labelled as the most promiscuous of them all.

Other portrayals within the media of Calabar women as 'naturally good in bed' are illustrated in this skit from Basket Mouth, a popular Nigerian comedian. In it, Calabar women are portrayed as great cooks, cleaners and excellent lovers:

> Calabar girls I too dey like their style. Because they really know how to take care of man. Dem go cook for you. Dem go make your belle. Make e extra sweet. Na inside bedroom dem dey get their power. Dem get degree for sexology. Dem be professors for knackiology. E reach bedmatics dem no dey taya. Because Calabar girls they are ever ready (Orhiunu, 2007).

> Translation: I really like Calabar girls' style. Because they really know how to take care of man. They will cook for you. They will make your stomach is full [from the food], which will be extremely delicious. But it is inside the bedroom where they get their power. They have a degree in sexology. They are professors in knackiology. They do not get tired in bedmatics (Orhiunu, 2007).

'Calabar' women's sexual prowess' is also detailed in an online article by Anurila Onyelemelam (2014), whose mother told her:

> Don't you ever make friends with Calabar girls! They're dangerous! If you make friends with them, don't take them to the home of the man you're engaged to be married. She'll snatch him from you! Their parents trained them from cradle on how to bang. If they get your man, forget it, he'll never come back to you or even look at you again!

These discourses that inform perceptions surrounding the sexualisation of this particular group of workers could be read within the broader cultural practices of bride fattening, or *mbodi,* that occurs in the 'Calabar' region. Traditionally as fuller-figured women were considered beautiful and garnered a greater level of respect, on becoming a marriageable age, young girls were put through a fattening process where they were secluded from society for a certain period of time (Simmons, 1960).

In addition to fattening, *mbodi* served two additional functions. First, it operated as an unofficial finishing school where young women were trained in the skills necessary for a successful marriage, motherhood and socioeconomic survival. Girls were taught, among other things, how to clean, cook different kinds of food, childcare, etiquette, financial management skills and time management to ensure that all daily tasks were performed before their husband returned from socialising (Brink, 1989; Effiong, 2013).

Second, *mbodi* was an institution where young girls received sexuality education – learning tricks on how to sexually satisfy their husbands. Eno Blankson Ikpe (2004a:11), writing on female sex appeal in Nigeria, and particularly in Ibibioland, notes that:

> During this [bride fattening] period the fattened received different exercises including the flexing of hip muscles, massage and cosmetic treatments to make her body luscious and more appealing. The exercises had a lot to do with the movements of the body especially the hips to make them flexible and agile for the sexual act which was seen as an important aspect of marriage. They were taught different moves and responses which enhance sexual pleasure.

Today, the custom of sending girls to the fattening room might not be as widely practised, due mainly to health concerns such as obesity and diabetes (Oe, 2009). Still, *mbodi* – with its tips on how to be a successful wife, mother and lover - may have laid the foundation for the current stereotypes of 'Calabar' women as sexual. These perceptions – as with the wider view of female domestic workers as loose and immoral – remain unchallenged and, in many cases, they are tolerated and ignored. This enables any exploitation resulting from such prejudices to be maintained.

6.1.2 Sexual Encounters with Other Men

Following on from the above, female live-ins are also said to engage in sexual relations with young male members of the home. Thinking back to a focus group discussion I conducted as part of my pilot study, which used Maya Hunt's song, 'Ekaette' as a catalyst in discussions about the silent, but well-known sexual relations between female domestic workers and male employers in many Nigerian households - it was highlighted that, in Nigeria, many adolescent boys' first sexual encounters are with their househelps.

One participant noted that 'it is normal for young guys to sleep with househelps. It is a way for them to "practice"'; another echoed this view by saying she was sure that 'almost half of Nigerian men have "messed around" with their maids as teenagers'. This is also common in many parts of Latin America, where men who wish to '"cut their teeth" without compromising their reputation... may have their first sexual experience with prostitutes or live-in maids' (Chant with Craske, 2003:146). Similar cases are reported in Lebanon, where a male respondent in Ray Jureidini's (2006) study on female domestic workers spoke of mothers and fathers encouraging their sons to have sex with their maids as a means of introducing them to manhood.

During the focus group, another young man spoke about how he got 'dis-virgined' by his housegirl' and also '"pumped" [slept with] at least two others', while another discussed the difficulties of having housegirls in his home as a teenager:

…if they were not pretty, dem get BODI. I will confess now, it was very hard, especially with my hormones. I was really tempted to 'do' many of them. It was only my self-control and the shame if I got caught that prevented me.

This man's quote indicates how critical his self-control is in spite of the overtures from his housegirls. It also suggests a fundamental difference between employer and worker – the self-control he possesses is not something the sexually uncontrollable domestic worker could possibly have. This argument of 'self-control' also masks the fact that, in many cases, these relations are usually less consensual and more coercive.

Employers do not only worry about sexual relations with male members of the household, but also co-workers. They talk about drivers, cooks and gardeners 'hooking up' with housegirls, which is also undesirable. Conversations with friends, relatives, as well as at social gatherings, also reveal the commonly perceived undesirability of relations between domestic workers. A friend explains how her family once had a housegirl who ran away with the neighbour's driver. Another friend spoke of the betrayal by her parents' driver, who was 'almost part of the family' – he was her grandfather's driver – but lost his job after having sexual relations with their new housegirl.

Female employers also point to a couple of the reasons behind this undesirability – the importance of workers focusing on their jobs and not spoiling their employer's name. This is substantiated by 62-year-old female employer, Bolanle, who is self-employed and a mother of seven, and jokes that '*maiguards* often make sexual advances toward the housemaid rather than concentrate on their work' before describing a former housegirl who 'was more interested in boys than housework'. Bolanle explains how she 'sent her

packing' after she 'learnt of all her atrocities', which involved 'befriending [her] driver, gardener, washerman and a lot of neighbours'. When I asked why she was sent away, Bolanle reveals it is because 'they would now spoil our name'. Similarly, female employer, Adama (35, teacher, married, two children), lets me know how she found out her former housegirl was pregnant:

> [She] was screaming of pain in the stomach and when we admitted her to the hospital, the doctors informed me that my maid wasn't seriously sick, but pregnant. I was shocked as my maid was not married and was not allowed to leave the house regularly. It was after I asked her that she informed me it was with the family driver. You see, this is why they say don't have male and female domestics in your house. They will surely sleep together. Those ones have no control.

These first two discourses (i.e. on breaking homes and having sexual relations with men) point to very important aspects of employers' perceptions of workers' sexuality. First, as evident from female employer, Adama, is the issue of pregnant 'maids', which was especially shocking for her considering one of her strategies to prevent such things from happening was curtailing the opportunities for her worker to leave the house too often. Second, female workers are usually stereotyped as being more interested in sleeping with different men than doing the housework.

Following on from this, while relations between male and female domestic workers constitute a big 'no-no', by virtue of having no control over their sexual urges and desires, workers in the same vicinity will inevitably get together. The fact that workers might be deprived from any social contact (e.g. Adama not allowing her worker to leave the house), which might lead to workers naturally gravitating towards each other for comfort, attention and affection, is not even considered by employers.

Fourth, hearing female employer, Bolanle say, 'they would now spoil our own name' suggests that one reason why sexual relations in general – or between domestic workers within an employing household – are regarded negatively is due to the consequences such relations have on an employer's reputation. Sexual relations between male and female workers living in the same household not only undermine an employer's authority, but any revelation about the employer's unawareness of the goings on in their home signals to the outside world the employer's inability to maintain order in their own household, which could ruin a family's reputation. Also, there is the consequence of sexual relations, which is usually immediate firing. Finally, this preoccupation among employers of their workers' sexuality masks the range of oppressions domestic workers face, including their degrading labouring conditions and extreme isolation.

The perceptions of female workers' sexuality could be one reason why some of my interviewees explained they preferred female live-ins to be very young – because of their 'innocence… she's too young to flirt with other males in the house' (Biodun, 56, female employer, housewife, two children) – or much older, as 'their [husbands'] eyes are less likely to wander' (Bolanle, 62, female, self-employed).

Women between the ages of 18 and 30 are often seen as the most 'dangerous', as they are said to be more likely to take over female employers' homes while they are at work, or snatch husbands. Statements I heard to that effect included, 'they may look at your husband', 'they would have had more courage', been 'exposed to things' and 'may try to flirt with your husband or guest'. As Adama, a 35-year-old female employer of Yoruba

origin, who works as a teacher, recounted:

> We as women need to keep a very tight leash on our husbands, especially as we work as well. I am sure by now you have heard numerous stories of wives not being aware of secret affairs between maids and husbands.

This is why, as Biodun (56, housewife) explains, 'the age of the person also matters':

> These days, most grown-up girls are threats in our homes. Men with some money easily lure them. Therefore, to avoid such dangers, it is better to go for teenage children who can be overlooked by men.

Older workers, as 56-year-old housewife Biodun and mother of four, informs me are also preferred because they 'would not look at your husband'. Thus, employers feel husbands might be less tempted to cheat with a young girl or older woman. Unfortunately, this belief that women between the ages of 18 and 30 are the most dangerous masks the fact that they, along with even younger domestic workers, are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than older ones. This comes about due to the view that they are 'loose', which is exacerbated by their social isolation and weaker bargaining power. This also indicates that some can be more vulnerable to exploitation as a result of perceptions of their sexual availability, illustrating the ways in which control can be shaped by social hierarchies of gender, age and ethnicity.

6.1.3 Fears of Transmitting Communicable and Sexual Diseases

Finally, one of the most popular stories I was told by almost, if not all, employers, was about the nanny who had the HIV virus and used the toothbrushes of the children she was caring for. Indeed, it was so common it featured in another personal column by Stella Damasus (2012) – who wrote 'The Nanny Craze' I shared in the Interlude:

> A 34-year-old woman lost two of her children to HIV because the nanny spent all her salary buying recharge cards for her driver boyfriend, and could not afford to replace her worn-out toothbrush. So, she decided to share the children's toothbrush and to worsen it, she would make the children do the brushing for her in form of a game 'who can brush Aunty Sumbo's teeth better?' The nanny had Gingivitis and did not know what it was, so did not complain and it was left untreated.

This particular discourse indicates the fears that employer have about leaving their children with lower-class domestic works that may do something wrong. In her writing on domestic service in La Paz Bolivia, Lesley Gill (1994) suggests that these anxieties come about because employers fear that domestic employees may infect, neglect or even abuse children (ibid:91-92). I was recounted many more stories, which highlighted employers' worries that domestic workers would bring diseases into the home, such as another nanny who infected a 12-year-old boy with a sexually transmitted disease. As detailed in the section on employer control below, these concerns result in employers 'enacting a detailed regime of rules, instructions and supervision' (Stivens, 2007:39).

This is another reason why older workers are preferred as employers desire someone more 'knowledgeable and mature' (Balogun, 56, male employer, widow, three children, civil servant). There is indeed a perceived reliability, responsibility and experience that comes with age. For instance, there are ten nannies in this study – all are women between the ages of 28 and 53, six live-in and four live-out. Female presence in this occupation is due to gendered perceptions about the innate nature of the skills and competencies they use to perform tasks of childcare. However, older and experienced women dominate as nannies because employers want someone they can trust with their children and to 'have peace of mind'. As 62-year-old female employer Bolanle also explains, employers value

the experience older women can bring:

> The age matters. The older the person the more mature and experienced they are to handle the children. You also don't mind having older women in the household. You know our men, their eyes are less likely to wander with the older ones.

Bolanle's quote also suggests that entrusting someone else to look after one's child requires a great level of experience and trust. This issue of trust is something I discuss in more detail in Chapter 7, but older female domestic workers seem to be aware of this, with Ijeoma, a 53-year-old live-in nanny of Igbo origin from Imo State who is widowed with three children, saying:

> I have been doing this for around ten years, after I had finished raising all of my children. The employers prefer that you can bring the knowledge from raising of children to the job. I also still have the energy to do the work, so why would a younger, less experienced woman be entertained?

These stories around being carriers of disease further points to the fact that, for many female live-in workers, their experiences of the sexualisation of their labour is exacerbated by the social stigma attached to their 'dirty' work (i.e. work that is disgusting and degrading). Thirty-year old housewife Rachel explained to me that workers are 'scoundrels and carriers of diseases' due to their lower-class nature. This is why, Nigerian satirist, Elnathan John (2013), writes in an online piece entitled 'How to get a house-help in Nigeria' that 'when the young girl comes, first thing to do is to test her for hepatitis and other infections. You don't want her bringing diseases into your healthy home' (see Section 6.2.5 on taking sexuality).

Employers also manage their workers' hygiene to ensure they remain clean, and hence,

uninfected. As explained in Chapter 2, individuals from lower-classes are frequently stereotyped as 'dirty and unhygienic' (Dickey 2000:475) because they often undertake dirty work. A case in point is Eno (female employer, 29, banker) who clearly explains what she does when a new domestic worker arrives:

> Whenever a new girl arrives the first thing I do is provide her with green soap and deodorant so she's clean, and Omo for her clothes. At all times. It is the first thing I always do. They have to be clean – no foul smell and no dirty clothes. That is important to work in my house – their level of cleanliness. So if she's not very clean, by force, she will be clean.

From Eno's narrative, cleanliness – referring as much to a clean body as to the work itself – is a key element in domestic work (see also de Regt, 2009 in the context of Yemini employers of domestic workers, where cleanliness is also important). This serves the purpose of keeping an employer's home and its members safe and clean, but also establishing boundaries to separate the pure from the contaminated, the higher from the lower, the good from the bad and so on. This, then, becomes the basis for distinctions between 'them' and 'us'.

As Eno also illustrates, an association with dirt also triggers a desire to remove it (Simpson et al., 2012:3). This can be seen with Eno stating they will be clean 'by force'. Thus, she manages her workers' hygiene by buying 'green soap and deodorant… and Omo' due to the belief that contact with dirt is contagious (see Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999: 413; see also Cox, 2014 on employers treating domestic workers as if they are 'innately dirty' because of the stigma of working with dirt).

Eno is not the only employer that tries to ensure their workers are clean. Adama buys her

workers deodorant, and other personal hygiene products, such as sanitary pads and underwear as she wants them to be clean, especially those involved in childcare. Workers explain to me other ways in which employers manage hygiene, such as being expected to use different toilets to those of their employers, and rarely eating with them (see also Chin, 1998; Constable, 1997a), although it is not uncommon to find them eating with the children. They might also only use 'special' dishes or cutlery (see also Barbosa, 2012 on domestic workers in Brazil). In managing workers' hygiene, due also to their potential as disease carriers, this reveals how employers see themselves as purer and cleaner than their workers, simply because they do not do the 'dirty' work.

6.1.4 Social Stigma of Sexuality in Paid Domestic Work

Tales of domestic workers stealing husbands with their cooking prowess, having sexual relations with different men or infecting children with disease reveal the close encounters of domestic service that might lead to the 'wrong' kind of intimacy – one that turns workers into sexual threats. True or false, the beliefs these stories embody become socially relevant when employers decide to hire female domestic workers, particularly young, single ones. This, in turn, often leads to employers attempting to impose regulations and controls to restrict workers' sexuality, such as disciplining their bodies through, for instance, compulsory HIV and STI tests before being employed, or virginity tests once in employment.

Nigerian employers do this to protect themselves and their family members from the dirt associated with their workers and any dangerous sexual contact with them, but also to

ensure that difference is maintained as it is a crucial reminder of class difference between the wealthy employer and the poorer employee. Thus, for female live-ins, whose sexual reputation and moral virtue is linked to their 'dirty' work, this becomes the basis in which employers interact with them, which translates into the many widespread exploitative practices they are subjected to. This becomes part of their daily rituals and routines.

In this section, I have looked into ideas of female domestic workers as promiscuous and sexually available, and the ways in which sexuality and dirt – which have a long history of representing and reproducing classed, gender and racialised differentiation – can play a significant role in these discourses. The above cases on sexual discourses also reveal the ways in which workers and employers are often seen along a spectrum of pure/dirty, saint/whore (Anderson, 2000) and so on to signify the difference between these two classes in the intimate space of the home (Rollins, 1985) in order to 'separat[e] that which should be separated' (Douglas, 1966:53). It is this difference, as explained earlier, that forms the basis of power in paid domestic work.

As the next section demonstrates, the stigma surrounding female live-ins' sexuality often means that employers invariably become owners of their labour and bodies, which frequently leaves female live-ins with very little control over the practices that make up their everyday lives.

6.2 How Employers' Control Shapes Workers' Rituals and Routines

My findings indicate that female live-ins' daily rituals and routines are deeply intertwined with their employers' controlling strategies, creating a situation where workers find it extremely difficult to manage their own lives. I argue in this section that, for female live-ins, relations of subordination and hierarchy are deeply rooted in the routines and rituals of their work (see Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992), due to residing in their employers' homes, which puts them under a 'round-the-clock' work cycle.

Therefore, when female live-ins wake up, what they do in their private lives, what activities they undertake, what spaces they can enter in their employers' homes, what clothes they wear and so on, all becomes part of the choreography of everyday that helps to define their lower social status and class position (see Stoler, 2002:17). In other words, the everyday life of female live-ins is not a 'natural' everyday, but an everyday created by their employers (see also Storey, 2014 on the everyday life of the 'masses') in a bid to maintain order in their homes and create distinctions. This is clear in narratives, such as 62-year-old female employer, Bolanle, who explains that distance should be maintained between her and her workers: 'We are not the same and you cannot let them be thinking that. They must know at all times that I am the Madam and not them'.

Existing studies have also revealed the ways in which employers' discourses around sexuality emphasise the need to curtail their workers' tendency towards immorality (Yeoh and Huang, 1998). For the female live-ins in this study, this could lead to a denial

of their sexuality by controlling their physical appearance, or ensuring minimal social interaction in the home and public sphere, as well as determining working hours and workloads to further ensure there is little to no time to socialise. Control can also lead to forbidding intimate relationships with others, or taking away their sexuality through sexual abuse.

6.2.1 Denying Sexuality

In this study, control that *denies* sexuality occurs in two ways. The first is through practices that desexualise workers' bodies in a bid to make them less threatening sexually. The second is through isolation, such as controlling domestic workers' interactions within the home to minimal movement, contacts and ability to communicate outside the home (see also Radcliffe, 1990:385). The aim of both strategies is to minimise any inappropriate encounters that could lead to unwelcome outcomes, such as pregnancies.

6.2.2 Control of Physical Appearance

Beginning first with physical appearance, due to it being 'the locus inscribed with social meanings of femininity, masculinity, sexuality, and racial and class hierarchies' (Constable, 1996:470), an employer can attempt to desexualise the bodies of female live-in domestic workers by controlling their modes of dress. While some households enforce a strict uniform policy, for those who do not expect their workers to wear uniforms, such as 56-year-old male employer Balogun, certain forms of clothing are prohibited. Female

live-ins in this study are not allowed to wear clothes that are too revealing, such as sleeveless shirts, shorts or mini-skirts – even when they are sent on errands outside of the house.[21] Instead, daily wear is usually a *wrapper* tied around their waist and a loose T-shirt. Rachel Tolen's (2000) study on domestic workers in a Madras Railway Colony echoed this, as employers restricted their workers from wearing 'showy' clothing, and advised them to put on a 'plain white dress shirt and dark pants' (cited in Arnado, 2003:163).

Women are also not allowed to wear make-up or have stylish hairstyles. For example, Ama, a housegirl of Ijaw origin from Edo state, who is unsure of her age and is single with no children, has to keep her hair short. Ama explains how her Madam brings someone to the house to 'barb [cut] her hair'. This was also observed in Nicole Constable's (1997:95-99) study on Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong. Here, female employers attempt to obscure their female workers' femininity by forbidding nail polish, prescribing daily wear and having their hair cut short like a boy.

One of the rationales behind this control is to ensure that a worker's physical appearance is 'plain and lacking style' (Lan, 2006:89) so as to signify their lowly status. Another reason is to deny any display of femininity. As indicated earlier, the sexuality of workers is of particular concern for female employers, who feel they can break up homes, and a female employee's sexual attractiveness could make her more appealing to the female employer's husbands (see also Cheng, 2004:42).

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[21] The way women choose to dress is an issue in many African countries (see Nesbitt-Ahmed, 2012a). The miniskirt, for example, is seen as a sign of 'moral decay' in society and a woman who chooses to wear one is suggesting she is sexually available.

This anxiety over physical appearance is also expressed in a 2011 post written on a Nigerian blog, *Sisi Yemmie*, entitled 'How to tell when your housegirl is about to *Yapa*' about a new housegirl in the author's parents' home. The worker in question may be a part-time, live-out but it reveals how style of dress can signal to an employer a worker's sexual availability, and not them reclaiming their identity through their clothes. There were two issues of concern, which the author felt would 'give Ekatte belle' (i.e. get her pregnant) – referring to the Maya Hunt song discussed earlier. First, the worker wore fashionable clothes that were too tight and too short:

> New new designs, today na deep V-neck she go wear, 2moro na sweetheart neck, she don dey wear only C-thru tops... the skirts kon dey short, the jeans don dey tight.

Second, she was up-to-date with the latest hairstyles and wore make-up and perfume:

> Her hairstyles don too current and flexible sef. She go do Rihanna, Beyonce. Make-up gan don pass House of Tara abi na House of Ayamtanga or Karashika. She came in today with perfume! This is the end of Omobabe in this house.

This blog post also raises issues around class concerns in that a worker, whose job is to clean homes, should not be concerned with her looks. Yet, as I discuss later in this Chapter there are workers who are very much in the know about the latest fashion trends and use clothes as a way to reflect their knowledge, but also that they are also Lagosians.

This link between workers' suitability for the job and their physical appearance was also discussed in Shu-Ja Ada Cheng's (2004) study on domestic workers in Taiwan. In interviews with employment agencies, Cheng (2004:42) notes that 'agents often mentioned they would not pick women who appeared too attractive for fear of provoking

female employers' insecurity and jealousy'. As such, control of workers' physical appearance is done to make sure employees are in no way sexually appealing, but also to ensure they remember their place in the social hierarchy – as domestic workers recruited to serve the household; or as Constable (1996) writes with reference to Filipina domestic worers in Hong Kong 'to prevent domestic workers from forgetting "their place" [and] acting like they are not "maids"' (ibid:470).

6.2.3 Limited Social Interaction in Private and Public Spheres

Employers also adopt more severe actions that are imposed for the workers' 'own good' and to ensure they 'do not get into trouble'. This includes *restricting movements within the home* by often excluding workers from certain spaces in the house, either because they hold valuable items or because these areas are bedrooms – which, as discussed earlier, is a sexually-charged domain (Hansen, 1989). This restriction within the home is often compounded by the lack of a private space for female live-ins to rest or sleep. Researchers on domestic work have highlighted how these restrictions on space and sleeping arrangements symbolise status hierarchies within the home (Constable, 1997; Ozyegin, 2010; Pande, 2014).

Arrangements for room and board for live-ins in this study vary by sex – all men stay outdoors within the compound (see Chapter 8), while all women live indoors within the main house. The homes of the employers in this study are bungalows, one or two-storey duplexes or apartments contained within a compound. Compounds are rectangular in shape, with large walls to prevent neighbours from seeing inside and one entrance, with a gate for security purposes that leads into the courtyard. Within these compounds, there is

the main house, but there can also be smaller housing units, such as the boys' quarters (usually behind the house), a security post (usually in front of the house by the security gate), a laundry room and so on. As Toyin Falola (2001:94) writes in the context of urban housing in Nigeria, 'the modern house is designed for the Western ideal of a nuclear family'.

Turning to their sleeping arrangements, eight women have private rooms, eleven sleep either in the living room, the hall, or kitchen – usually on a mat – while four share a room with children or younger relatives. Similar patterns have been observed in the Middle East where live-in female migrant domestic workers do not have their own rooms and sleep in balconies, passageways, living rooms or children's room (de Regt and Fernandez, 2014; Pande, 2014). In situations where there is more than one female live-in, as explained by 18-year-old Chidi of Igbo origin, from Imo State, who is single and works as a housegirl, they tend to share a room:

> It small, but Amina [nanny] say we dey luck. We have our own room. Housegirl no get room. Na to sleep with pickin [children], or on floor or in parlour be dat. So I no go complain. I dey get mattress.

As noted in Falola's description of urban homes in Nigeria, spare rooms are usually meant for guests, which mean they are rarely given to female live-ins, even if they are vacant. As such, although 'private' rooms are usually also used for other purposes, such as washing and ironing, women that have a separate room feel they are 'enjoying' the space they have - to 'store their stuffs' and 'be by myself'.

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For workers like Chidi having a room of her own can give her an element of privacy and her own space, where she can, for instance, unwind and be herself - even if for a short while. Thus, even if the room is usually of lesser quality than those used by the employing family, it also provides an opportunity for them to create their own homes within the employer's house.

On the flipside, not having a space of their own often means workers have to stay up until their employer goes to bed and be up with or before them. Thirty-one-year-old live-in nanny, Ada, of Igbo origin from Enugu State, who is married with four children, sleeps 'in the room of her Madam's newborn son'. She explains how she must always 'wake for feeding him and looking after him. I tire'. The lack of space also means live-ins often have the least autonomy of all the workers in this study to maintain their own life in their own space, leading to a denial of their independence to sustain their own private life.

Employers also try as hard as possible to *limit their workers' interactions within the public sphere*. Workers are rarely allowed to receive guests or leave the employer's home, except to run errands, something which Amrita Pande (2014) also discussed in her study on migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. While some workers are allowed out only 'when accompanied by their employers, when walking the dog or when taking out the garbage' (ibid:33), others are 'practically prisoners in their employer's house' (ibid:33). Happiness, a housegirl of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State, who does not know her age and is single with no children, explains that she is not even allowed to greet the neighbours. She explains how her employer 'has warned me that I should not even

appear before visitors, not even to serve them food. So when we have visitors I keep to the kitchen'.

In a similar vein, 22-year-old Samantha, a housegirl of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom State, who is single with one child and now lives out, explains that, when she first became a domestic worker and lived in, she would only go out of the house with her employer to the market, but she 'never had permission to leave the house on my own [and] was not allowed to speak to any of the other maids'. Psychological tactics may also be used by employers to convince workers of the dangers of venturing out on their own: 'Lagos is dangerous', 'people will try and rob you' or 'the crazy area boys'.[22] In doing this, employers are, on the one hand, portraying Lagos as unsafe, while on the other painting their workers as children, who might make the wrong decisions if left on their own.

In cases when female workers are newly arrived to Lagos or are young, to be certain workers stay inside, some employers go as far as locking them inside their homes every time they are not around. This was the case with Ama - a housegirl of Ijaw origin from Edo state who is unsure of her age and is single with no children - in her first job. The possibility of being locked in while their employers are away further limits any chances of social interactions. Other arrangements to keep workers indoors or off the streets are to 'loan' them to friends, relatives and neighbours to provide domestic assistance.

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[22] Area boys, or *Agberos*, are gangs of street children and teenagers, comprising mostly of males – but increasingly with a few females – found in Lagos, who are engaged in a range of activities, such as extorting money, selling illegal drugs, acting as informal security guards or performing 'odd jobs' in return for compensation.

Employers, such as 38-year-old housewife, Rachel, explains the restriction in terms of 'not letting others spoil them', but other justifications given include employers' concerns that domestic workers would become distracted or, worse, become pregnant if they venture out; as well as only doing so until they know whether the worker is trustworthy - taken here to mean honest (see Chapter 7). This 'concern' over protecting the worker from getting into trouble or mixing with the wrong crowd masks the employer's need to protect themselves from bearing the responsibility of the worker's action if they do not 'act right' while outside. As argued so far, an employer's respectability is an important part of their social standing.

Employers' endeavours to limit their female live-in workers' social interaction with the public sphere is most apparent in this study in relation to days off – which are either non-existent or irregular. As many as 22 of the 28 workers who have no days off are live-ins; of those 22 workers, 16 are women. My findings further indicate that young, female live-in househelps are the most likely workers to not get any leave – 12 of these women are between the ages of 18 and 24, making them the most vulnerable to employers imposing restrictions on their personal lives.

Some live-ins with no days off are occasionally granted an hour or two on Sundays to attend church services. However, since they often accompany employers, this is usually less to do with enabling workers to worship and more to do with employers wanting someone to look after their children. For those workers who live in and have no days off, working and living in such highly exploited situations means that their employers can –

and usually do – control and limit their freedom of movement.

Thirty-five-year-old teacher, Adama explains how 'resting once in a while [inside the house], especially if she has worked a lot is perfectly fine', but going outside of the house to socialise is not. Adama questions this need to leave the house when she asks, 'Who do they know in Lagos?' Similarly, 72-year-old Damilola, who is retired, does not like the idea of granting a weekly day off because of her responsibility to her housegirl:

> She is in my house, so I am responsible for her well-being and safety. If she was to leave the house and something was to happen, it would become my own problem… If she ends up meeting the wrong kind of person and comes back pregnant, or worse, with disease, it is me people will be looking at and blaming.

Finally, sixty-year-old female employer, Bolanle, who is fine with days off, as long as 'it doesn't damage my family's reputation', further illustrates the importance of an employer's social status when deciding to give their worker a day off.

Domestic workers, particularly young ones, are also *denied access to their own family*, because of a fear that the family will take them back home (see also Radcliffe, 1990:386), especially if they become aware of how they are treated. As discussed in Chapter 5, many domestic workers, especially those who started at a young age, come from very large families with parents on very low incomes. Their family expects them to work to help support them (see also de Regt and Fernandez, 2014; Fernandez, 2014), such as 19-year-old Bukola - a housegirl of Yoruba origin from Oyo state who is single and has no children - who is in domestic service to support her mother and younger siblings. Yet, many of these workers also mention not having returned home since arriving in Lagos

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and having problems contacting their families, due to a combination of lack of opportunities, lack of resources and distance (see Appendix I on distances from Lagos to states of origin).

Many employers also *do not allow relationships of a more intimate nature* and, as already discussed, are wholly against pregnant domestic workers. As stated by 27-year-old designer, Taiwo, who once fired a housegirl for having a boyfriend, 'What if she had gotten pregnant? What then?' Thirty-eight-year-old housewife, Rachel, has already instructed her housegirl that, if she gets pregnant, she will lose her job – as she is employed to clean the house. Rachel explains how a pregnant maid would not be able to perform the tasks she was hired to. Moreover, as explained in Chapter 4, domestic workers are not covered by maternity protection laws, which makes it possible for employers to fire them if they become pregnant.

This is why 35-year-old teacher, Adama, always asks about the marital status of a worker prior to employment, as she only wants single workers. As she clarifies, 'they are in my house to work'. Adama also describes incidences of other people's housegirls getting pregnant and the perception it gives to outsiders that they are not in control of their household, suggesting that her 'singles-only' policy is to ensure her reputation is not ruined. Employers also make it clear that they do not want to accommodate spouses and children, as they are employing the worker, not their family. This is one reason why young and unmarried workers are often employed and seen as ideal, compared to those

with dependants and spouses. However, this preference leaves female live-in workers, particularly those who are mothers, with a serious predicament.

As 18-year-old Faith – a housegirl of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom State who is a single mother with one child - mentions, in many cases female live-ins do not let their employers know they have responsibilities when searching for a job. They fear they might not be hired, as employers do not want to take on the added responsibility of a child. However, due to their higher likelihood of social isolation and absence of free time, it is increasingly difficult to maintain their care-giving expectations and obligations.

Consequently, mothers like Faith – whose home is 674 km from Lagos and would take at least 10 hours by bus to get to – often express feelings of hopelessness, guilt and loneliness about being apart from their children either continuously or for long periods of time. Similar feelings are expressed by transnational mothers about 'abandoning' their children (Asis, 2002; Dreby, 2006; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Horton, 2009; Schmalzbauer, 2004, 2005) and being constructed as bad mothers (Parreñas, 2005), even if their migration was prompted by a sense of obligation to provide for their dependants.

Furthermore, as days off are non-existent and wages are low for many of these women, travelling back and forth between their hometowns and Lagos is not an option. This suggests that entering domestic service could mean forfeiting a family life altogether – with many women explaining that they fear they may never see their children again. Given gender ideologies that place women at the centre of care work (see Chapter 2), for

live-in mothers whose children have been left behind in their respective states of origin, female family members – or 'other mothers' (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005) – look after them. These include grandmothers, mothers or other relatives in their home communities.

Studies on the 'international transfer of care-taking' (Parreñas, 2001:72) also point to the ways in which women engage in 'intensive mothering' (Parreñas, 2005:7) - 'gendered model that advises mothers to expend a tremendous amount of time, energy and money in raising their children' (Hays, 1996:x) - from a distance. This is done through sending money and gifts and maintaining close ties with their children through communicating by mobile phones, texting, Skype, email or Facebook (Arnado, 2010; Chib et al., 2014; Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2001; Pratt, 2013).

In her study on Caribbean nannies in Brooklyn, for example, Tamara Mose Brown (2011) illustrates how mobile phones allowed nannies to stay connected with the family in the West Indies. Brown (2011) also reveals how mobile phones are used by nannies to create communities and, in it, exercise agency, as they also enable them to arrange playdates. Thus, technology often helps domestic workers lessen the isolation and loneliness they experience, which as indicated so far in this chapter is a significant characteristic in female live-ins daily lives.

However, for the live-in mothers in this study, being able to communicate with their children is often constrained by their class. This is because younger women, in particular,

are not allowed to have access to telephones in order to have a private conversation, and have limited economic resources to enable them to communicate. Rhacel Parreñas (2005), in her research on children of transnational families, observed similar class constraints in migrant mothers narratives - middle-class Filipina migrants were able to maintain close contact and intimacy with their children, while for Filipina domestic workers it is a challenge simply accessing a phone and the space to have a private conversation. Even with the Internet, many migrants who are computer illiterate and/or lack access are excluded from engaging in e-mail communication with their loved ones (Schmalzbauer, 2004, 2008).

Furthermore, technology can also have its drawbacks. For those workers who are provided mobile phones by their employers, this makes them even more available at all times (see also Mose, 2011). Mobile phones are also used by employers to monitor their employees' whereabouts when sent on errands. As I have also indicated so far, the Internet can also play a role in the negative construction of workers through websites, such as LagosMums.[23]A search through its 'Nanny archives' reveals 'rants and a note to mums on small-minded nannies', 'health checks for your nanny' and 'the right way to hire domestic staff'.

Indeed, it is as a result of this restriction and isolation that one option mothers adopt - instead of 'abandoning' their children - is to become live-out workers (see Section 6.3.1 below) and care for their children, in spite of the additional burdens of rent and

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[23] Lagos Mums is a Lagos-based online community where Lagos mums can meet, ask questions, receive advice and share thoughts about being a mum in Lagos.

transportation costs that come with it (see Chapter 7 on female live-outs). This alternative is only usually available to those workers who have stronger social networks. Unfortunately, this is not the case for many young, female live-in workers who have not established themselves fully in this occupation. Denying sexuality, then, works to give female live-ins little room to be anything beyond that of 'helpers' in the employer's home, which leads to the extremely exploitative working conditions they experience on a daily basis.

6.2.4 Constrained Labour Conditions

Beginning with their working time, while not all workers were able to provide me with specific hours – indicating the difficulty in determining start and end times – in explaining their typical working days, I nonetheless was able to gain a sense of just how long they can be. Workers explain how they wake up early in the morning to do household chores and usually stay up through the night – cooking, cleaning or taking care of restless babies. This is exemplified by 19-year-old housegirl, Kudirat - of Yoruba origin from Kwara State who is single and has no children.

She wakes up every day with the call to prayer (around 4.30am) and starts her work, which involves cleaning the house, cooking the food, washing the plates and going to the market. As she explains, there is 'no sitting down. No stopping. I work until late'. Similarly, 18-year-old housegirl Chidi – of Igbo origin from Imo State, single with no children - wakes up at 5.30am every morning before undertaking her daily tasks, which

include making breakfast before her employers go to work, washing, sweeping and mopping inside the house and cleaning the bathrooms.

Recent ILO (2011a, 2011b) estimates found that domestic workers generally work some of the longest and most unpredictable hours, with those who live-in particularly vulnerable to such long hours because they reside in the homes of their employers and are expected by their employers to be available at all times (Esim and Smith, 2004; ILO, 2011b, 2012). Indeed, as indicated in Table 6.1 below, whether a worker lives in, lives out or works part-time plays a huge role in structuring working time indicated.

Table 6.1 Daily Working Hours of Live-ins, Live-outs and Part-timers

	Live-in		Live-out		Part-Time	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
9-11 hours	0	0	2	4	0	0
12-15 hours	4	4	9	3	0	0
16-18 hours	0	10	0	0	0	0
No Specific Time	7	9	0	2	6	3

Source: Interviews with Domestic Workers (N=63)
NB. Working hours are self-reported based on individual interviews with domestic workers speaking on when they start and finish work.

Female live-ins experiencing the longest daily working hours, ranging from 12 to 18 hours a day, which leaves little time for a private life – even if they desired one. Younger workers are also the most likely to be the most vulnerable to long working days. Of the ten workers who work between 16 and 18 hours a day, eight are housegirls between the

ages of 18 and 20 - although two are unsure of their age. They are also often expected to be available at all times to attend to the employing household's needs (i.e. they are made to work 'round-the-clock') - indeed, seven of the nine workers with no specified working hours are housegirls between the ages of 18 and 25 (one is unsure of her age).

This is consistent with findings in other parts of the world. In Chile, for example, live-in domestic workers worked an average of 67.6 hours, while live-out domestic workers averaged 40 hours per week (ILO, 2013). Similalry, in the Philippines, 51 per cent of women live-in workers worked at least 61 hours a week, and approximately a third of live-in domestic workers recorded working on average two hours more per day than live-out domestic workers (ibid).

Female live-ins also have demanding workloads, as indicated by Theresa, a 53-year-old female employer of Igbo origin who works as a civil servant, and relates the importance of her housegirl in helping her to balance her household duties with her paid work:

> We [she and her husband] both work and we have three children but my husband does not do any of the housework. He tends to leave the responsibility of the house and the kids to me. So not only do I have to work outside, I also need to work inside. So my housegirl is very crucial for my sanity as she really helps a lot – she cleans, does the washing and she also usually makes the kids their breakfast in the morning and sometimes will do the cooking in the evening if I am running late.

Theresa's comments may reflect the reality that Nigerian women still undertake the bulk of unpaid domestic and care work (see Chapter 5), but they also indicate female live-ins' demanding daily rituals and routines in the upkeep of their employers' homes. Moreover, Theresa acknowledges how arduous domestic work can also be for her and how her

housegirl also frees up her time to take on social and religious activities, while also being

a 'good' mother (see also Chapter 7 on mothering narratives).

> The times my maid is ill I end up having to do all of the work in the house, and as my husband does not do any of the housework it becomes very tiring. Especially as I work outside and I'm also an active in the kids' school – on the PTA [Parents-Teacher's Association] and then there's church on Wednesday and Sunday and then and our fortnightly meetings.

Yet, in the same vein, Theresa makes it clear that she and her worker are not the same:

> My housegirl is great but she is not like one of us. Can you imagine her socialising with my peers and my friends, or following me and my family on any one of our trips abroad?

This separation of middle- and upper-class norms from lower-class ones, as I have been

arguing thus far, plays a crucial role in maintaining social order in the home. Even if

workers are essential for the functioning of households, they are employed to do one

thing and one thing only – clean, care and keep homes pristine. One way to ensure they

are not distracted from their work is to keep them constantly busy. This is why, when

looking at female live-ins' daily workloads and hours, it comes as no surprise that, even

if they could interact with their family or kin or engage in intimate relations, their

working conditions gives little space for them to do so. Added to this are the limited

breaks they are afforded during their working day, especially as employers continually

give a number of workers new tasks to do. Housegirls, such as Khadijat and Bola,

complain about having no time to rest:

> There is nothing like break, you just have to continue to work. Whenever I want to take rest, my Madam says I did not come to rest but to work (Khadijat, 18, Yoruba, Kwara State, single, one child).

If I lie down in the afternoon when I am tired after mopping the floor, Madam will come in and say, 'You cannot lie down in your room in afternoons'. Sometimes when I am alone in upstairs, the children came to peek at me and ran downstairs again. I suspect Madam told them to look what I am doing. How can they expect us to work non-stop the whole day? (Bola, 20, Yoruba, Oyo, single, no children).

As Tope, a 19-year-old housegirl of Tiv origin from Benue State, who is single with no children, explains, on weekdays she can engineer some respite from her duties as her Madam 'is not around'; however, this is not the case at the weekends, as her employer is present and can monitor her movements and decide when she can and cannot take a break. Employers, on their part, are adamant that their workers have a lot of free time. Twenty-nine-year-old banker, Eno, makes it clear free time is available to her housegirl:

Mondays to Fridays, there is no one there to monitor her as we [my husband and I] are at work, the children are at school. So during those hours she [Eno's housegirl] is free to do as she pleases.

Yet, when Eno explains her housegirl's tasks – cooking, cleaning, washing, ironing – it is apparent that the amount of work she has does not leave much space for free time.

There are also situations when domestic workers are 'loaned' to other households – usually to those of relatives, friends or neighbours of their employers. Househelps, for instance, may be asked to clean or help in preparation for social events. This indicates that workers are not only working for one employer, but a whole network of employers. As such, workers are vulnerable to the whims and fancies of each of these different groups regarding their work responsibilities, suggesting that working lives can be

unpredictable and workloads can also vary on a daily basis depending on the demands of their main employer.

I am suggesting that denying sexuality, coupled with the severe labour conditions, has profound consequences for female live-ins', as their access to any life and identity beyond those of 'service' to the employing family is often denied. The unpredictability of working hours and the absence of daily or weekly rest periods generally make it extremely difficult for workers to know precisely when they will be relieved of their paid work, which undermines the quality of their free time, if available.

Thirty-one-year-old Lota, of Igbo origin from Rivers State, who is single with no children and works as a nanny, points out that she is unable to decide when she wakes up and is still made to work even when she is unwell. Similarly, Bola, a 20-year-old housegirl of Yoruba origin from Oyo State, who is single with no children, explains her lack of free time and how difficult it is to have time for a social life:

> You don't always get free time, because you're living inside Oga and Madam's house; and since they're working all the time and leave the children behind, you need to be at home. The work take plenty of time and there is no time even to sit, talk, less of time to visit your friends.

Twenty-five-year-old Nancy of Ibibio origin from Akwa Ibom who is single and has two children, does get some time for leisure, but - as she explains - this is quite irregular:

> Yes, I meet some of my other friends that work as housegirls but not often, perhaps once a month, sometimes maybe every six months.

Lota, Bola and Nancy indicate just how much time female live-ins spend inside the household and how the nature of the work and living arrangements largely prohibits them

from having time for friends, partners or children due to employers restricting social interaction. This lack of contact with friends or relatives, as previously discussed, could contribute to feelings of loneliness, with the loneliest time usually late at night and at the weekends. It also makes it extremely hard for workers to create networks with others to exchange experiences or gather any information that would allow them to enjoy an improved standard of living. As already explained, isolation and lack of independence is a key aspect of their lives indicating more than anything, that live-in domestic work is oppressive in its denial of independence to the workers to maintain their own private lives (see Ally, 2010:46).

Therefore, my findings suggest that living in their employers' homes results in female live-ins everyday lives being centred on a script within the routines and rituals of paid domestic work imposed upon them by their employers; this often leaves them with the feeling of having little control over their working and living arrangements, which can result in decidedly negative effects on their lives. Employers fail to note this in their quest for safety and control. The tragic irony is that, although domestic workers are often viewed as 'morally suspect' and a 'sexual threat', their weak and subordinate position in the household makes them vulnerable to a form of control I term *taking* sexuality.

6.2.5 Taking sexuality

While not all workers' sexuality will always be denied or taken, denying and taking sexuality should not be seen as separate. The isolation and lack of social support resulting from *denying* their sexuality renders female live-in domestic workers vulnerable to

intimidation and risky sex, with the accompanying costs of unwanted pregnancies and Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

In their study on domestic workers in South Africa, Sally Peberdy and Natalya Dinat (2007) argue that domestic workers' isolation may have a protective effect as 'it reduces opportunities for starting new relationships' (ibid:198), thereby protecting women from STIs as 'they do not have active sex lives' (ibid:201). However, my findings suggest the opposite – that not engaging in sex outside of the house does not mean workers are not being forced to have it inside employers' homes. Thus, if sexuality is not *denied*, it can also be *taken*. This can take various forms, such as unwanted touching or rape, with the aim of 'inscribing shame onto the workers' bodies' (Tejeda, 2011:104).

Existing studies have indicated that domestic workers experience high levels of sexual harassment in their everyday lives (see Anderson, 2000; Chang, 2000; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2004). However, due to the limited data on paid domestic workers in Nigeria, it is quite difficult to state how many domestic employees in the country experience abuse – be it verbal, physical or sexual. Furthermore, while only seven women spoke to me regarding their own experiences of sexual abuse in the workplace, it is clear from their interviews that gender-based violence (GBV) against women (i.e. violence directed against a woman because she is a woman) is a fundamental part of their own their everyday lives.

Joy, a housegirl of Tiv origin from Benue State, who was unsure of her age and is single

with no children, describes how she is occasionally touched inappropriately on her face or having her hands held by men. Similarly, 19-year-old Funmi, also a housegirl - of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State who is single with one child - explains that it has happened to her on more than one occasion: 'Sometimes strangers, sometimes people in the house I work – sometimes my breast, sometimes all over my body.' While being touched inappropriately by men made Joy and Funmi feel uncomfortable, for 19-year-old Pamela, a housegirl of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom State, who is single and with no children, it was all part and parcel of the job: 'Of course now… nah normal for Ogas.' Happiness, a housegirl of Efik origin from Cross River State, who did not know her age and is single with no children, also explains that it did not take long for her '"Oga" to start entering the room in the night' – further suggesting that this is a normal part of her job.

These women's accounts also highlight that unwanted sexual approaches and/or demands are not exerted solely by men living in or associated with the household (e.g. female employers' husbands, sons or male kin), but also male domestic workers in the household or the neighbourhood and visitors to the household. As 19-year-old housegirl Bukola of Yoruba origin from Oyo State, who is single with no children, makes very clear, 'Please o! It's not only the Oga, or the Oga's son, or the brother, even the men that are working in the house are *ye-ye* [useless]'.

There is a possibility that only seven women shared their experiences because no one else experienced sexual abuse. However, it could also be that so few women spoke to me

about sexual abuse in their lives because physical and sexual abuse is rarely, if ever, spoken about in Nigeria. As the Nigerian Demographic Health Survey (DHS) (2013) found, 45 per cent of women who experienced violence never sought help or told anyone about it; as such, my discussions on sexual abuse need to be situated within the context of SGBV in the country.

The DHS (2013) notes that Nigeria has a 'shockingly high' level of violence against women – '28 per cent of women aged 15 to 49 have experienced physical violence at least once since the age of 15', while 'seven per cent of women have experienced sexual violence at least once in their lifetime' (ibid:301). While the report does not specifically mention domestic workers, it further states that 'women who are employed but are not paid in cash are more likely than other women to have experienced physical violence since age 15' (ibid: 304). This could certainly apply to domestic workers, particularly those paid in kind.

While widespread, societal pressure and the stigma associated with any form of violence against women means that women do not tend to report cases such as domestic violence, sexual assault or rape. Existing studies within the country also indicate the prevalent view that the police are reluctant to take it seriously, that allegations are rarely investigated and sentences for persons convicted are often minor (CIG, 2015:5-6). Women are also often hesitant to report crimes to the authorities or seek assistance as they are often blamed or told to settle the problem themselves. The consequences of reporting are also severe, as argued by Olakunle Michael Folami (2013:3) in a study on unreported cases of domestic

violence in Nigeria:

> A woman becomes a pariah to her husband, relatives, and the larger community if she reports a case of domestic violence to the police; such a woman becomes labelled and stigmatised. The economic base of many women who report domestic violence is often jeopardised because their sources of income, most especially in the rural areas of Nigeria, are largely connected to their husbands.

This situation is compounded by a number of discriminatory practices against women in existing laws and policies within the country, such as a lack of legal recognition of marital rape. This occurs, in spite of recent laws and policies to protect violence against women, such as the first national policy guidelines on gender-based violence (GBV) produced in 2008 and the Violence against Persons (Prohibition) Act 2015, with an aim to 'eliminate violence in private and public life ... provide maximum protection and effective remedies for victims of violence and punishment of offenders' (CIG, 2015:11).

All of the above – in relation to violence against women in the country – as well as the fact that employers do not see their homes as a workplace (see Chapter 2) become the social context in which female live-in workers experience the taking away of their sexuality. While undoubtedly unreported due to the stigma of reporting and unequal power relations that exist in domestic work, my interviews with workers reveals that sexual abuse in this study included grabbing domestic workers or touching female employees' breasts and buttocks, persistent demands for sex, buying food, money or clothing in return for sex and propositioning in return for higher wages or more favourable working conditions. It can also involve the act of sex itself, such as the case of adolescent boys having sex with their housegirls, as explored earlier in this chapter. There are also cases of rape and repeated rape.

Owing to the sensitive nature of this topic, when discussing the issue with the seven women that I spoke to, I started by asking if they had ever experienced uncomfortable or inappropriate touching. Most responses to this question involved women saying that they have been touched or grabbed inappropriately (as discussed earlier on). Once respondents became more comfortable with me, I was able to ask them if anything more had happened, with only five female workers elaborating on this. A 20-year-old housegirl, Bola, from Oyo State, single and no children, was subjected to both inappropriate touching and unwanted sexual attention in her previous workplace:

> Oga come buy me meat pie and chocolate… one day like this Oga dey grab my 'bum-bum' [bottom] and squeeze me [points to chest]… he then started to hug me and touch me when nobody dey house… I no dey tell, I dey fear.

In the case of 22-year-old Samantha (who was once a live-in), a housegirl from Akwa Ibom State and is a single mother of one, her 'Oga' would follow her around the house whenever her female employer was out of the house, smiling and complimenting her. Although she was not sure if he was monitoring her work or if it was something more sinister, words Samantha used to describe how she felt included 'afraid' and 'ashamed'. Like most workers in her situation, another worker in the neighbourhood in which Samantha works explained to her that, if she informed anyone, she would lose her job. Samantha, who usually interacted with other local workers on the street she worked in when her employers were not around, explains how this worker asked:

> …"he touch you?" I said no. She said then forget about it. You are lucky. You know how some Ogas will be raping their maids. Carry on with your work. You have room, you have salary. Just forget and continue with your work.

While disturbing, Samantha's narrative shows that sexual harassment is a common part of the job that workers are meant to accept. As she was not being physically abused, her scenario signalled some kind of manageable situation. Unfortunately, as already mentioned above, cases of sexual abuse tend to go unreported, as indicated by Bola, who said nothing about her male employer's behaviour in her former place of work for fear that her female employer 'go sack me… say I dey waka for estate... she go say "na lie". She no go believe me'.

Khadijat, a Yoruba housegirl from Kwara State, who does not know her age and is single with one child, also never told her female employer that she was raped by her husband for fear that she would 'sack' her and also call her an 'asewo' (prostitute). Tope, a 19-year-old housegirl from Benue State (single with no children), did try telling her female employer when her male employer's relative attempted to rape her, but she did not listen and, instead, blamed Tope.

Female live-ins' experiences of sexual abuse are usually made worse by employers' view of their workers as carriers of diseases, as mentioned previously, which often leads to workers being tested for diseases. This is illustrated by a question on a forum on the website, Lagos Mums, I introduced earlier:

> …how seriously do you take the testing of your domestic staff who work for you? It is not only HIV to be worried about, we owe it to our homes and children to ensure we have safe staff in our homes!

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The overwhelming response to that question was that domestic workers should be screened for Hepatitis, HIV and TB for the safety of the home and the children – although there was no evidence as to whether men were subjected to the same tests. Similar cases have been observed in Singapore where migrant domestic workers are required to undergo a medical test (including pregnancy, STD and HIV tests) within 14 days of arrival into the country and every six months thereafter (HRW, 2006). This is also echoed in Johnston's (2013) study where several expatriate women described paying for additional medical screening (HIV, TB and other infectious diseases) for their migrant domestic workers because, 'you can never be too careful' (ibid:162).

Employers will also carry out virginity tests on their young female domestic workers to see if their virginity is still intact and to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Virginity testing clearly discriminates on the grounds of gender, as it is almost exclusively practised on women, while their male counterparts are rarely subjected to similar tests. Ultimately, virginity testing impairs on the dignity and well-being of female domestic workers who are subjected to it and also violates their right to privacy.

These tests, which impinge on women's bodies, are testimony to what Ann Stoler (2002:45) called 'the policing of sex' to ensure that certain categories of people are 'kept in line' (ibid:45). Additionally, while women who pass the tests are allowed to remain in employment, detection of diseases or pregnancy leaves the domestic worker open to the prospect of dismissal.

Owing to the perception of female live-ins as immoral, when I asked employers about their views on the situation of sexual abuse of domestic workers, an overwhelming majority placed the blame on the worker – after all, female workers 'would only snatch your husband from you' (Eno, 29, female employer, banker) or 'seduce your husband/older son' (Rachel, 38, female employer, housewife). Surprisingly, some domestic workers also share similar sentiments and feel that female workers are as much to blame, indicating how widespread this perception is.

Forty-two-year-old Chidinma, of Igbo origin from Anambra State, who is a divorced mother of four and live outs, who works as a nanny, says she 'know[s] of girls that engage in sex for better life. They are not all victims.' Also, 33-year-old Chinwe, also Igbo and from Anambra State, who works as a live-out cook and is a widower with three children explains:

> These young girls! Chai! Not all of them are innocent. Even one girl dey work for my madam's house one time like this. When Madam no dey around and it just be Oga, she dey walk around with tight, tight shirt and no bra. You go see her thing pointing well, well for shirt. That girl na *asewo* [prostitute]! Please, sister do not start to think that all of us are victims. Some girls will do whatever for better life.

Chinwe and Chidinma may not be far off with their 'accusation'. As 28-year-old housegirl Nneka (Ijaw, Rivers State, in a relationship, no children) explains, she used to exploit the situation and use her body to her advantage to subsidise her meagre wages:

> I am ashamed to admit that before I became part-time I did some things I regret. But when you need money. In my last house that I was living in, I used to sleep with one of our neighbour's son. He would give me extra money to buy some of the things I needed.

Other 'exploitable' situations are revealed when workers tell stories of other people they know who were taken up, usually by Lebanese men, and in return got houses built for

them, received monetary gifts or, on rare occasions, marriage. While this complicates the notion of sexual control of employers in the workplace, cases of attraction and voluntarism on either side are rare (see also Jureidini, 2006). Unfortunately, employers take stories like that of Nneka's mixed with their fear of workers' sexuality and use these narratives to control their workers' sexuality.

6.2.6 Maintaining Social Order, Determining Rituals and Routines

This section has argued that employers' perceptions of female live-in worker's dangerous sexuality categorises them as a threat to the moral standings of middle – and upper-class homes. This results in control. However, to justify their exploitative practices, employers adopt a number of 'legitimising narratives', such as containing workers' 'potential rampant sexuality', ensuring workers do not get into trouble and reducing responsibilities and costs if workers do get themselves into trouble. Their ultimate aim, however, is to maintain social order in their homes and create difference. The amount of power employers have is also reinforced by the fact that the workplace is a private home, which provides many opportunities for employers to scrutinise every aspect of their workers' lives.

This suggests that, within the confines of the private home, the relationship that develops between worker and employer can take on many different forms, with the one between female live-ins and employers resulting in workers being treated quite harshly – as employers attempt to minimise any potential sexual threats by organising domestic workers' practices of everyday (i.e. their rituals and routines) through rules and

expectations, such as modes of dress and restrictions from certain spaces. This exertion of power then becomes part of the daily practices of employers, indicating that control resulting from sexual views is deeply embedded in the everyday lives of female live-ins- to indicate to workers that they might work in the private home, but they do not belong in this space.

Yet, some female live-in workers are more vulnerable than others, as there is a particular sexualisation of women, usually along the intersection of class, age and, to a lesser extent, ethnicity. Their lower status (e.g. coming from poorer backgrounds) is already linked with their supposed 'deviant' sexuality. However, being young and 'living in' means they have been isolated from their families or denied the chance to make any social networks – as revealed in denying sexuality – thus increasing their vulnerability. Moreover, while domestic workers' poor socioeconomic status and isolation often makes them unwilling to report cases for fear of losing their jobs, employers' ability to 'hire and fire as they please' (Chang and Groves, 2000:77) also makes it extremely difficult for workers to speak out as, if these 'affairs' with or 'seduction' of male employers are discovered, it commonly leads to dismissal.

Therefore, in the context of my study, I argue that notions of sexual availability provide the framework within which female live-ins interact with their employers, which is magnified with female live-in domestic workers' lower class, as well as their gender, age and, in some cases, ethnic identities.

6.3 Challenging Employer Control

Female live-in's can certainly experience a sense of powerlessness as a result of employer control, but my interviews also revealed the ways in which workers attempt to minimise this and challenge restrictions on their lives. This is what I turn to in the final section of this chapter.

Some women devised ways to socialise beyond the work place without getting caught, such as dawdling or increasing the time out when sent out on errands; or citing traffic or other excuses as reasons for returning late. During this 'time out', workers often run their own errands, visit relatives and friends, or just create an opportunity to be away from the employing household. Workers may also give themselves short breaks during the day when their employer is not around to ensure they have adequate rest periods. During this time, workers may relax, listen to the radio (if they have access to one), or engage in religious worship.

There are also those employees who are able to negotiate days off. Seven female live-ins in this study have days off, although as they are between the ages of 25 and 53, suggesting that a greater degree, albeit small, of freedom comes with age. For these workers, days off can be once a week (usually on Sundays), every weekend (Friday morning to Saturday evening, or Saturday morning to Sunday evening), once a month or during festival periods (Christmas, Easter or Eid). During their days off, and away from their employers, workers are free to socialise with friends or family, gossip and even complain about their jobs. It is their time to do what they want.

Finally, others simply followed the rules – mainly for fear of getting caught. This is because some employers have strategies for knowing if their workers do not obey their rules, such as 53-year-old female employer, Theresa, whose children or neighbours let her know if her housegirl leaves the house.

As discussed in Chapter 2, when focusing on domestic workers' everyday resistance, I am not romanticising these acts, but instead using them as a way to understand the complex practices workers develop as part of their everyday life to counter employer control over their lives. In looking at the ways workers challenge assumptions that they are sexual threats, I focus on four main actions: movement to living out; constructing a more positive moral identity; styles of dress; and addressing isolation.

These responses are not used by all female live-ins and vary in how much they challenged perceptions of female live-ins as sexually deviant. They do, however, illustrate that challenging the taken-for-granted can range from doing nothing, such as conforming to an employer's mode of dress, to taking some action by looking for less oppressive and exploitative working conditions in other homes. They also reveal what female live-ins are able to do within the confines of their exploitative conditions.

6.3.1 Movement from live-in to live-out situations

A few of the female live-in domestic workers report they are always on the lookout for 'better jobs' with 'better conditions' – taken here to also mean free from abuse, lack of privacy and isolation. One of the ways female live-in employees do this is by moving

from living in to living out. However, as domestic workers have varying stores of social networks, movement is only possible with established networks and experience. Moreover, while inexperienced workers seem to be more willing to work for whomever is willing to employ them, this is more likely due to the limited access they have to others owing either to being new to the sector or their limited possibilities of socialising.

A case in point is Happiness, a housegirl of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State who does not know her age and is single with no children; and has been in her current job for almost two years. She is 'managing' in spite of her complaining that her Madam is 'wicked' and has not paid her 'one kobo for the pass six months'. She manages because she does not know anyone in Lagos and is scared to leave. Similarly, Khadijat, an 18-year-old Yoruba housegirl from Kwara State, who is a single mother of one, laments that she is unhappy where she is currently working, as her employer has never spoken a kind word to her and beats her a lot, but she also cannot leave as she is afraid of her. Moving from living in to living out, therefore, is not an option for all workers.

In this study, while all of the women that currently live in have always done so, five workers (who now live out and work either full-time or part-time) have lived in at some point during their time in this occupation. These women – like most live-outs who work full-time or part-time in this study – point out that those workers who do not stay with their employers often have more control over their working lives than live-ins. As revealed by 28-year-old part-time housegirl, Nneka, and 42-year-old live-out nanny, Chidinma, it requires having established oneself within domestic service and the

assistance of social networks - relatives, neighbours, close friends, other domestic workers – and in some cases employers - in finding jobs and accommodation.

After many years of living in, Nneka - of Ijaw origin from Rivers States who works as a part-time housegirl and is in a relationship, but has no children – decided to live-out when her employers were relocating to Abuja. Having worked with them for almost five years, she discussed with them about the possibility of living out and they assisted her in finding a new job, as well as with providing some funds towards her rent. On the other hand, Chidinma - of Igbo origin from Anambra State, and divorced mother of four – found her current employment through a relative of hers who works in a salon and informed her of a vacancy after a client asked her if she knew of any trustworthy nannies.

Generally, live-out work – whether full-time or part-time - is primarily for those workers who want to maintain some degree of autonomy from the employing family on a daily basis and who also want to have the capacity to maintain an independent familial and social life (see also Ally, 2010). For these workers, living out or working part-time means 'Being free. To have your own place, to have more control' (Nneka, 28, housegirl, Rivers State). It is about controlling when working ends and social life begins, not about control over the work itself. Shifting to live-out or part-time work, therefore, provides the worker with more personal freedom and, in many cases, the chance to be free from harassment. However, as I will illustrate in the next chapter, moving from a live-in to live-out situation comes with its own challenges, such as concerns over rent and long daily commutes.

6.3.2 Constructing a More Positive Moral Identity

Workers also maintain their values of hard work and virtuousness by making it clear that they are here to earn money for themselves or their families back home. This is the case with 19-year-old housegirl Tope - of Tiv origin from Benue State, who is single with no children - who explains that she is working because she 'had a strong desire to lift myself out of poverty', especially as her 'father's income as a farmer did not cover our daily needs'. As well as 19-year-old housegirl, Kudirat - of Yoruba origin from Kwara State who is single and has no children - who explains that she has 'always wanted to be financially independent':

> But to earn a living in my village is not so easy. How much you work hard, it only just enough to eat. The other problem is concerned with my parents. They are approaching seventy and my father need to retired soon. All his hard earnings as a carpenter had been spent for our education. Now is our turn to support them back.

The aim of which is to reframe understandings of their sexual availability and refocus on other traits, such as their reliability or hardworking nature. A similar case of 'performing their job' was also noted by Barbara Johnston (2013) in her study on female migrant domestic workers in Singapore, whereby women 'constructed an idea of femininity based on warmth and kindness of character and superior domestic skills in cooking and cleaning', in order to 'downplay specific references to sex' (ibid:197).

In other instances, domestic workers aim to construct a more positive moral identity through religion. Studies on the religious strategies used by workers (see Cruz, 2006; Nakonz and Shik, 2009 in the context of Filipino migrant workers) indicate that those who use it do so to enable an emotional adjustment to their living and working situations.

Particularly for those workers in situations they feel they are unable to influence, strategeies can include being patient, praying away problems, using religious songs to 'forget' and hoping interventions from God will make things improve for the better (Nakonz and Shik, 2009; see also Constable, 1997a; Parreñas, 2001).

While I did observe similar accounts of religion being used among live-ins, I also found another use. Specifically the affiliation with the church or mosque, as a way of providing a 'safe' space that enabled workers to forge an identity beyond that as immoral and sexual, but as 'good girls' who can be trusted. As Julian Chang and Kimberley Groves (2000:79) observed in Hong Kong, self-identified religious Filipina domestic workers tended to congregate in all-female groups on their days off and to avoid places that they identified as morally suspect, and stressing in conversations that they were 'not available' (see also Cheng, 2004:80 on Filipina domestic workers in Hong Kong).

My findings suggest that female live-ins are aware of how they are viewed by employers – as sexual threats – and religion, therefore, enables employees to establish a sense of self in their employing household by creating an identity centred on a religious moral identity (Shinozaki, 2015). Workers do this by constantly singing praiseworthy hymns while working – even if their employers might prefer for them to work in silence, which in itself is another form of resistance. For those who can, they read the Bible or religious-related texts during their down-time – in a bid to forge a 'cleaner', less immoral image. This again is done with the aim of minimising any views of their sexual availability with the hope of reducing any form of control.

6.3.3 Styles of dress

Clothing is another vehicle workers use, although this particular practice illustrates the ways in which female live-ins simultaneously resist and embrace the existing system of power (Abu-Lughod, 1990:47; Constable, 1996:541). On one hand, there are those workers, such as 25-year-old housegirl Nancy of Ibibio origin from Akwa Ibom who is single with one child, who dress in a manner that does not attract too much attention and stays clear of a sexual image. She is not entitled to wear a uniform, but always wears long skirts, loose shirts and no make up.

Other women learn to create their own style by retaining their own forms of clothing when they arrive back to work on their days off as a way of asserting their femaleness, such as 30-year-old nanny Tina of Igbo origin from Anambra State who is divorced and has no children. Tina is quite meticulous about her appearance – with her hair always neatly braided and her 'outside' clothes including skinny jeans and high heels. Quite opposite to a uniform, this is a way for workers to reclaim themselves.

Generally, style is important to identity in Nigeria, as workers want the latest hairstyles, clothes and accessories as a way for them to show they are also urban women that are up-to-date with the contemporary styles in Lagos. Some workers, as will be discussed in the next section, are able to watch TV and listen to the radio. They are aware of music, fashion and more. Workers like Tina try to put their best outfits on so employers know that they are people, too, underneath the uniforms and the dirt.

Indeed, Brenda Yeoh and Maria Soco (2014) indicate for Hong Kong, the off-day provides female workers the opportunity to shed their dowdy 'workaday uniforms' (which are most commonly plain T-shirts and slacks or bermudas and, occasionally, the standard domestic maid's uniform). They can wear their best clothes, which may range from blouse and jeans to flamboyant outfits, inclusive of hats, large dangling earrings and other costume jewellery, leather shoes as well as make-up, which again ranges from a trace to heavy application. As Yeoh (1998) explains, this is not only indicative of self-respect, but is symbolic that off-days are beyond the jurisdiction of their employers.

6.3.4 Create Spaces to Address the Isolation

Finally, my findings indicate that, in spite of the isolation that comes with living in, workers are able to create spaces to break it. One way is through religion, which I introduced earlier as a way for female live-in workers to construct a more positive moral identity. My interviews also reveal that it is a way of fighting off isolation – even if only for a few hours every Sunday, as revealed by Patience of Adja origin from Benin Republic, who is single, has no children and is unsure of her age.

Patience works as a housegirl and often workers from 6am to 1am on a daily basis, she is usually not allowed out of the house during the week on her own, even on Sundays. However, Sundays is when she gets to go to church and spends time with her friends. The joy as she speaks about the how happy she feels when she is in church reveals its significance in Patience's life. Religion, in this context, serves more as a social locus than a spiritual one, with church, prayer groups and other forms of religious communities a

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very common form of social network (Nakonz and Shik, 2009). Indeed, studies on paid domestic work have revealed the creative ways workers try to create social networks in the face of their restrictions (Brown, 2011).

For those workers who are rarely allowed to go out, such as Ama, who is of Ijaw origin from Edo State, who does not know her age and is single with no children, she explains how her main leisure activity is watching TV or listening to the radio:

> In evening, if I am finished in time, I can sit down in parlour and watch TV with the children… Africa Magic, Shuga, Keeping Up With Kardashians, E!

Although Ama is one of the sixteen female live-ins that have no days off, she introduces the role media can play in domestic workers' lives. For Ama, 'watching TV' and specifically mentioning her knowledge of popular shows, such as 'Keeping Up With the Kardashians' and 'Shuga' – a Kenyan soap opera – indicates how social isolation within domestic service can also be eroded through the intrusion of the outside world through media. Workers also derive pleasure from listening to the radio, which also enables them to access information about the outside world. In a few houses, where multiple domestic workers are employed, I observed the radio becoming the basis for gatherings, as they played board games such as Ludo and discussed different issues.

As explained previously, Internet and mobile phones can be a way to break isolation and loneliness. While Internet and social media use is expanding rapidly in Nigeria - in 2013, for example, there were over 50 million Internet users in the country, which is around 30 per cent Internet penetration, with 72 per cent visiting social networking sites

(Africapractice, 2014). Yet, not all female live-ins have access to mobile phones or the Internet – this was more possible for male domestic workers and female live-outs as discussed in Chapter 7 and 8. Thus, female live-in workers, such as Ama, tend to be able to eke out leisure moments and find their leisure within the homes they work in through television and the radio.

As Leila Linhares Barsted and Jacqueline Pitanguy (1999:59) write in their study on media and domestic work in Brazil - where income is highly concentrated and the majority of the population who lives at the poverty level - leisure is restricted to very few options and is differentiated by gender:

> Men, even the poorest, have sport, basically football, as their number one preference. For women, television soap operas are practically their only access to leisure.

As such, TV and radio can play a huge role in reducing workers' social isolation and reveals the small access to leisure and entertainment that workers like Ama may have in their lives and the reduction, albeit small, in their level of isolation.

Overall, these different responses – of movement to living out, of constructing a more positive moral identity through religion, of conforming or not to styles of dress, of addressing isolation through the media - reveal that female live-in domestic workers are not unlike the Bedouin women described by Lila Abu-Lughod (1990; see also Chapter 2) as both are resisting and embracing the existing system of power (ibid:47) in their attempts to challenge the perceptions of their sexual availability.

It also indicates that, while the power structure of the home in which the live-in resides and works is hierarchical and controlled by employers, power dynamics and relationships between the domestic employer and employee 'are highly complex, fragile and ripe with contradictions' (Storey, 2015:273). The employer certainly retains the upper hand, but their power over their workers is not absolute, with the making of female live-in domestic workers' everyday lives the consequence of struggles and negotiations between employer and employee.

6.4   Conclusion

This chapter examined the everyday lives of female live-ins in their workplaces and illustrated that, for female live-ins, working and residing within an employer's household severely constrains their privacy and freedom of movement and makes them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. This is heightened by the fact that the employer treats their home not as the public sphere of the domestic worker, but as their private space.

In the case of female live-in paid domestic work, I argued that at the heart of the discussions around their everyday life was the construction of their sexuality as dangerous by employers, as well as the media. This is used to separate the low-class worker from the wealthier employer and justify their control through discourses of protecting them for their own good. However, control is not clear-cut and is shaped by workers' different identities, with some female live-ins more vulnerable than others.

Thus, in the context of female live-in paid domestic work in Lagos, anxieties concerning their sexual availabilty are what seem to shape their experiences around their everyday lives. The next chapter explores the way in which notions around motherhood and living out can also shape the experiences of women involved in this occupation.

7

Being a Working Mother: The Everyday Lives of Female Live-out Domestic Workers

Research on paid domestic work reveals the ways in which the intimate nature of paid domestic work coupled with hierarchies based on class, race and gender differences, to name a few, lead to tensions in the employer-employee relationship inside the home (Constable, 1997; Gill, 1994; Hansen, 1989; Lan, 2006; Rollins, 1985). However, as I argue in this thesis, intersections of these different identities are complex and rooted in local context. Chapter 6 discussed the ways in which female live-ins experiences are greatly shaped by views of their sexual availability, which is exacerbated by working and residing in their employer's homes. This chapter focuses on the narratives of domestic workers who are mothers and live out, working either full-time or part-time.

As briefly touched upon in the previous chapter, workers who live-out (both male and female) cite two motivations behind doing so – being able to maintain some degree of autonomy from employers on a daily basis, and having the capacity to maintain an independent familial and social life. Indeed, mothers in this occupation that live-out and work full-time or part-time in some ways may be regarded as possessing greater powers of negotiation in their employment. However, as I argue in this chapter, they also have to juggle work commitments with family and domestic responsibilities, which are made even more difficult by their low-income status in an occupation that lacks decent labour

conditions. This often makes it hard for women to provide adequate care for their children.

Similar to the previous chapter, this current chapter is organised along the three main conceptual themes: rituals and routines, social order and challenging the taken-for-granted to understand the terrains of struggle negotiation between mothers who live out and their employers, who would prefer their workers not have family obligations. As such, I begin by exploring mothering narratives.

Employer discourses on the preference for childless workers is apparent from the previous chapter – where they are wholly against pregnant workers, enforce a singles-only policy and have a tendency to look for those without dependents and spouses. Employers also have anxieties over recruiting people that live out; as they are less able to police their actions once they are away from the employing household. By living out in order to provide care in their own households, I argue that low-income mothers are challenging employers' notions about them only having obligations to the employing household. Yet living out also comes with other challenges. As such, I draw on the experiences in and feelings about, residing in their own homes women shared with me, to provide insights into their daily rituals and routines as working mothers. I explore issues such as their daily commute, time constraints and unpaid domestic and care responsibilities.

As I illustrate in this chapter, for these mothers that live-out and work either full-time or part-time, experiences of everyday life are determined by the intersection of their gender and family circumstances with their low-income status. This, coupled with the current unregulated status of this occupation in Nigeria and a context where the state does not fully guarantee workers' rights in areas such as maternity leave and working hours (see Chapter 4), constrains women workers' ability to be 'good' mothers. Thus, I explore what everyday life looks like for female live-out workers, who are trying to juggle their paid work responsibilities with their family commitments; in a context where motherhood is often denied and Lagos living is not easy.

7.1   Female Live-out Domestic Workers

As indicated in Table 5.1, there are 29 live-out domestic workers in this study, 12 of whom are female (see Appendix I for more detail) - eight of these women are mothers. They are whom I focus on in this Chapter. The small number of female live-outs who are mothers is not enough to claim that this is the full experience of low-income working mothers found in this sector in Lagos, but my aim is to give an indicative insight into this particular group of women's experiences, and the ways in which identities intersect to make a worker simultaneously privileged and marginalised.

Employers may have a preference for childless workers who are expected to neglect their own personal life and be fully committed to their work, but speaking with domestic workers, nearly half of the female employees in this study have children, and of them almost an equal amount are live-ins (nine) and live-outs (eight). This indicates that either

employer's are not as oppressive as this discourse suggests, or workers are challenging the childless domestic worker narrative.

Closer inspection reveals that with the female live-ins, with exception of 53-year-old Ijeoma and 45-year-old Rita, all women had their first child between the ages of 15 and 19. These women also had their children prior to becoming domestic workers and do not seem to have had other children while in service. This suggests that, while having children prior to getting into domestic work is possible, once in service – and, in particular, living in – the ability to have children might be severely curtailed.

Chapter 6 explored the feelings of loneliness and guilt female live-in mothers experience as a result of being separated from their children for long periods of time. This is one of the reasons why those women who have stronger social networks live-out and work either full-time or part-time, so they are able to care for their children. Here, I want to explore the experiences of live-out mothers to further indicate the ways in which a range of factors, including class and age, influence how women attempt to combine their paid domestic work with caring for children (Duncan, 2005; May, 2008).

7.2   The Joys of Motherhood: Class Distinctions in Mothering

The notion of women as caregivers and nurturers is central to many cultures' conceptions of femininity (Hochschild, 2002; Lan, 2006; Parreñas, 2010). In Nigeria, like elsewhere in Africa, motherhood informs women's social identity (Oyewumi, 2001). A classic example of motherhood can be seen in the writings of Buchi Emecheta's (1979) *The Joys*

of Motherhood about a Nigerian woman, Nnu Ego whose life revolves around her children and how, through them, Nnu Ego gains the respect of her society. Motherhood can then be said to define and shape cultural notions of gender, and is often presented as the supreme route to physical and emotional fulfilment for women. Moreover, gendered norms around motherhood in Nigeria continue to shape how women perceive themselves and narrate their everyday lived experience.

This is why, as I highlighted in Chapter 5, while Nigerian women are working, they are also still engaged in their 'traditional' roles as child carers and home-keepers. As I also illustrated in the same chapter, female employers explained that the nature of their paid work, along with their child and domestic responsibilities, gives them little choice but to hire 'somebody to assist in the home' (Eno, 29, Igbo, banker).

Indeed, existing research points to the fact that the middle-class are able to achieve a work-life balance – 'the right of individuals to work while not damaging their freedom to pursue activities and responsibilities outside the workplace' (Datta et al., 2006:4)[24] - by relying on 'others', usually working-class, ethnic minority and migrant men and women (Datta et al., 2006; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). As has been argued by Evelyn Nakono Glenn (1994), in the context of social constructions of mothering, paid domestic work enables female employers to enjoy the emotional benefits and social status of being mothers while being released from the menial work involved in unpaid domestic work.

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[24] These activities and responsibilities could include unpaid caring labour of young children by working mothers (Bradley et al., 2005) and, to a lesser extent, fathers (O'Brien, 2005; Kilkey et al., 2013), as well as recreational labour (Ransome, 2007) and community and voluntary activities (Datta et al., 2006).

Thus, it 'frees' middle-class women from housework, even though they are still expected to comply with gender norms around motherhood.

Still, the availability of domestic workers makes it possible for middle-class and wealthy women to comply with the demanding notions around motherhood and paid work that they could not otherwise sustain. At the same time, the attitudes and actions of employers, as revealed in Chapter 6, also support the underlying assumption that the domestic worker should mainly work and that entitlement to any other identity is not for them. In the case of domestic employees who are mothers, they are expected to neglect their own care responsibilities in order to provide undivided attention to that of the employing household. This, as has already been argued in this thesis, is due to their lower-class position, which sees domestic workers as more suitable to fulfilling the demands for cheap labour for employers (Anderson, 2000; Collins, 1994; Glenn, 1994).

As such motherhood is experienced differently by these two groups of women - middle-class women are able to be 'good' mothers by recruiting domestic workers, but discourage the same for their domestic workers. This suggests that, in Lagos, for female live-out domestic workers, their 'life beyond commodification' (Pratt, 2013:1924) is often ignored. This is in spite of the connections between paid domestic work and workers' personal lives I have indicated so far in this thesis.

Moreover, it is not only employers' that constrain workers' rights to be mothers, but the State plays a role in its refusal to guarantee workers' rights to become or be mothers –

lack of maternity leave, for instance, as discussed in Chapter 4. Both the state and employers play a role in denying workers' rights to mothering. This is particularly disheartening considering Recommendation 201 paragraph 25 of the ILO's Decent Work for Domestic Workers Agenda, which recognises the need to respect domestic workers' work and family responsibilities (see Chapter 4; Hodges, 2014).

The idea of 'good enough' mothering (Macdonald, 2010:2) also reveals that notions about how best to raise children remain firmly built on the 'idea of the ever-present continually attentive at-home mother' (ibid:3). However, the experiences of both live-out mothers and employer mothers reflect that this is not a reality for either class, but even less so for live-out mothers. Indeed, Cameron Lynee Macdonald (2010) has argued that in the US, the mother-nanny relationship is ultimately based on who the better caregiver is - the 'mother-employer' or 'mother-worker' (ibid:3).

This contradiction between 'the ideal and reality of motherhood' (Macdonald, 2010:3) is evident in Sharon Hays (1996) study of mothering ideologies, also in America. Hays (1996) interviewed women from a variety of ethnicities and classes; and concluded that, in most households, mothers could not give up paid employment without it having financial implications. As such, working mothers attempt to achieve a work-life balance by either leaving their jobs or reducing their working hours (Blair-Loy, 2003); or by hiring nannies who work as shadow mothers - i.e. surrogates who would care for their children exactly as they would (Macdonald, 2010).

This is the context in which the live-out mothers find themselves – as women recruited to enable employers to achieve a work-life balance (see Chapter 5) and, particularly to enable wealthier women to be 'good' mothers, but who are meant to deny their family responsibilities by both the state and employers. I now look at their daily rituals and routines within this context.

7.3   Daily Rituals and Routines

Similar to their live-in counterparts, female live-outs have demanding workloads and often experience little control in the work process. As Chinwe, a 33-year-old cook of Igbo origin from Anambra State explains, 'we have to always remember that even if Madam is nice, this [their workplace] is not our own house'. Female live-outs also do not really have fixed duties and, even if sets of duties are agreed upon, workers are still expected to do other tasks. For example, women mention spending nights at their employer's house caring for children or helping to cook and clean. Some workers also have to work late into the night and at weekends. Regina, a 35-year-old nanny of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom State, works on Saturdays and Sundays which, as she explains, is 'the time for my children and for being a family'.

Additionally, for those employers who do not want to see their workers sit idly, they continually give them new tasks. Their daily working hours are also long and can range from as few as nine hours to as many as 15 hours, revealing that, while they may work shorter hours than female live-ins, the 'eight-hour working day' does not apply to

domestic workers (see Table 6.2). Long working hours persist because employers still want their workers to be available at all times.

Additionally, live-outs tend not to get breaks during the course of their working day, as employers do not see this as a big priority – they do, after all, go home at the end of the day. Working quickly to finish tasks also does not necessarily mean getting off early, or gaining extra free time. Instead, it could mean employers adding additional tasks to ensure their workers are not idle. This is why 55-year-old, Mopelola, a part-time housegirl of Yoruba origin from Oyo State, only speeds up her working process when her employer is not around, as doing so when her employer is around risks leading to additional duties, which she does not want.

Moreover, six of the eight live-out mothers have days off, potentially indicating that living out gives workers a higher degree of freedom and that some female live-outs optimistically have the ability to negotiate days off. These women are also older, between the ages of 28 and 55 (the two live-out mothers without days off are 21-year-old Doris and 22-year-old Samantha), indicating the stronger bargaining power that comes with age.

Like those live-ins who have days off, there is no uniformity or regulation as to when this leave can occur – five have days off once a week, usually from Saturday evening, returning to work Monday morning, with the other varying from once every month or two, to taking a break 'as and when required'. Crucially, even if a day off has been

agreed, workers say employers still have the final say regarding when this can be. There are also situations where workers are asked to cancel or change their day off. This suggests that, even when workers are able to negotiate days off, the decision as to when it will happen still often lies with the employer.

While these experiences are somewhat similar to the female live-ins in the previous Chapter, female live-out mother's daily routines and rituals are further shaped by their ability to move in and out of homes. Indeed, as I have indicated so far in this thesis, domestic workers represent a dangerous mixing of inside and outside. They bring the outside in, but they also have the also ability 'to take back to the outside what properly belongs inside' (Dickey, 2000:473) – and this especially is frightening for employers when they recruit a live-out. Thus, in addition to notions around dirt and their sexual availability, domestic workers, especially those who live-out, also face being viewed as dangerous because they can move in and out of employers' homes.

7.3.1 Anxieties and Control

Writing on employers' fears and anxieties about workers' movements into and out of their homes in Madurai, India, Sarah Dickey (2000) notes that workers' 'represent the dirt, diseases and "rubbish"' (Chakrabarty 1991) commonly associated with the lower class' (ibid:462) and concerns arise because:

> They may transport in dirt, disorder and disease, and contaminate children with lower-class habits and language; they may remove valued belongings and information through theft and gossip (Dickey, 2000:473).

As such, there might be unwanted sexual mixing in the homes - as detailed in the

previous chapter – but the intimate knowledge that domestic workers accumulate might also be used against employers to rob or sabotage their family life (Bujra, 2000:137). Thus, with female live-outs, employer anxieties are around having an 'inherently untrustworthy' domestic worker in their home, and the only way to minimise these threats is by enacting a detailed regime of rules, instructions and supervision as I detail below.

The issue of trust - taken here to mean honesty – is important to employers, as suggested by 29-year-old female employer, Eno, who I introduced in the last chapter, as wanting a clean worker. Eno also wanted an honest worker:

> …and she must be truthful. I cannot be having somebody in my house that is not honest, even though these people, sometimes they cannot always be trusted – like the ones who steal or the *ambeos* [nosey] who ask too many question and talk too much. Those ones I will sack immediately I become aware. This is why honesty is very important... The thing is, there are plenty of house-helps in Lagos. So at the end of the day, if one is not good, they are easily replaceable.

Indeed, in Sarah Dickey's (2000:473) study on domestic workers in India, cleanliness and honesty are cited as two of the most important qualities Indian employers look for in domestic workers. Trust, as indicated in Eno's account manifests itself in two ways: gossip and theft.

7.3.2 Gossip

Beginning with gossip, Eno pointing out in her account that she would 'immediately sack … the *amebos* [nosey] who ask too many question and talk too much' illustrates that the type of worker that may spread information via gossiping is not ideal. Gossip, by definition, transmits rumours or talk of an intimate nature. With reference to domestic

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work, it makes the home more public and exposes the good and bad that takes place there. Indeed, Eno once fired a worker because 'she wanted to know everything'. Seventy-two-year-old Damilola, on the other hand, 'continues to keep hers' because she 'doesn't talk at all'.

Both Eno and Damilola indicate their awareness that domestic workers have access to intimate information that can be taken out of the house – for instance, by passing onto another worker that may then transfer it to the households in which they later work. Their accounts also suggest that a worker should know their position as outsiders in the household that are not meant to get involved. This fear of gossip is also the reason why employers, such as 27-year-old Taiwo, who works as a designer, vetoed 'inviting a relative to assist'. Taiwo prefers to keep her domestic affairs away from extended family members, which she believes can only be guaranteed by someone who is not a relative, thereby preventing 'early intrusion in any form'. Similar problems with 'house servants' were discussed by Thavolia Glymph (2008) in relation to a plantation household in the US, 2008:

> One of the chief grievances of white ladies since the war has been the way in which house servants who leave them and hire to others gossip about them or slander them to their new employers.

Gossip is threatening to employers because of its ability to ruin a family's reputation. In Lagos, as in most of Nigeria, family reputation is very important as it can affect marriages, business prospects and even financial success. As such, to ensure information belonging to the family stays inside, employers may either prevent workers from leaving the house (as discussed in Chapter 6), or, as Eno stresses, 'never speak about private

affairs in front of them'. This brings to mind the saying *pas devant les domestiques* (not in front of the servants), a French saying that English elites used to refer to not speaking so the servants, who were notoriously given to gossip, could not hear (Dawes, 1974). For 62-year-old Bolanle, she told me that a rule of silence was enforced at work: 'If you once let them start talking you can't stop them.'

7.3.3 Theft

Theft is another way workers can seem untrustworthy. Almost all employers spoke about food, cutlery, expensive jewellery, clothing, money, or other valuable items that had been stolen by current or former workers. These stories are probably an 'urban myth', or what Karen Hansen (1989:250) calls 'the folklore of domestic service', but it constitutes a decisive genre of conversation in Lagosian households. This suggests that, while domestic workers are employed as nannies to care for their children and as people generally trusted to look after the house in their absence, they are also potentially dangerous to them and their homes. As most employers assume their workers will steal, they adopt strategies, such as locking up rooms and valuable goods, or closely monitoring workers as they work.

The latter is a strategy employers like 62-year-old female employer, Bolanle, uses as she expects total control. She supervises their work closely and fiercely insisting that everything be done promptly. Like Bolanle, other employers constantly sought ways of distancing themselves from workers. Working together was redefined as 'supervising their work' to make sure they did it 'according to schedule' or to 'our ways', and to ensure that they did not steal. These methods, however, could misfire or be counterproductive. Rooms that workers could not enter had to be cleaned by family

members; access to locked cupboards entailed the constant presence of the employer.

Now this is not to say that some workers do not steal – indeed, this is often used to subsidise their low wages, but when it comes to thefts, workers usually fear such accusations and will often make a big show of honesty to allay suspicions, mainly for fear of losing their job. This is because, as employers like 61-year-old Bolanle explains, if her workers 'misbehave' she would dock their wages or dismiss them.

If workers are not engaged in petty theft, employers often imagine they are conspiring with outsiders to rob them, especially when workers are not given what they want. This is the case with 53-year-old female employer, Theresa, who explains how, a few years ago, her security guard robbed her family because her husband denied him the NGN30000 (USD$192) loan he requested. Unfortunately, the popular discourse of domestic workers as potential thieves also means that, when thefts are discovered, workers are usually blamed first and the response is also most likely instant dismissal. Kehinde, who was advised by the police to dismiss the guard after her family was robbed, illustrates this. She explains that the police informed her that 'they were probably the organisers'.

Similarly, in spite of 62-year-old female employer, Bolanle's, strict rules she had suffered various robberies and petty stealing. For, Bolanle, however, this was further proof that workers 'cannot be trusted'. As such, she explains how she 'also let[s] them know that I know people – soldiers, ministers… Big Men – so they if they misbehave, they are aware that there will be more than just salary cut or sacking.' This, however, indicates that employers' power can also be precarious and must be continually reasserted and suggests that the relationship between workers and employers is greatly shaped by a worker's

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positionality; with there oftentimes being a sort-of cost-benefit analysis in employers' decisions on the types of control to adopt. For example, docking wages could lead to resentment and a desire for vengeance against the family, such as through organising a home break-in. Given the intimate access of workers to their persons and possessions, employers prefer to dismiss the offender, though a fatalistic acceptance of 'poor service' or of 'petty stealing'. Moreover, in some cases, even when workers are caught stealing red-handed, threatening with the police is intended to shame them into admitting their guilt. As 56-year-old male employer, Balogun, who works as a Civil Servant explains: 'I didn't dismiss him. Workers are thieves and we are afraid of getting someone worse'.

For female live-out mothers, the workload, hours and nature of tasks, combined with lack of decision-making about working schedules and the work process that come from these anxieties, can constrain their ability to engage in activities beyond the workplace. Workers are often too tired from their work to do anything else, such as 34-year-old nanny, Efem – of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State - who affirms 'the work is hard that by the time I am getting home, I am finished'. Other workers mention that their workload makes it extremely difficult for them to predict when they may or may not be free, such as 42-year-old Chidinma of Igbo origin from Anambra State, who works as a nanny. She explains how her work 'physically wears her out' leaving her scarcely any time for herself. Precious, a 28-year-old nanny of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State, working as a nanny does not like having to work long hours, but she is equally resigned to the inevitability of it:

> I should be finishing five sharp and go home and forget about the work… But it would never happen with my job… it is the nature of it.

Thus, while living out does provide more opportunity for freedom and, in many cases, the chance to be free from the harassment female live-ins face, the nature of the work makes it extremely difficult for workers to organise or attend to their private and/or family concerns. This is what I turn to next.

7.4   Balancing Work and [Home] Life in Paid Domestic Work

In terms of living out and being a mother, while workers like 35-year-old nanny, Regina, finds it hard, she also feels she needs to 'sacrifice that part to meet my obligations'. Forty-two-year-old nanny, Chidinma, of Igbo origin who is a divorced mother of four informs me that she decided to live out because, while she needs to work, she was worried about who would take care of her children:

> I decide to be coming back at home and look after my children instead of living with my employers. It is difficult but I cannot leave my children alone all the time, especially when the father have left us. It is difficult… it is very difficult… but I can say I am around.

Chidinma's account indicates a predicament that is, arguably, an inevitable outcome of low-income mothers – the need to work to support their children while remaining 'good mothers' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Parreñas, 2001). Chidinma explains the sacrifices she has to make for the benefit of her children, such as going hungry sometimes so her children can eat. She also describes her feelings on being a mother who is unable to provide care for her children, but provides (paid) care for others. Indeed, for many of the mothers in this study who care for employers' children, it is increasingly difficult to earn a salary while looking after someone else's child and being unable to look after their own. They constantly express the sacrifices they have to make for the benefit of their

children.

The large literature on transnational mothering also reveals that in addition to the 'pain of family separation' (Parreñas, 2000:575); women must also care for someone else's grandchild, child, or parents while unable to care for their own. As Arlie Hochschild (2002) points out, this often entails a 'global heart transplant' or redirection of love that migrant domestic workers are unable to express in daily care of their own children to an employer's children (ibid:22-23).

For the female live-out mothers in my study, my findings point to the several challenges for low-income women undertaking paid domestic work for managing their work and family life. Mothers end up adopting diverse strategies which includes the use of 'other mothers' and sacrificing leisure. This is also evident in studies on 'global care chains' and 'transnational motherhood' (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997), as well as on migrants whose children are present with them (Evans et al., 2005; Kofman and Raghuram, 2005). For instance, working-class women and women of colour, according to Pierrette Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ernestine Avila (1997:551), have long had to juggle the competing demands of paid and unpaid work due to the lack of resources for 'exclusive, full-time, round-the-clock mothering'. They tend to share mothering responsibilities with female kin and friends.

7.4.1 Who Cares? Other Mothers in Lagos

As explained in Chapter 5, there is a lack of available and affordable childcare options in Nigeria. Hiring a domestic worker may be feasible for the middle-class and elite

employers in this study, but it is rarely an option for the low-income mothers I interviewed, as 45-year-old Rita, a live-in nanny of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State with three children, illustrates. She laments on the impossibility of working and looking after her own children simultaneously:

> It is not easy - being poor, being a woman and being a mother. It is more difficult for people like us… we do not have the money to pay for someone to come and look after our children the way the Madams can. Shebi [As in] you understand what I mean? And we still need to work so that we can eat. In the end you are leaving your children alone, sometime with people you do not trust, while you do these jobs. It is as if they are saying to people like us [poor people] 'do not have children'. It's just work, work, work. It is not supposed to be the way.

Rita highlights how, for many of the low-income mothers, providing adequate care for their children while engaged in domestic service is particularly difficult, and why some live-in while their children are left in their home towns - outside of Lagos – or with relatives in the city.

Living out is even harder for many separated or single mothers, such as 42-year-old Chidinma, who is divorced, lives out and is the sole means of support for her four children. The state is also complicit in hindering workers' rights to be good mothers and to provide adequate care for their children. Thus, workers' experiences around motherhood and family life are constrained not only by unfair working conditions, but also by a broader context of social inequality that being low-income implies.

Unable to afford to pay for childcare, and in the absence of few options to support it, one way they address their caring responsibilities is by getting their unemployed relatives (if they are available) or neighbours to provide informal care while they work. Chidinma

explains how she leaves her young children with an unemployed neighbour while at work, 'giving her small money whenever I am able to for her help'. Similarly, 35-year-old nanny, Regina's three children are informally cared for by her younger sister, who is in Lagos and trying to find work. Mothers' valued familial care as it is a low-cost option (Dyer et al., 2011), which is usually done 'in kind'. Regina's sister, for instance, lives with her. From Regina's perspective, this is also 'good care' (Dyer et al., 2011) as her children are left with someone she trusts.

This strategy is present in Karin Wall and José São José (2004) study on the work and care responsibilities of immigrant families with young children, who identified extensive delegation of care locally, which could either be formal or non-familial informal care.[25] This was also the predominant strategy employed by migrant workers in Sarah Dyer et al. (2011) and Kavita Datta et al.'s (2006) studies as they both found very little evidence of families using formal paid childcare.

Those for whom these options are not available often make use of their children, especially daughters. Although mothers who use this method because they feel they have no choice, worry about the pressure these responsibilities place on their children. Thirty-four-year-old nanny, Efem, cites the guilt she feels having to rely on her teenage daughter to provide care for her younger son when she is at work. As argued by Laura Addati and

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[25] In terms of the ways migrants with resident and dependant families manage their work and life in the countries they work in, in their study on the work and care responsibilities of immigrant families with young children, Wall and José (2004) highlight five local strategies – extensive delegation of care, negotiation of care within the nuclear family, mother-centredness, child negligence and the superimposition of care upon work.

Naomi Cassirer (2008:8) writing on care-giving in the context of HIV/AIDs, leaving children alone or in the care of older siblings can not only have an effect on the quality of care of young children, but can also impact long-term educational and employment opportunities for older siblings who provide the care.

Finally, in rare cases where mothers face challenges in balancing work and care, and have no other choice, they take risks by leaving their children home alone, sometimes locked in a room (see Datta et al., 2006; Wall and José, 2004). This indicates how constraining a worker's condition must be – with demanding employers and no support from the state - to adopt this final strategy. In light of competing familial and work demands, mothers often mention sacrificing their leisure time.

7.4.2 Sacrificing Leisure

Existing research on leisure notes that the social expectation of motherhood often means women with young children in either full- or part-time jobs are more likely to curtail their leisure in light of their mothering roles and responsibilities, or integrate their leisure with their children or partner's preferences (Bialeschki and Michener, 1994; Green et al., 1990). Thus, in addition to 45-year-old live-in nanny, Rita, suggesting that poor people are not expected to have children, I argue that one could extend this sentiment to include any form of social life.

Many female live-out mothers connect leisure with meeting work and family obligations – or, as 33-year-old Chinwe of Igbo origin from Anambra State, who works as a cook, puts it, 'doing the other things in life' first. As 34-year-old nanny, Efem, also explains:

> It is a matter of getting to the house, making sure they have eaten, put them to sleep. After that there is no time to do anything else. It is only time for my family. There is never time for the other things.

This is not to imply that mothers do not also have concerns about leisure or friendships, or do not have friends who assist with informal childcare and provide emotional support and companionship. Indeed, studies have revealed the ways in which migrant domestic workers create spaces for leisure and friendship in their lives, particular in public spaces (e.g. Zoitl, 2008 in Hong Kong). In *Raising Brooklyn*, for example, Tamara Mose Brown (2011), explains how Caribbean nannies in Brooklyn create communities through their use of public space, exchanging food, playdates and mobile phones.

What my findings suggest, however, is that low-income working mothers are more likely to spend more time and energy on their family commitments. As 42-year-old nanny, Chidinma, clearly demonstrates, many workers are fully aware of the things that stop them from doing the things they may want to do in terms of their private lives, signifying their awareness of their time poverty:

> Time. There is not enough time in the day to do everything in this house and in my own house, talk less of relaxing. That one is not for people like us. When I have to get everything prepared with my own children before I head to work, or at the end of the day in work I have to make sure I have washed the pots and whatever and Madam can just sit there and relax and watch the television, but me I cannot. I can only relax when I've done all of the jobs and there is always too much to do. So

there is no such thing as resting or relaxing when there are pots to wash, children to look for here and in my own house or something else… and I think that's one of our [her and her employer's] big differences.

This reveals that domestic work is a source of constraint for Chidinma, who feels that she cannot 'relax' when there is work to do around the house. In Chidinma's case, her paid domestic work and children are a priority, with leisure not seen as important 'for people like [her]'. By that, Chidinma is referring to low-waged domestic workers not being able to enjoy middle-class lifestyles, such as relaxing and watching the television.

Chidinma is also expressing the sentiments of many of the women in the study on how the responsibilities of being a domestic worker and a mother afford them little time or space to satisfy their 'non-work' needs. Thus, my findings suggest that, due to the demands of their work and the family obligations placed on them, mothers tend to see leisure as the one area of their life that can be easily cut out in order to provide care for their families. Understanding why this is so also entails looking at the larger urban landscape of these women's lives which takes place beyond their workplace.

7.4.3 Commuting and Accommodation

Workers who do not live with their employers also have to worry about rent and commuting in Lagos. While it is impossible to gauge the actual time it takes for live-outs to commute, due to the unpredictability of Lagos traffic, what is clear is that live-out workers find the commuting tiring. The time burden of these commutes defines another axis of vulnerability not experienced by live-ins, which leaves live-outs with increased

fatigue levels and less time to attend to their domestic responsibilities. Due to the distances they have to travel and the poor quality of public transport, most live-out workers cite commuting as one of the toughest parts of their working life.

Female live-outs face additional challenges as they, especially, have to deal with the constant threat of violence in public spaces (see Chant and McIlwaine, 2013, 2016; McIlwaine, 2013 on the particular risks of violence that women face in urban areas). This, along with commuting, has serious consequences on their lives. For example, they are unable to move around the city securely, especially those women who finish work late at night, due to risk of being attacked. Workers get used to it over time – saying they gradually learn to handle the physical discomfort, time taken and, in the cases of some of the women, the sexual harassment that comes with using public transportation. Others feel safer when commuting in a group and this becomes a practice, especially for those who leave early in the morning and late in the evening, which consequently does create space and time for social networking.

Variable wages, which I discuss in more detail in Chapter 8, add a further complication for female live-outs, since only a few employers subsidise workers' transportation and rent, something that is usually reserved for male domestic workers (see Chapter 8). As such, in addition to the fatigue resulting from the daily commutes, these women also face financial burdens in their decision to live out. At the time of my study, the price of petrol

had already increased from NGN65 (USD$0.42) to NGN97 (USD$0.62) per litre.**26** This

increase severely affected live-outs in terms of transportation and accommodation costs

> The removal of fuel subsidies has affected us all. Okada and bus fares have increased. Landlords want to be charging more money and increasing rents because of these fuel increases. If you look around, things are going up… landlords are collecting two or three year rents, despite the law prohibiting landlords from collecting two years rent. I cannot even ask my employer for a salary advance in order to rent an apartment. I have been with friend for the past three months while I find a place to live (Priscilla, 23, housegirl, Akwa Ibom State).

Although most workers use public transport, which might be in the form of *okadas* (commercial motorcycles), *danfos* (commercial mini-buses) or *keke maruwas* (tuk-tuk/auto-rickshaw), a smaller number, who live close to their place of employment, either walk the whole way, or part of the way, daily to save on transportation costs. Those who can afford to rent homes closer to their place of work do so in areas within close proximity, such as Dopemu, Agege, Pen-cinema, Iyana-Ipaja, Orile-Agege and Gbagada, Surulere. However, rent in Lagos is high, as discussed below and can be as much as NGN70000 (USD$448) a year for 'Face Me, I Face You' and between NGN30000 (USD$192) and NGN85000 (USD$544) for 'room and parlour' – which becomes quite difficult to sustain with their irregular wages.

The majority of live-outs (male and female, full-time and part-time) live in 'Face Me, I

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[26] On 1 January 2012, the Nigerian government removed the subsidies that kept fuel prices in the country low. The reason – Nigeria's fuel subsidy cost the country an estimated US$8 billion in 2011 alone. This caused the price of petrol to increase from NGN65 (USD$0.42) to NGN141 (USD$0.90) a litre. In a country where around 70 per cent of the population of 160 million live on less that USD$2 a day, the sudden increase of petrol made Nigerians furious. This led to a six-day strike that affected the country - economic activities were grounded as workers stayed at home and shops, banks, manufacturing firms, hospitals and petrol stations were closed, causing the Nigerian economy to lose about NGN1.94 trillion (USD$3.1 billion) according to Afrinvest West Africa Limited (Nesbitt-Ahmed, 2012b).

Face You' apartments or 'room and parlour'. 'Face Me, I Face You' apartments are low-cost tenement buildings where tiny rooms literally face one other. They are found all over Lagos and offer residential accommodation to the bulk of low-income urban dwellers. While a major disadvantage of living here is a lack of privacy, as well as the risk of getting into altercations with co-tenants (Nigerians also refer to them 'face me and face trouble' or 'face me and face wahala'). Occupants of such accommodation share kitchens, toilets and bathrooms and it is not unusual to find about ten people sharing these rooms, nor uncommon to find 10–20 people living in one room, as rent here can be as much as NGN70000 (USD$448) a year.

Workers who do not live in 'Face Me, I Face You' apartments live in 'room and parlour' – self-contained mini-flats, usually divided with a curtain into the sleeping area (room) and the sitting area (parlour). Mats are placed under the bed, and if children are in the household, taken out at night for them to sleep. Some have shared public toilets, while others have separate kitchens, toilets and bathrooms. Rent for 'room and parlour' varies with workers paying anywhere between NGN30000 (USD$192) and NGN85000 (USD$544) a year depending on the location and the size of their room.

A way to lower the costs of rent and bills is to share accommodation, which also has the added benefit of providing social support with multiple earners (see Datta et al., 2007; Moser, 1998; Rakodi, 1999). While this usually involves living with other family members who work, domestic workers may also share accommodation with friends in Lagos. Other live-outs might choose to work or live further from their workplace to save

their earnings; this, however, adds to the commuting time.

While this indicates the strenuous lives live-outs lead; for mothers, their socially prescribed role as carer – which plays a significant role in their decision to live out – also means that their home lives, like their work lives, are severely constrained.

7.4.4 Lagos Living

For live-out mothers, their 'outside' lives are made even more difficult by the often severe shortcomings in the provision of, and access to, basic services and essential infrastructure that characterises low-income urban settlements in the Global South (Tacoli, 2012). As explained by Niji Akanni (2002) in his essay on everyday life in Lagos, low-income workers in the slums, such as Ajegunle - 'the Jungle City' - live in areas with lack of basic urban services:

> Seventeen people lined up at dawn to use the two-cubicle pit latrine serving an eight-room house of seventy occupants. An army of workers, traders and school pupils sloshing through flooded streets, to meet another army at various bus stops, waiting for buses that won't come. A battalion of high school students and lowly civil servants, clutching electric irons, stream in and out of the only three houses lucky enough to have electricity on the long street of 74 buildings. (ibid:138)

As such, female live-outs do not only work under exploitative work conditions in paid employment which provides low pay and little security, but also deal with the consequences of limited service provision, such as access to safe drinking water, sanitation, drainage, public transport, health and education in these areas (see Tacoli, 2012:19). Furthermore, as they remain responsible for care in their own homes, they are more affected by this lack of access, such as having to wake up either very early in the

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morning or stay up even later at night to ensure there is water – which is often collected from communal water sources - ready for the household in the morning. This can also lead to increased incidences of violence late at night, especially as their communities face constant power outages. Further, as Cecilia Tacoli (2012) further notes in low-income settlements, water purchased from private suppliers can be expensive, sometimes up to ten times higher than water from public suppliers. Cheaper informal vendors, on the other hand, may sell polluted water that may affect the health of users, exposing young children to diarrhoea and increasing their need for care (ibid:22).

In this section, I have argued that female live-out mothers experiences are shaped by an intersection of their everyday life with their social class and gender, and a key element in female live-outs' daily rituals and routines is juggling the total demands on their paid domestic work with their responsibilities to unpaid care work in their own homes – in a context of limited service provision, and their long commutes, that adds greater stress on them. All of the above leads to the increase of time-poverty of these women (Folbre, 1994, 2006; Fraser, 2009; Razavi, 2007), which is another key element in their lived experiences.

This indicates that the experience of female domestic workers as mothers is also differentiated by the intersection of their motherhood with other social hierarchies of class. Live-outs also discuss having too little time to spend with children and other family members as a result of their long working hours and long commutes, and they are often too tired from work to undertake any domestic responsibilities once they are home.

Moreover, all live-out mothers have to deal with domestic responsibilities when returning home, but only a few men who live-out or work part-time cite this as a problem (see Chapter 8).

Yet, while the majority of working mothers explain that they would prefer to work shorter hours so they can spend more time at home with their children and family, they also all acknowledge that fewer hours would mean a pay cut. As 35-year-old nanny, Regina, explains:

> It is not as if I do not get tired and pray to God that I can quit, but the money is small, it is the only money in fact. So yes, it is difficult, but I still have to continue doing it.

Moreover, despite some of the problems linked with living out, my findings indicate that domestic workers often prefer this to a situation where they have scarce free time and have to be on call almost constantly. As 55-year-old Mopelola of Yoruba origin from Oyo State, maintained:

> It is bad when you are live-in… there is no one there for [your] children. This is how I was looking for washing and ironing only, to do this work where you can come home.

It is this difficulty in accessing suitable childcare that drove Mopelola to choose part-time, live-out work, making it more manageable to combine her paid domestic work with her care responsibilities and other activities. As Mopelola explains, 'I deliberately went part-time to be spending more time at home with my daughter [who is 14].' Mopelola also has a market stall selling food items, which she runs when she is not cleaning. This demonstrates how, in addition to becoming part-time, she is also attempting to make a move from purely domestic work to a combination of domestic and non-domestic work,

enabling her to diversify her sources of income in order to try to either earn enough money, or just make life bearable. As I will reveal in Chapter 8, part-time work also comes with its challenges, such as delayed payments from multiple employers.

Although Mopelola is the only one of the three female part-timers in this study who chose part-time work to provide care, this does at least suggest that becoming a full-time live-out worker is not the only possible option for workers who have to combine their paid work with their unpaid care and domestic responsibilities. Still, as living out is challenging, mothers try to search for ways to find better working conditions that enables them to better integrate the different elements of their lives, which is what I turn to in the final section.

7.5   Finding Suitable Working Conditions: Movement and Employer Preferences

One of the ways female live-out mothers attempt to find the best possible working conditions that enable them to balance their paid work with their family commitments is by *movement* between households. In terms of upward mobility for domestic workers, Gabrielle Meagher (2003:92), writing on this occupation in the new economy, explains about the usual 'move out of the industry into occupations with higher status and better pay and conditions'. Meagher also introduces a 'second kind of upward mobility *within* the industry into jobs with good earnings, secure employment and career satisfaction'. It is this limited 'second kind' that a number of mothers in my study aimed for through their movement.

Owing to the challenges they face, it should come as no surprise that domestic workers

do not usually stay in any employment for long. Indeed only two live-out mothers had been with the employer for almost six years – the rest were all three years or less. High labour turnover can be seen as a negative thing, especially when workers are told to leave by their employers due to reasons such as poor quality of work or theft. Yet, as my findings indicate, there are also some cases where workers make the decision on their own to leave their place of employment - indeed in this study only fifteen workers (six women and nine men) had been with their employers for more than three years. This suggests that, even in the face of harsh working conditions, and possible unemployment, domestic workers are still able to maintain some level of control, albeit small, over their lives.

As explained in the previous chapter, movement is only possible with established networks and experiences to help in accessing and sharing information on new or alternative employers. Moreover, in moving, workers also need to be able to spot the good employers, as skilled and experienced workers have preferences for certain types of employers and are more able to use their networks in seeking the best employer. They can also afford to be picky and chose employers they believe will pay more and offer better working conditions.

Interestingly, here is where gossip comes in handy, as women are able to share information about good and bad employers with friends. Through gossip, women transmit information about their employers, the working conditions in wealthy homes, and the personal and intimate lives of the families in which they worked. Gossip about

employer's character as human beings circulated far and wide and gave domestic workers seeking employment critical information.

Experienced workers also speak about preferences for certain types of employers based around their perceptions of their advantages and disadvantages. Through my interviews I came to understand that workers also want employers that are 'more understanding, relaxed about the work schedule and generous' (Nneka, 28, part-time housegirl, Ijaw, Rivers State). Indeed, there has also been some investigation into the different stereotypes deployed by domestic workers against their employers (Constable, 1997a; Bartolomei, 2010; Lan 2006; Paul, 2011 are noteworthy examples).

In terms of ethnicity, 33-year-old Chinwe from Anambra State, who is Igbo and works as a cook, explains how she prefers to work in Igbo households and feels more comfortable. She mentions her experiences of being treated differently in households where the employers are a different ethnic group from her, such as a Yoruba family who would rarely pay her on time and, when she complained or asked for her money, they would say 'you these Igbo women, you too like to "chop money"'.

In terms of the racialised stereotypes, while all employees in this study worked in Nigerian households, my findings indicate that there is a preference for Europeans and Americans over Nigerians, Nigerians over Chinese, and Chinese over 'Indians' and Lebanese. Workers' accounts point to two reasons behind this hierarchy of employers. First, they are more than aware that different employers have a different socio-economic

status – most Indian, Lebanese and Chinese employers are owners of many companies in Nigeria, Nigerians can be middle- or upper-class, while 'Westerners' – taken here to mean Europeans and North Americans – are often expatriates with higher earnings and, thus, can pay domestic workers more.

Second, there is the view that some employers are better than others, with 'Westerners' painted in a positive light – even among those that have never worked for foreign employers. For instance, 28-year-old Nneka, who works part-time in various homes, mentions a friend who works for an American family:

> These 'oyinbos' [foreigners] they are the not the same as the Nigerian. My mate's American employers treat her nice. It is very different compared to some of my Nigerian Madams that are always giving work and do no see you as a person… if she is late they [the American employers] do no shout. If she is sick she cannot come for work. Not like our people, that like to make too much noise. Nigerians! Always shouting.

From Nneka's account, American employers are portrayed as understanding, relaxed and kind. This is in sharp contrast to Nigerian employers. Yet, 42-year-old Chidinma, who works as a nanny, finds that this is not always the case. She also mentions knowing a few people that have worked for 'the oyinbos' and explains that, sometimes, they can be 'stingier than us Nigerians'. Nevertheless, as workers in this study all worked in Nigerian households, they mostly all preferred to find the best employer or the 'optimum' working condition, especially as living and working arrangements play a very important role in domestic workers' agency in their 'outside' life.

7.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored the everyday lives of female domestic workers who are mothers and work either full-time or part-time. I have argued that employers would prefer they neglect their own motherhood and be fully committed to the employing household, which enables employers' to be 'good' mothers. At the same time, workers' ability to be mothers is further constrained by the nature of the occupation and the refusal of the state to regulate working rights for women workers (e.g. childcare facilities). This reveals the ways in which gender, class, living arrangements and parental status can enable or constrain female domestic workers' experiences. It also indicates the heterogeneity of everyday life in this occupation and how concerns of domestic workers may differ at different stages of their life.

As I have argued in this chapter, while female live-outs in some respects have greater independence compared with female live-ins, they also have greater expenses and economic insecurity, and sometimes even heavier labour loads, especially given their travel time and domestic responsibilities. Nonetheless, despite some of the problems linked with living out, such as mobility constraints and time poverty, as I have also discussed, live-out mothers often prefer this to a situation where they have scarce free time and have to be on call almost constantly. As 55-year-old Mopelola maintained:

> It is bad when you are live-in… there is no one there for [your] children. This is how I was looking for washing and ironing only, to do this work where you can come home.

Mopelola seems to indicate that female live-outs may be aware of their better-off position in comparison to female live-ins, valuing the autonomy their position affords them relative to workers lower on the hierarchy. Thirty-four-year-old nanny, Efem, from Cross

River State, explains: 'It's not like the housegirls with my previous madam that no get no money'. Similarly, 31-year-old live-in nanny, Ada, from Enugu State, is also aware of her higher standing in domestic work as compared with housegirls:

> I feel sorry for younger maids to be honest. I work Monday to Friday while Madam is at work and get days off once a month – Friday 5pm to Sunday 5pm. My only child is in the university so I no longer need to stay in the house and my husband works in Ibadan Monday to Friday, so there is no need to have a house in Lagos. I go to Ibadan every weekend to see my husband.

Still, what continues to stand out the most in looking at both female live-ins and live-outs is not only the vital role that employers play in structuring domestic workers' everyday lives – due to the prevalent perceptions that being lower-class domestic workers are in their homes to serve them – but also that employers' control is not fixed, and is in constant fluctuation. Nowhere is this most evident than with male domestic workers, who I turn to in the next chapter and who experience the least amount of vulnerability among workers in this study.

8

Masculinity in the Everyday Lives of Male Domestic Workers

As I explained at the beginning of this thesis, paid domestic work has not always been a female occupation and, in countries such as Nigeria, men have always been present. The sector was one of earliest ones through which African men were incorporated into the colonial economy as houseboys, cooks and washermen. Thus, in the final of my empirical chapters, I focus on the everyday lives of male domestic workers (both live-ins and live-outs). I concentrate on their masculinity, which – like that of the deviant sexuality of female live-ins and the motherhood of female live-outs – is an area of contention in the employer-employee relations that shapes their everyday lives. While discussions in this chapter centre mainly on male domestic workers, I will also draw out key similarities and differences with their female counterparts at various junctures, in particular to further reveal the importance of intersectionality in making sense of everyday life.

Similar to Chapter 6 and 7, this current chapter is organised around the themes of ritual and routines, social order and challenges. In looking at male employees' everyday lives, I argue that, while men and women in this occupation have similar experiences, such as arduous daily tasks and long working hours, male domestic workers also experience more autonomy when compared with their female counterparts. They are more likely to live-out and be given rent and transportation allowance by their employers. If they do live-in,

they often have their own 'rooms' within the compound and their movements in the public sphere are less restricted.

Bringing men into the discussion, therefore, enables me to illustrate the differences between men and women in this occupation. Still, there are also differences among men in this occupation, such as the diversity in male earnings, with drivers being one of the highest paid workers in this study and *maiguards* the lowest. This suggests that, even when men are subordinated, some can be more marginalised than others.

In spite of these 'freedoms' in living conditions, for example, men are still engaged in low-paid menial work and so are still subjected to the stigma of dirt and sexuality. Added to that, is the fact that some men undertake jobs that are often associated with 'women's' work – making these men seem like less of men. Based on this, I discuss employers' construction of male domestic workers as simultaneously safe and dangerous, and the roles these play in shaping men's experiences on the job. Following on from this, I explore the ways in which male domestic workers challenge this construction of safe and dangerous masculinities, for instance by rationalising their presence in this occupation.

To conclude, I argue that, while male domestic workers enjoy more flexibility and autonomy (e.g. the ability to make decisions) in their work than female domestic workers, their daily lives are still altered by doing 'effeminate' and 'dirty' work.

8.1   Masculinities in Paid Domestic Work

As explained in Chapter 2, the concept of masculinity leads to the creation of hierarchies among men with hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995) embodying the most valued way of being a man (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005:832). This can mean different things across different contexts. For instance, in Nigeria, the hegemonic masculinity of the Lagos man could refer to the wealthy male breadwinner who can afford to employ an army of domestic workers to maintain his home. There are also subordinate masculinities of which male domestic workers can be said to belong to on account of their low-class status. Moreover, as explained in the previous Chapters, while the idea of the domestic space as female is changing – albeit slowly – it is also still seen as a female space in Nigeria.

Thus, if, as Seemin Qayum and Raka Ray (2010) argue, the essence of domestic service is subservience, then it is a job that runs counter to hegemonic ideas of masculinity. Thus, male domestic workers could then be said to be trying to make sense of their everyday lives in spaces that are typically 'demarcated as both feminine and inferior' (ibid:117).

8.2   Male Domestic Workers' Everyday Experiences

As indicated in Chapter 5, there are 28 male domestic workers in this study aged between 19 and 68, although four are unsure of their age. Appendix I indicates the characteristics of male live-ins and live-outs who either work full-time or and part-timer. Eleven men live-in (as compared with 23 women), while 17 men live-out (as compared to 12 women),

suggesting that, in my study, live-ins are much more likely to be female, while live-outs are usually male. In relation to her own work on domestic workers in South Africa, Alison King (2007:52) suggests that the higher incidence of live-out arrangements among men is because they have always been 'more successful in negotiating private living arrangements away from their place of work'. In addition, I would like to propose that this could also be due to an employer not wanting a man in the house when they have daughters, as I will explain in more detail later in this chapter.

As already explained in Chapter 5, the 63 workers in this study are found in seven different domestic service occupations – househelps, nannies, drivers, gardeners, washermen, cooks and *maiguards* – revealing the wide array of tasks that encompasses this occupation. My findings indicate that paid domestic work is a gendered occupation with certain jobs seen as masculine and feminine (see also Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ramirez, 2009).

Specifically, men work as *maiguards*, drivers, gardeners, cooks, washermen and houseboys, while women typically work as nannies and househelps (see Figure 8.1) – although there is one woman who worked as a cook, 33-year-old live-out Chinwe. This indicates that while both men and women are found doing jobs that traditionally would be associated with women (e.g. cooking and cleaning) – challenging the conventional association of certain domestic jobs with female labour - no woman was found doing tasks that would traditionally have been done by men in the home, such as garden maintenance and household repairs.

Figure 8.1 Gender-Segmentation of Domestic Service Occupations in Survey
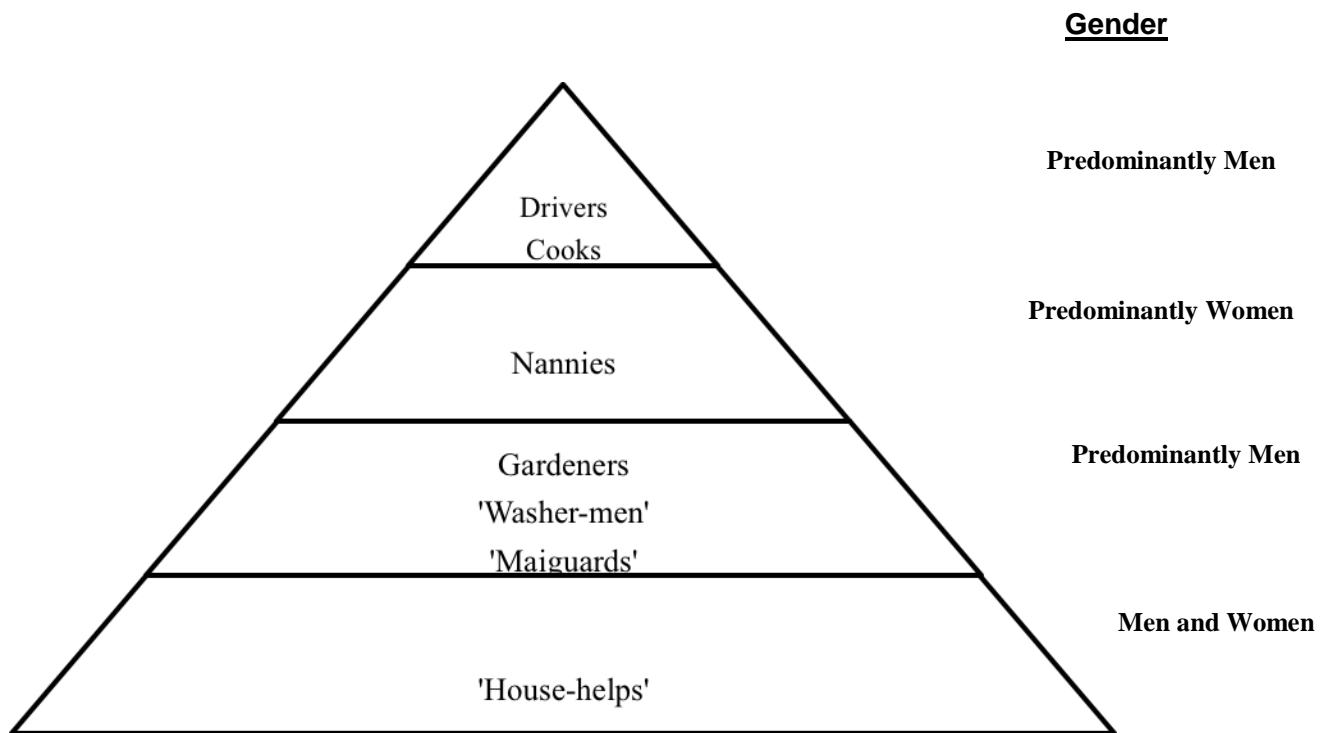
Source: Author's own (2013) – adapted from Martha Chen's segmentation of the informal economy (2004)

In my study, men are seen as more suited to the position of *maiguards* as the job involves not only the physical tasks of opening and closing heavy gates, but also requires the strength and authority necessary to guard their employers' homes and lives. By drawing upon familiar masculine traits of strength and the threat of danger implicit within security work (see Allen et al., 1998), this fits and reinforces the notion of security being synonymous with men.

Similarly, driving is explicitly reserved for men, since it requires skills and specialisation women are claimed not to possess. In Lagos, driving is believed to be 'rough' and outside a woman's competence (see also Lawuyi, 1988:3 on Yoruba taxi drivers) due to the

nature of traffic and road conditions. Gardening is also seen as a 'man's' job as it requires strength to do physically challenging tasks, such as planting, watering and trimming plants and grass, pulling out dead plants and grass and keeping gardens clean and well-maintained. This suggests, as Raka Ray (2000) does that, while domestic work is considered an occupation with few skills, men are thought to possess more of the skills that the sector requires.

Interestingly, while employers also have stereotypes of the best person for the job, workers themselves – on several occasions – make it very clear that jobs such as driving and guarding are for men, not women. Male domestic workers reiterate this when they say 'Driving is hazardous', 'I go laugh when I see my Madam drive', 'Lagos road no dey safe for woman'. Male employees often talked up stereotypes of 'bad female drivers' and 'unsafe roads' not only to rationalise their presence in domestic service, but to make sure such work was retained for men. As will be discussed later on in this chapter, downplaying the feminine (e.g. domestic work) and emphasising the masculine (e.g. hazardous driving) aspects of their jobs was a way for men to 're-establish a masculinity' (Simpson, 2004:366) that might be undermined by the 'feminine' nature of domestic service (see also Lupton, 2000).

In addition, even in occupations that are seen as traditionally female, there is a gender divide between what men and women do, suggesting a further segmentation of this occupation, in which men are seen as having skills that women do not possess (see also Bartolomei, 2010 on male domestic cooks and female house cleaners in Congo). My findings suggest that cooking, washing and ironing clothes are jobs predominantly done

by men because they are seen as 'specialised' functions requiring some level of skill. Men, for example, are employed as washermen to wash and do all household laundry because they are deemed to be more able than women to handle heavy items and iron heavier items, such as blankets and bedspreads, due to their physical strength.

Men are also preferred as cooks for their 'professionalism' (see, for example, Bartolomei, 2010 on male domestic cooks in Congo). As 56-year-old male employer, Balogun, who works as a Civil Servant, makes clear, 'they [men] are more focused in the kitchen, as they don't see it as just making food'. All cooks in this study are trained in hotels or restaurants and explain that they are skilled in cooking 'local and continental dishes'. Men are also seen as ideal cooks, because, as indicated in Chapter 6, female employers fear that, if women cook, this may lead to men falling in love with them (see also Hansen, 1989 on love potions and cooking in Zambian households).

Finally, as discussed in Chapter 6, while some employers only wanted young women to work as househelps because of their supposed submissiveness and willingness to follow orders, the presence of male househelps further reveals that employers' hiring preferences are not fixed. Households that prefer men say that they are 'hardworking and more reliable', 'don't gossip like girls', 'are stronger' and 'can do heavy work'. An additional perk of having a houseboy is that they can do what Majella Kilkey and Diane Perrons (2010) term 'handyman work' (e.g. male domestic chores, such as painting, decoration and lawn maintenance), as well as washing and ironing clothes, washing cars and polishing shoes. As Balogun (56, civil servant) explains, houseboys:

... can take care of all your indoor and outdoor household needs so that you can simply enjoy your time off. Cleaning cars, washing the house, gardening, pool maintenance and cleaning and any other household tasks.

The gendered nature of this occupation, in the sense of the type of domestic labour men and women do also reveals that both men and women do physical domestic labour (e.g. cooking, washing, ironing and cleaning). Moreover, while there are some aspects of male domestic labour 'caring' or emotional labour, in the sense of their labour being embedded in performance and negotiation (see also Bartolomei, 2010), women are more likely to provide more emotional labour as a result of the caring aspects of their jobs. However, the performing of physical or emotional domestic labour can lead to different experiences in the job.

Those involved in more physically demanding tasks, such as driving and gardening, can more or less predict and schedule their workloads, while those who do emotionally demanding tasks of caring for young children, the sick and the elderly find it more difficult to schedule their work. This is because work demands are unpredictable and will inevitably occur at more irregular hours (e.g. late into the night) or at least periodically.

Indeed, Nancy Folbre (1995, 2005) who has written extensively on the care economy, writes that caring labour – which includes childcare and elder care – involves, among other things, more personal (usually face-to-face) interaction over a relatively long period and often entails trusting relationships between workers and consumers. Thus, workers who not only have children, but also care for children, are the most likely category of workers in my study to note how their jobs prevent them from directing their caring

labour towards their own families for substantial periods of time due to the 'process of personal and emotional engagement' (Folbre, 2006:187).

While there is considerable diversity in this occupation, and even concerning the type of male workers in this study, for male employees their experiences are as a result of their masculinity – of ideas around what it means to be a man – and its intersections with their low-class status and the actual practice of doing domestic work. As such, men experience domestic work differently to women.

For one, men are less likely to be seen by their employers as being willing to obey and to be at their beck and call. Indeed, this perception of who will or will not take orders, among other traits, has also been observed in studies on export-processing manufacturing industries, such as the different views of male and female workers in manufacturing and tourism Sylvia Chant (1991) observed in Mexico. Women, for instance, were seen as patient and willing to take orders, while men were characterised as impatient, inflexible (due to their inability to take on extra tasks), demanding (in terms of asking for higher wages) and resistant to authority. This is not to say that male and female domestic workers do not face similar experiences, as I discuss briefly in the next section.

8.2.1 Daily Rituals and Routines

The occupational status of the male domestic worker is similar to that of female domestic workers in that, by design of their low-income status, they both do the 'dirty' work to maintain the social status of employers, both inside and outside their homes (see also

Hondagneu-Sotelo and Ramirez, 2009 on the masculinised and racialised dirty work of Mexican immigrant gardeners in the US).

Male domestic workers spoke to me about the physically demanding nature of their jobs. Washermen, for example, explain in detail the enormity of laundry work – collecting and sorting items, soaking them, bleaching or starching (if necessary), washing, drying and ironing. They also usually have 'big loads' of laundry ranging from T-shirts to duvets. Long-time washerman, 47-year-old Praise, who works part-time, of Efik origin from Cross Rivers State and married with two children, recounts the 'horrible pain' he feels after a day of washing clothes. Similarly, Felix, a 46-year-old part-time gardener of Igbo origin from Rivers State, who is single and has no children, explains how what he does 'isn't an easy job o!':

> I have to work in different postures continuously for long durations, which results in plenty, plenty pain. Most of my tools are also old-fashioned and need more physical labour to operate. Working in the afternoon in the hot sun also isn't easy. But man must eat. It isn't easy, but I have no other choice for now.

Older workers also express concerns over being fired due to the perceived or actual physical limitations to carry out the job. Rufai, a 57-year-old live-out of Yoruba origin from Osun State, who is married with five children and has been a driver for over eight years, explains how the work has changed him:

> It's not easy. I'm not a young man. I am not as strong or energetic. I know, very soon, I will have to stop this job. Soon I won't have the energy to sit in traffic. I just pray I would have gathered enough for my children before that time comes.

Male domestic workers also experience variable working hours, which, as indicated in Table 6.2 in Chapter 6, can be as few as nine hours a day to as much as 15 hours a day.

While men clearly do not work as long as female domestic workers, there are those male employees who live in that are still expected to be on call for most of the day. For example, *maiguards*, who often sleep in their security posts, work during the night and, in some cases, during the day too. On the other hand, there are part-time domestic workers who perform jobs consisting of defined tasks that could sometimes only involve working a few hours a day or week. Looking across the working time of all domestic workers in this study, this implies that hours can be excessively long or short, irregular or scheduled during unsociable periods.

In terms of days off, five of the 11 male live-ins had days off, while all of the six men working part-timer and nine of the 11 male live-outs that worked full-time had days off. This indicates that living out gives workers a higher degree of freedom – and more so for men than women. Part-timers having days off is no surprise; being employed for a few hours or days a week provides them with some freedom in their lives to undertake other forms of paid work, or engage in unpaid or social activities. However, this can also entail long periods of unemployment and variable income.

As explained in Chapter 7, workers themselves are aware of the relative autonomy that their individual positions within the domestic worker hierarchy offer them. As noted by 28-year-old Ade, a live-out driver of Yoruba origin from Ondo State, who is married with three children:

> Even if the hours are very long and unpredictable, as a driver I get better working conditions than the housegirl. I have more freedom. I can go home when I like.

Male domestic workers also experience a lot more autonomy than their female counterparts. Thus, their daily rituals and routines can be seen as a combination of exploitation, low-wage dirty work and 'independence'. The areas in which I observed the most difference between men and women's daily experiences were in relation to their wages, living arrangements and lives 'outside' of work in the realms of care and leisure.

Higher Wages

Beginning with earnings, a heavy workload and long working hours do not necessarily translate into high wages. If that was the case, female live-in housegirls would be paid quite substantially. Instead, the longest working hours are usually endured by some of the lowest paid categories of domestic workers – househelps and *maiguards* – who have no choice in their working hours, often as a result of their live-in situation. Similar to housegirls, *maiguards* can also receive in-kind payments – although none of the *maiguards* I interviewed did. As 56-year-old male employer, Balogun, explains:

> … the offset on the wages is that they get free accommodation and services [and] they actually earn better than uniformed security guards, who earn on average NGN10000 (USD$64) monthly.

There is also significant variation in the ways in which domestic workers are compensated, indicating that, while this may be a low-income occupation, low pay is not an inherent characteristic of domestic service. Indeed, 53 workers (28 male domestic workers and 25 female employees) in this study receive a salary that ranges from as little as NGN1500 (USD$9.60) a month to as much as NGN50000 (USD$320). Yet, as mentioned in Chapter 5, at least 14 workers in my study earn above Nigeria's minimum

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wage of NGN18000 (USD$115), with four drivers earning between NGN48000 (USD$307) and NGN50000 (USD$320) a month. However, only two women – a 33-year-old live-out cook, Chinwe, and a 35-year-old live-out nanny Regina – are in this 'higher' wage bracket, earning NGN20000 (USD$128). This indicates a gendered hierarchy in earnings with men being higher paid than women, as indicated in Figure 8.2 below. While both the characteristics of the employer and types of jobs performed play a role in determining how much a domestic worker will earn, the characteristics of the workers themselves also impact their compensation. Such characteristics include the worker's sex, ethnicity, age, as well as their expertise, the perception of whether the work is innate or requires some sort of skill and the length of employment.

Figure 8.2 Hierarchies of Earnings of Paid Domestic Workers in Survey

Author's own (2013) – adapted from Marta Chen et al's. (2004) segmentation of the informal economy
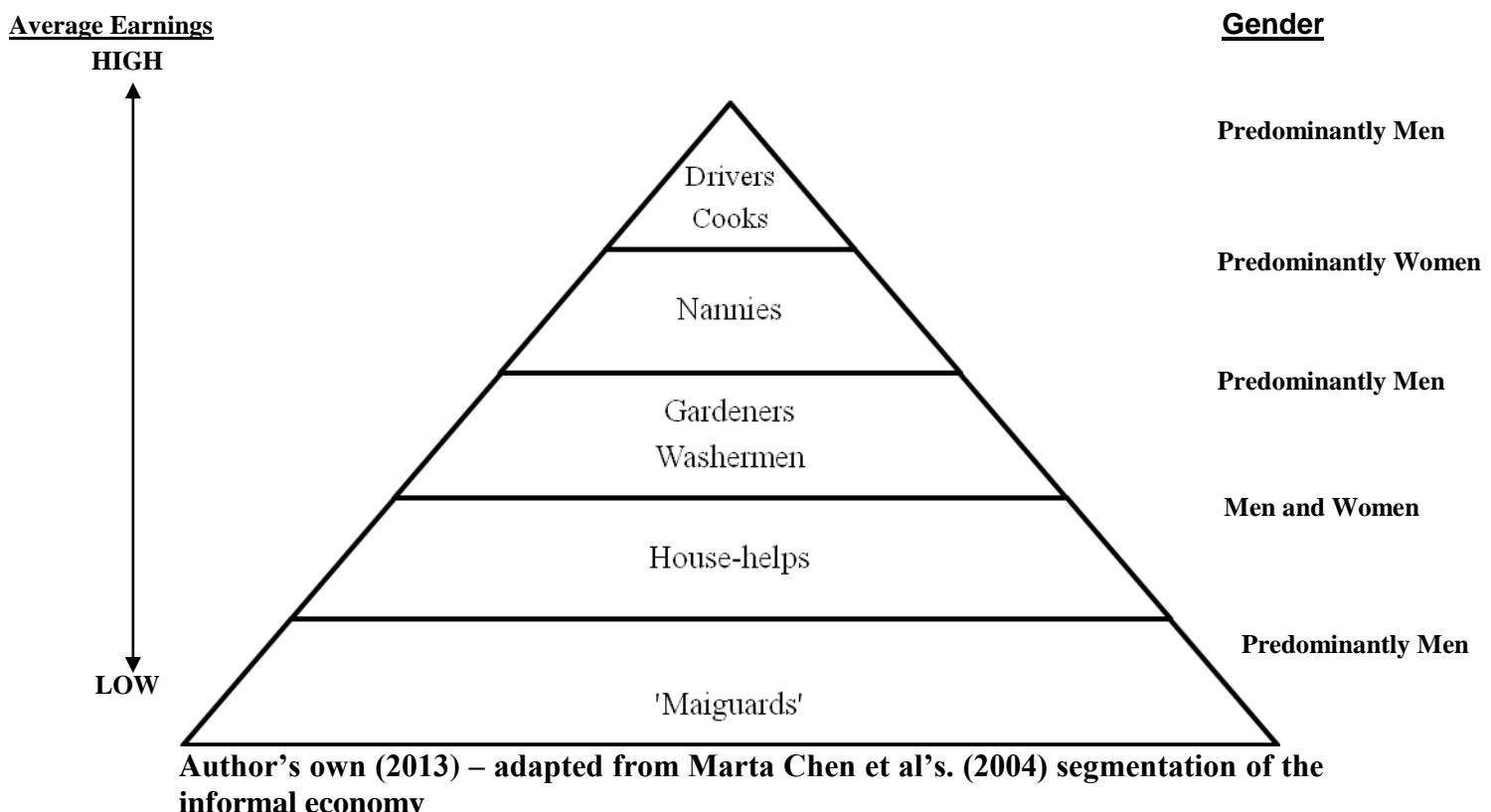
One of the reasons behind the gendered division in earnings is the assumption of women's 'natural' versus men's 'acquired' skills. This leads to 'feminised' domestic labour performed by women, such as cleaning and caring, being low paid. As the tasks are traditionally associated with women, female domestic workers are seen as having the innate skills and competencies required to perform them, as well as the natural pleasure women are said to desire from taking care of others (Whittaker, 2003) – which is often used to justify low pay. Yet, as Nancy Folbre (2005) argues, 'yes, many care workers derive great satisfaction from their jobs. But that doesn't mean they should be paid less as a result' (ibid:16-7). On the other hand, 'feminised' labour performed by men, such as cooking, is one of the highest paid jobs due to the perception that some formal acquisition of skills (e.g. training in hotels or restaurants) is required for men to do this work.

Skills do not only affect wages between men and women, but also among men in different domestic service occupations, as well as women. As shown in Figure 8.2 and Table 8.1, men also form both the top (drivers and cooks) and bottom (*maiguards* and houseboys) rank of earners. Male cooks earn more than male househelps due to cooks being seen as more skilled and professional. Similarly, the belief that driving in Lagos requires some sort of specialised skills (e.g. being able to manoeuvre the 'rough' Lagos roads) means that being able to 'handle a car' and 'knowing the area' leads to greater remuneration.

Table 8.1 Monthly Salary Range by Occupation and Gender

		Monthly Salary in NGN/(US$)	
		Female	Male
'Femininsed' Domestic Labour	Househelp	0-12500 (USD$0-80)	6000-16000 (USD$38-102)
	Nanny	8000-20000 (USD$51-128)	
	Washerman		10000–20000 (USD$64-128)
	Cook	20000 (USD$128)	28000-35000 (USD$179-224)
'Masculinised' Domestic Labour	*Maiguard*		5000-10000 (USD$32–64)
	Gardener		10000–20000 (USD$64–128)
	Driver		18000–50000 (USD$115–320)

Source: Interviews with employers and domestic workers. (Note: The minimum wage in Nigeria is currently NGN18000 (USD$115) a month.)

Higher wages for drivers also partly reflect the demand for experience of these jobs, as most of the drivers have worked at one time or the other in the private sector, mainly for banks. Although they enter domestic service for various reasons, such as loss of a job from the private sector or bank closures, their previous link to the formal economy enables them to come into domestic service with a level of professionalism, which they can use to their advantage. They are coming into the job with a previous salary to negotiate with, but they can also negotiate the conditions of work.

The low salary for *maiguards*, on the other hand, is due to their work being considered less skilled. Many employers explain that most *maiguards* are not able to read or write and lack formal security training, which 'limits their value and the range of service they can perform' (Balogun, 56, civil servant). This further shows the role that formal

acquisition of skills plays in determining wages. Thus, whether the type of labour done is 'feminised' (houseboy or cook) or 'masculinised' (*maiguard* or driver), lower-paid male workers are more likely to perform tasks that are either seen as lacking any formal training (*maiguards*), while higher-paid workers perform tasks that require some form of formal acquisition of skills (drivers or cooks).

Gender-based discrimination in wages is further compounded by the worker's age, as indicated in Table 8.2. My findings indicate that domestic workers between the ages of 18 and 24 earn from as little as nothing to NGN13000 (USD$83) a month, while workers above 25 usually earn between NGN5000 (USD$32) and NGN50000 (USD$320) a month, with only one worker over 25 reporting that they are paid 'in-kind'. This was 25-year-old live-in housegirl Nancy, of Ibibio origin from Akwa Ibom State.

Table 8.2 Monthly Salary Range by Age and Gender

Monthly Salary in NGN/(USD$)		
Age	Female	Male
No idea	0-8500 (USD$0-54)	5000-9000 (USD$32-57)
18-24	0-12500 (USD$0-80)	6000-13000 (USD$38-83)
25-29	0-17500 (USD$0-112)	5000-50000 (USD$32-320)
30-39	8000-20000 (USD$41-128)	10000-50000 (USD$64-320)
40-54	8000-16500 (USD$41-105)	15000-20000 (USD$96-128)
55+	Varies	48000-50000 (USD$307-320)

Source: Interviews with employers and domestic workers. (Note: The minimum wage in Nigeria is currently NGN18000 (US$115) a month.)

Older workers are more likely to receive higher wages because, as explained in Chapter 6, age is equated with maturity and experience. Younger workers' weaker bargaining power can also possibly account for their lower wages, as well as their recruitment via middlemen (see Chapter 5), which often means they may not have even had the opportunity to engage in direct negotiations with the employing household (see also ILO, 2013).

Regardless of men's higher earnings compared to women, male workers are still particularly vulnerable to non-payment of wages. Part-timers explain that, as jobs are based on verbal agreements, it is not uncommon for them to work in the same household for months without pay. In these situations, they either wait to be paid, as asking for wages can lead to job loss, or take on more employers in order to increase their wages.

Additionally, almost half of the 53 workers that receive a wage do not get regular increases in salary, with only a small number having received periodic rises. As many employers already feel their employees' salaries reflect the work they do, they do not see the need to increase wages for work they feel is unproductive. Thirty-year-old Tunde, a live-out driver of Yoruba origin from Ondo State, who is married with two children, reports leaving his previous employment – also as a driver – because he had asked for a salary increase after having worked on the same salary for three years, which he did not get.

To improve his situation and ensure some form of social mobility, he switched jobs.

Indicating the importance of social networks, Tunde was able to find his new job through a former colleague (who worked for his prospective employer's sister) who recommended him. Tunde is now earning NGN25000 (USD$160) in his new job (compared with NGN15000 (USD$96) in his previous job). While switching jobs is one way to improve situations (see below on challenges), as asking for a pay rise can lead to an employee being fired and losing their job, some workers 'just managed' (e.g. accepted it), not unlike the 'part-timers' who just wait.

Increased Flexibility

Male domestic workers also seem to experience more flexibility in this sector. For example, male live-ins – more so than female live-ins – are able to take on more than one job as an important income-maximising strategy. This enables them to diversify their sources of income in order to try to either earn enough money, or just make life bearable. For example, *maiguards* often have kiosks outside the homes they work, where they sell various goods. Others supplement their low income by combining their security duties with laundry services, engaging in petty trading or polishing shoes outside their employing household. Muhammed, a live-in *maiguard* of Hausa origin from Borno State, who is single and has no children, earns NGN9000 (USD$57) and combines his *maiguard* duties with a shoe making business.

A prime example of this flexibility, however, is part-time work. As explained in Chapter 5, although full-time work is more common in my study, nine workers are engaged in part-time work – six are older men, who work as washermen and gardeners. As explained

in Chapter 5, part-time work has benefits for employers and workers, especially middle-class families with lower household earnings; it is usually more affordable, as they may only need someone in the household once or twice a week. It is also beneficial in households who may have limited space to accommodate live-in domestic workers. For workers, being employed for a few hours or days a week provides them with some freedom in their lives to undertake other forms of paid work – or, as is the case with female workers, to engage in unpaid or social activities.

Part-timers do face additional trade-offs, due to a great amount of instability associated with part-time work. For instance, gardeners can shift in and out of the sector, be affected by the seasonal nature of gardening – wet and dry season – change or lose employers, stop working for weeks or months and also have constant issues with employers. There is also variable income, as workers earn anywhere between NGN3000 to NGN10000 (USD$19-64) a month per employer. To make ends meet and respond to the sporadic nature of their work, part-timers may take on additional customers.

Moreover, owing to the number or employers they may have, daily working hours for part-time workers can sometimes be long, as part-time work is solely part-time from the employer's perspective (Neetha N., 2009). Indeed, as the potentially longer working hours could be a major impediment to the integration of employment and personal life, a few workers will opt for part-time work. Other complaints associated with part-time domestic work include not being allowed to have access to toilets in some employers' homes and sometimes not being provided with any teas or snacks until they return home.

Yet, the male part-timers in this study explain that they still feel it is a better option than working full-time as it gives them flexibility and the ability to leave if they are unhappy with the situation. John, a 33-year-old gardener of Igbo origin from Imo State, who is married with five children, captures these feelings of flexibility and independence:

> If I am tired, I can relax for some time. If I am in better mood I can work more time. This is not to say that I do not have to obey the command of others, but one good thing about this job is that I am not bound to anyone and I can start and finish the work as I like.

John suggests that, despite the risks and opportunities that come with his work, working part-time is an opportunity to avoid oppressive constraints, providing him with autonomy, independence and freedom. For workers, being able to have free time, be their own boss and have some flexibility in their work are among the major advantages of working part-time. Thirty-nine-year-old Akpan, of Efik origin from Cross River State, who is also married with five children and works as a washerman, further explains what it means to effectively be one's 'own boss':

> You know the ones that stay with their employers, the househelps, the maid, they can't get permission to do anything, they can't relax and they may be scolded by somebody. But in this work, I am my own Oga and I am free.

This is widely observed as being important in sub-Saharan Africa, beginning with Keith Hart's (1973) work on Kenya, which expressed the entrepreneurial dynamism of the informal economy and the fact that many choose to be there and be their own bosses. However, there is a double-edged sword to the autonomy that comes with part-time work. Flexibility in work schedules, for instance, can go hand-in-hand with prolonged periods of unemployment and irregular wages. This may not be beneficial for managing work and

life as workers may be unsure of when they might be working and so cannot make concrete plans.

Based on the information gathered from interviewees, this suggests that there are hierarchies of autonomy and control in this occupation, with part-time workers experiencing relatively more autonomy, as indicated in Figure 8.3 below.

Figure 8.3 Hierarchies of Autonomy and Control of Domestic Service Occupations in Survey

Autonomy

MOST

Gardeners

Washermen

Drivers

Cooks

'Maiguards', Nannies

Nannies

House-boys

LEAST

House-girl

Author's own (2013) – adapted from Marta Chen et al.'s (2004) segmentation of the informal economy
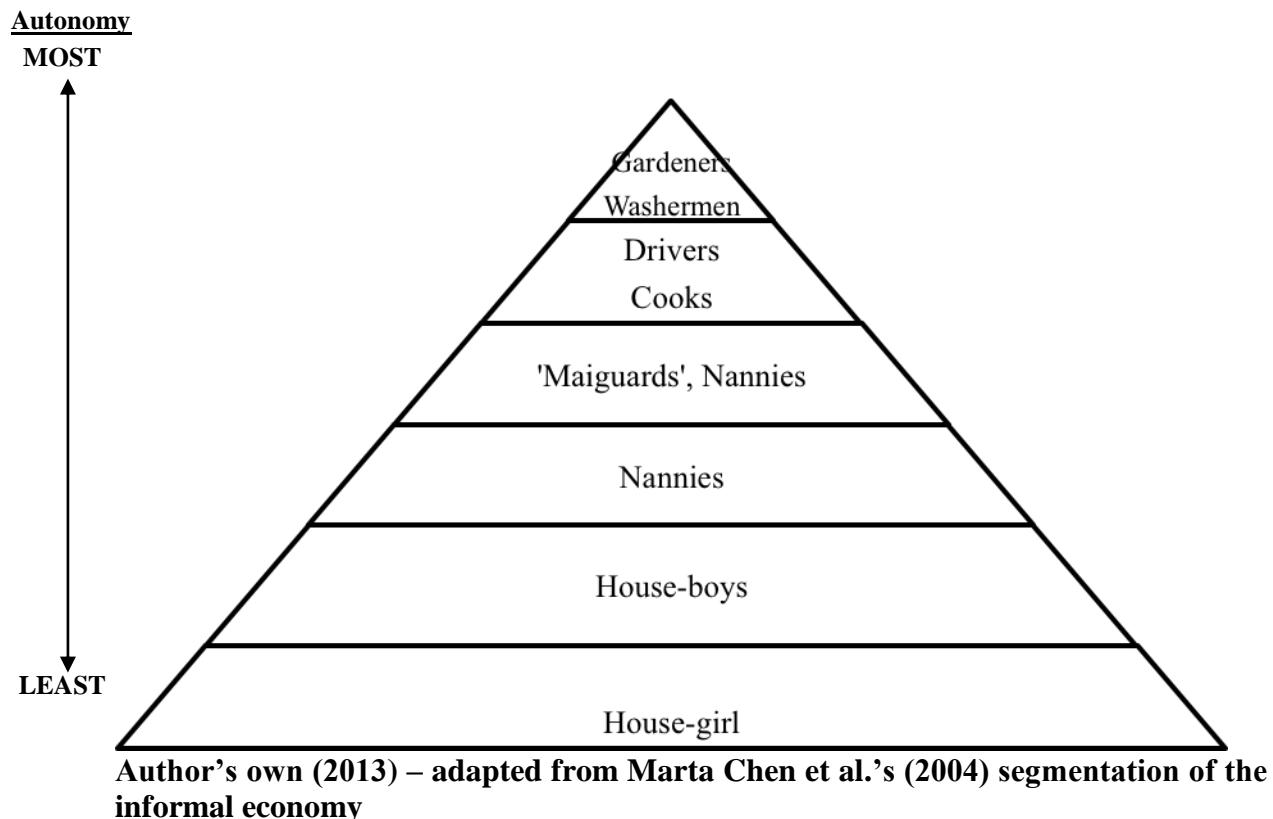
While there is not sufficient evidence to suggest a trend, in addition to living out (see below and Chapter 7) and working part-time, I find length of time with the employing household and knowledge/experience associated positively with flexibility and, indeed,

autonomy on the job. For example, some workers that have been in their employing households for a long period of time – usually three years or more – get added responsibility of running errands, such as drivers that are requested to go to banks to make deposits and deliver important information and documents to specified addresses. Having said this, in the case of 25-year-old Femi, who lives out and is of Yoruba origin from Ogun State, in a relationship but has no children, although he had been working with his employer for only 18 months, his university degree ensured that he rose up the ranks to driver/PA. In giving their drivers large sums of money or important documents to deliver, this indicates the level of trust employers have in their workers and how important it is in domestic labour relations. It also highlights some independence and freedom on the job for some types of workers likely to be given some independence and freedom on the job.

Furthermore, in cases where workers have worked in one household for many years, they might also enjoy a degree of autonomy in their work in terms of dictating their terms of work. Employers, such as 33-year-old Idris, for instance, prefer workers who can do the work with little guidance – as they have their own work to attend to. Fifty-six-year-old Balogun jokes about his workers doing what they want, while 38-year-old Rachel explains how her daughter's nanny likes to tell her what to do.

Two drivers further indicate the importance length of time with employers plays in establishing relatively improved work relationships. Sixty-eight-year-old driver, Ayo, of Yoruba origin from Kwara State, who lives out and is married with seven children, has been with his current employers for ten years and finds that driving offers him decent

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wages. He suggests that his basic salary is NGN48000 (USD$307) a month, but can be as high as NGN75000 (USD$480) a month with additional benefits. His long-term employment with this particular household, and the relatively higher income that comes with this, has offered him the opportunity to better the lives of himself and his family, as well as allowing him some freedom in organising his working hours.

Through his job as a driver, Ayo explains how he has been able to train his children to university level. Additionally, he explains how he only works Mondays to Fridays and is able to leave his workplace every day at 5pm. Ayo's ability to organise his working hours, in turn, seems to have a positive effect on his familial commitments, especially as he explained how he 'did not have any time' to spend with his children when they were growing up:

> The work is such that when they [Ayo's kids] were little I did not have any time. So I can either play with them and we don't eat or I go outside and look for something. Shebi, you understand?

Now he mentions things being different and having more time. This, however, is in sharp contrast with 35-year-old live-in driver, Ola, of Yoruba origin from Oyo State, who is married with two children. He does not enjoy his job and finds it 'undervalued', despite being one of the higher paid workers in this study, earning NGN50000 (USD$320) a month:

> When you tell people that you are a driver, they look at you somehow, like you are nobody. In Nigeria, this profession is not celebrated. For instance, when I take my Madam [female employer] to a place, she or her hosts tell me to go and find somewhere to wait. Sometimes, I wait for almost 10 hours. When I'm hungry, I have to find somewhere to eat; even if the place is not conducive I will have to manage the place.

There is a crucial difference between Ola and Ayo. Ola has been with his employer for

less than two years and does not experience the same freedoms as Ayo, who has been in his employment for significantly longer. Additionally, Ayo could be experiencing additional freedoms due to his age. He is, after all, 68-years-old and so will enjoy additional respect that a worker Ola's age might not (see Section 8.4.1 below on age and forms of address). Ola's experience also suggests that, while higher wages are generally associated with increased autonomy, this is clearly not always the case.

Living in, Living Out

Another difference is in living arrangements and the experiences that come with it. As explained earlier in this chapter, men are more likely to live-out – although this does not mean they do not live-in. For those men that live-in, lack of affordable accommodation in Lagos, where housing is expensive, is cited as a reason, as explained in Chapter 5. However, as explained in Chapter 6, there is a gender divide with women being indoors and men living outdoors, particularly as many employers do not want men living in their households when they have young daughters – due to fears of sexual abuse (see Section 8.3 on dangerous masculinities).

Instead, male live-ins stay outdoors either in 'boys' quarters' or various parts of the house. This is in sharp contrast to the female live-ins who, as detailed in Chapter 6, rarely have their own private rooms in the homes. *Maiguards*, for example, sleep in their security posts, which differ in size depending on the household. While all rooms have mattresses, some are big enough to accommodate a TV, small fridge and fan, which are often provided by employers. Other workers like Tosin, a 37-year-old live-in houseboy of

Yoruba origin from Ondo State, who is married with three children, lives in the laundry room outside. He sometimes shares this room with the cook when he stays overnight. He sleeps on a mat on the floor and has access to a TV, which he watches at night or whenever he has free time.

With reference to live-outs, as explained in Chapter 7, the majority live either in 'Face Me, I Face You' apartments or 'room and parlour'. For example, 25-year-old live-in houseboy, Jonathan, of Ijaw origin from Delta State, who is in a relationship, but has no children, opts for such accommodation because 'they are very convenient in terms of pricing'. Similarly, 28-year-old live-out driver, Ade, from Ondo State, who is married with three children, explains that he is 'staying in a "parlour" located in Agege and has a direct bus to Ikeja and Oshodi to get to [his] work place', and also informs me that he is paying '36k [US$227] a year'.

While this indicates how costly it is for live-outs in Lagos, workers such as 35-year-old Ali, a live-out cook of Hausa origin from Sokoto State, who is married but has no children, says he is 'fortunate because my Oga [male employer] pays my rent'. This, however, is not always the case. When rent is included in workers' 'contracts', it is usually for men rather than for women. While employers tend to see men as breadwinners providing for their families – either married men providing for their wives and children, or single men providing for their parents or younger siblings – women are seen as having less obligations or responsibilities (even though many are also working to provide for their family) and their wages are assumed to be supplementary. This suggests

that, while all live-outs have strenuous lives, due to rent, transportation costs and the burdens of their daily commutes to work, living out puts more strain on women who have to use their salaries to pay rent and transportation.

Similar to female live-outs, men also have long working days. This is clearly illustrated by 30-year-old Tunde, a live-out driver of Yoruba origin from Ondo State, who is married with two children, who described his daily routine. Tunde, who drives an 11-year-old to and from school, explains that 'without fail' Monday to Friday he arrives at his employer's home in Omole (on the mainland) by 6am to take their daughter to Dowen College, Lekki (on the island). After he 'prepare[s] the car – wash am, check engine, tyres', and the daughter is ready for school, he then makes the daily 40km journey from Omole to Lekki.

Tunde explains that, as the heavy traffic between the mainland and island increases the journey time from 45 minutes to upwards of two hours, he and the child end up having to leave the house early. He also explains that, due to the 'far distance' after he drops her off, he is 'not allowed to return to the house'. Instead, he waits at her school, usually sitting in the car, sometimes sleeping and occasionally speaking with other drivers – who are also waiting – until she is done with school at 4pm. Here, Tunde reveals the social isolation, boredom and monotony that is associated with his work:

> By 1pm, when the weather is so hot and the vehicle becomes very hot, I come out, but generally, I have to sit in the vehicle until 4pm when my madam's child finishes school… It's boring but I have to manage what I have.

Tunde's social isolation may not be as extreme as some of the female live-in workers, whose mobility is restricted, as he does have some opportunity, albeit small, for freedom and social interaction. However, this suggests that, even with 'freedom', mobility can still be restricted. One way in which this occurs is through his employers, who constantly check his whereabouts via the mobile phone they provide for him.

Tunde also reveals how his daily commute makes his working day long. Tunde's daily working routine masks his daily commute to and from work. His working day might start at 6am and end around 8pm, but he usually leaves his house at 5am every morning and gets home between 9 and 10pm every night – 'depending on time of day, if road is clear, space is on bus'. Tunde is 'usually too tired' to do anything once he gets to his house, especially as 'driving in Lagos traffic is tiring'. He is unable to spend time with his children due to this fatigue. Tunde complains that his children are asleep when he leaves in the morning and asleep when he returns at night:

> I usually don't get home earlier than 10pm. I leave home when my children are asleep and get home when they are asleep. Luckily, my wife is a trader, so she spends more time with our children.

Yet, however long Tunde's working days are – and that of other male domestic workers – unlike female live-outs and their caring responsibilities, my findings reveal that men were not as burdened by this aspect. Indeed, they experienced caring differently.

Caring

Twelve of the male domestic workers in this study are fathers – three live-ins, five live-outs and four part-timers. For the men who live out and work either full-time or part-time, unpaid domestic work is performed almost exclusively by women in their own

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homes – revealing the stickiness of the gender division of labour. Older male domestic workers are also more likely to tell me they do not help their wives with domestic chores, particularly those who do paid 'female' domestic tasks. This is because they view what they do at their employer's house as a job to support their family.

Similar findings of gender relations being preserved were found in Maria Bartolomei's (2010) study in Congo, where a female cleaner explained that male cooks 'refuse to cook for their own family and refuse to do anything unpaid. They think that a man's job is only a job for a wage' (ibid:101). Younger men, such as 28-year-old driver, Ade, might do some domestic tasks, such as buying basic necessities for the household. This was also something raised by Radhika Chopra (2003) in the context of India where young male domestic workers might drop the children off at school on their way to work, suggesting that the performance of domestic work can have, albeit small, 'a carry back effect in these men's lives' (ibid:6).

Additionally, while small in number, my discussions with live-in fathers reveal that, although the dominant gender roles in Nigeria mean that men consistently think of themselves as the breadwinners who leave care commitments to their wives, daughters or other women in their family, considering men as strictly labourers and breadwinners without care commitments is wholly inaccurate. While there is a well-established ideal of the responsible father as a reliable provider for his children (see, for example, Akesson et al., 2012 on Cape Verdian fathers), what I observed were the ways in which male domestic workers' fathering practices differed from that of women, with their wages

playing a crucial role in this.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, men who enter domestic service say they do so 'for their families' or 'to feed their children'. A case in point is 37-year-old Tosin of Yoruba origin, who works as a live-in houseboy earning NGN16000 (USD$102) a month. He explains that his wife and three children are in his place of residence – Ondo State – and not Lagos. This, he mentions, enables him to live with his employer and save money, which he is then able to send back home. While sending money back home conforms to norms of breadwinning and financial provision, Tosin is also able to have a more regular presence in his children's lives than female live-ins due to his less-constrained life.

Unlike his live-in female counterparts, as Tosin's movements are less restricted and he has more opportunities for days off, this makes it possible for him to return home – at least during festivals and public holidays, if not more often. Similarly, 35-year-old driver, Ola, of Yoruba origin, who also lives in and is married with two children, and is one of the highest paid workers earning NGN50000 (USD$320), explains that he is able to go back to his hometown in Oyo State regularly as his Oga travels a lot, usually for months.

This reveals, as Doreen Massey (1994) argues, the 'differentiated mobility' of domestic workers, with male live-ins being relatively more in charge of their movements than female live-ins (see Chapter 2; see also de Regt and Fernandez, 2014 on differentiated mobility between freelance and contract domestic workers in the Middle East). This indicates that 'mobility is not equally accessible to all ... domestic workers' (Mahler,

1998:78), as illustrated in Chapter 6 with the female live-ins, who are unable to stay in touch with their families and communities back home, let alone return home.

Furthermore, as Tosin and Ola are separated from their families for long periods, they explain that they bought phones for their wives and regularly send credit to them. This enables them to be fathers and husbands by calling their families as often as possible – a situation live-in mothers, such as Faith, are unable to do (Chapter 6). As such, while men are not expected to be actively involved in care or care-giving, by Tosin and Ola maintaining steady communication with their family back home they are attempting to be actively involved.

Unfortunately, Tosin and Ola are the only cases of men – whether they live in or live out – who are separated from their families and attempt to be as present in their families' lives as possible. More common is men disengaging and then re-engaging with their families as a result of the difficulties of fulfilling their role as providers, particularly due to their irregular payment of wages. This is the case with live-in cook Amadi, from the Republic of Benin, whose wife and three children are all back in his home country, where he is only able to visit two or three times a year. This further indicates the impact living-in has on workers' abilities to have fulfilling lives beyond the workplace as men, such as Amadi, reveal that they go for long periods not communicating with their families because they feel they have failed; this, in turn, leads to frustration and severe loneliness due to being separated from their families.

This is also evident in scholarship on transnational fatherhood (Carling et al., 2012; Kilkey et al., 2010; Parreñas, 2008; Pribilsky, 2012), where parenting roles are strongly gendered. For instance, while both mothers and fathers send gifts and money and maintain communication, mothers are expected to continue providing emotional care to their children (Dreby, 2006; Parreñas, 2001, 2005). Fathers, on the other hand, are not expected to be actively involved in care (see Parreñas, 2008 on 'fathering at a distance') and are less likely than women to be socially condemned for not fulfilling their responsibilities. Thus, women continue to be constrained by their care-giving expectations and obligations (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Avila, 1997; Parreñas, 2005).

Of course, transnational parenting also affects men. Patricia Landoldt and Wei Wei Da (2005:642) found that, in most cases, Salavadorean men in the US stopped communicating with and supporting their families due to 'malfeasance and infidelity'. Joanna Dreby (2006, 2010), who analysed the experiences of Mexican transnational fathers and mothers in New Jersey, also found that men grew distant from their children because they could not fulfil their role as provider. Men's coping strategies from the process of separation are also often more self-destructive. For example, Paula Worby and Kurt Organista (2007) identify Mexican and Central American migrant men's inability to travel to visit their loved ones due to stiffer border policies as one factor behind their heavy drinking.

Finding Space for Leisure and Friendship

A final difference I observed was in the area of leisure and friendship. In Chapter 6, I discussed that, for female live-ins working and residing in an employer's home, there can be significant negative impacts on their personal autonomy and mobility, but that they do find ways to fit leisure into their lives, such as negotiating to get days off or finding leisure within the homes they work in by watching television. In Chapter 7, I argued that most live-out mothers might sacrifice their leisure due to the unpaid care and domestic responsibilities – although, for the female live-outs who walk in groups for safety during their late night commutes, spaces for companionship are found in these opportune moments. Men, both live-in and live-out, had different experiences, which further indicate the ways in which gender plays out differently in workers' lives beyond the workplace.

Male live-ins, for example, do not face similar restrictions to female live-ins. None of the *maiguards* in my study had days off; however, in spite of their long working hours, they had more freedom of movement, enabling them to roam around freely in the neighbourhood. Nevertheless, this is a bone of contention for many employers, who would prefer that they be on call 24/7 guarding the homes and not 'greeting their fellow "*maiguards*"' (Rachel, 38, female employer, housewife) or 'involved in neighbourhood politics' (Balogun, 56, male employer, civil servant). In some homes, where *maiguards* have kiosks where they sell conveniences such as sachets of detergent, matches, snacks and soft drinks, employers complain about how 'they are not able to focus on their core security duties while tending to their kiosk' (Bolanle).

Employers complained about how 'they tend to travel home after a period of service thereby disrupting service', and how 'while tending to their kiosk, they are not able to focus on their core security duties', and how 'some *maiguards* go around the block on Sundays and during festivities to greet their fellow *maiguards*'. The protected premises become porous at this time'. One employer spoke to me about how 'the married ones seek the warmth of their spouses on a cold night – while the protected premises are unsecured', while another one informed me that '"*maiguards*" often make love advances to the housemaid rather than concentrate on their work'. Since they reside in employer's home, they invariably become a part of the neighbourhood power structure and gossip mill. Most employers disliked the fact their *maiguards* were being embroiled in neighbourhood politics and quarrels.

It became interesting to learn how these workers create and consume their own leisure time, such as 30-year-old live-out Tunde of Yoruba origin, who is married with two children, who drives to Lekki and stays there for hours and often speaks with other drivers in a similar predicament. For example, as many workers are not allowed to have visitors in the households where they work, the street is usually where they 'do friendship', similar to the nannies in Brooklyn in the playgrounds (Brown, 2011). *Maiguards* would roam the streets and have conversations with other *maiguards* working in their neighbourhood. On many occasions, I would notice a few *maiguards* outside the gates of a household, conversing in the street, while a few workers also mention walking during their free time.

8.2.2 Being a Male Domestic Worker

These experiences of male domestic workers raise two important points in understanding their everyday lives. First, living out does not necessarily change the perception of domestic workers as 'informal' help or lead to an end in exploitative working conditions. It is less about controlling the work situation itself and more about deciding when identities as workers end and identities as people with social and private lives begin. In other words, there may be no difference in the work itself and workers may actually be disadvantaged in terms of wages. However, being able to maintain independent private and/or family lives, or be one's own boss, allows the workers the opportunity to arrange their work schedules around caring for their own homes and children and to leave work and go home to family, friends, or whatever they want.

Second, freedom of movement and autonomy (i.e. decision-making) in domestic service cannot be ignored. This is made clear by the part-timers who enjoy the flexibility and autonomy of their work, despite irregular wages and sporadic employment; or, by the mothers in Chapter 7, who choose to live out – even with the added burdens that entails – in order to be present in their own children's lives. In spite of their 'higher' status in this occupation, men are constructed simultaneously as 'threatening and docile, celibate and abuser' (Chopra, 2006:157) due to an intersection of their class with their gender.

8.3   Where Dangerous and Safe Masculinities Collide: Construction of Male Domestic Workers

As argued by Radhika Chopra (2003:6) male domestic workers 'vacillate between being treated like women in the work they do and/or being perceived as sexually dangerous'. Thus, like their female live-in counterparts, male domestic workers, both live-in and live-out, are viewed as sexually dangerous, as indicated by female employer Theresa (53, Civil Servant):

> You can have houseboys, but they would cost you more, and if you have a young daughter at home, then it's more likely everyone would prefer to have housegirl.

Theresa explains the specific fear employers may have towards employing men, especially male live-ins, when they have young daughters, as there is the perception that they can behave badly with young girls in the family (see also Ray, 2000). This was also articulated by one widow in Ray's (2000) study, who had 'a fear of being alone in the house with a male worker'; this emanated 'from her understanding of men of a lower class as having a brute strength, which employers otherwise want for heavy work' (ibid:9).

Other stories alluding to the dangerous presence of men in my study include the 20-year-old houseboy who lured his employer's 12-year-old daughter while they were at work into an unoccupied room in the compound and raped her, or the female employer who lived alone and was attacked, beaten and raped by her former driver. I also heard that:

> Young men can rape our daughters.

I really can't believe people are still naive enough to hire them. They not only molest your children (yes, they'll molest both your sons and daughters).

A houseboy… will molest your girls and bring in their friends' 'armed robbers' to do the rest.

The male househelps will vandalise your girls.

It's not safe for women to be alone with them.

I already discussed 'yellow peril' during the early colonial period in Chapter 6 to indicate that fears of domestic workers' sexuality in African countries are not new, as illustrated by historical studies, particularly in Southern Africa (Pape, 1990). However, most notable of the 'perils' was 'black peril' – the sexual offences allegedly committed against European women by African men, although this was notably a phenomenon of 'fear of sexual crime' (Jeater, 2002:465; see also Cornwell, 1996). The notion that male domestic workers posed a sort of sexual threat was constructed on heavily racist evaluations, pivoted on images of African men having uncontrollable sexual desires and a rampant and voracious sexuality (see Stoler, 1997).

Yet, 'black peril' fears created an image of the sexually deviant '"houseboy" rapist' (Etherington, 1988:36; see also Martens, 2002), whose urges had to be controlled. Jeremy Martens (2002:381, 396), writing on Natal rape scares in 1886, provides the case of an Anglo-Indian who said that 'if black men had to be employed in Natal they should be confined to the kitchen and dining room'. In Southern Rhodesia, meanwhile, the 'black peril' led to investigations as to the suitability of African female domestic workers in the home (Stoler, 1989:641; see also Hansen, 1989; Schmidt, 1992:412).

Nonetheless, as historical studies show, there was not much evidence of male black rape, suggesting that behind the manufactured 'black peril' was the uncertainty European men had regarding African men performing so-called 'women's work' in private spaces of the home normally reserved for husbands or sons. As John Pape (1990) argues, in the context of colonial Zimbabwe, the sexually uncontrollable black male was created to 'inhibit the development of intimacy between African men and white women' (ibid:710). Although also critical is that it shifted the focus away from male employer's far more widespread and often violent sexual abuse towards African women (ibid:710). Fear of 'other' men's sexuality can also be found in the Australian Territory of Papua New Guinea (Martinez and Lowrie, 2009:317; Stoler, 1989:58; Inglis, 1975:vi;), and in Indian colonies as well as in the Solomon Islands (Boutiller, 1984:197).

With these fears also existing today, employers also have complex emotions about hiring men due to fears of low-class workers' sexuality. At the same time, this dangerous masculinity can also be seen as docile. This is because they are seen as 'less than full men' (Lindsay, 2003:12) due to their presence in low-paid domestic work. This is echoed in Ray's (2000) study when one of his female interviewees notes, 'a servant isn't really a man; a servant is a servant' (ibid:9).

Thus, I am suggesting that while men may do 'women's' work – often for a multitude of reasons, as discussed in Chapter 5 – they are sometimes more than a man and often times less. As, employers still recruit them, to ensure enough distance is maintained in the home, and also to prevent anything from happening, they adopt controlling strategies.

Indeed, in line with the need to protect their homes, when it comes to *maiguards*, I found

this list online regarding what employers can do to 'get the best' out of their *maiguard*.

DO'S FOR THE HOMEOWNER

In order to get the best of your *maiguard* you must do the following:

1. Know your *maiguard* (His name, hometown, previous employment, next of kin etc.).
2. Get references from him.
3. Take a picture of the *maiguard* and keep it for future reference.
4. Invite a security professional to take the *maiguard's* fingerprint.
5. Ask some questions about his background.
6. Know his friends and relations.
7. Teach him security rule. Since most of them are illiterate then learn his native language.
8. Discipline the *maiguard* if he misbehaves. Unpunished misconduct is an invitation for more misbehaviour.
9. Let him know the rules of the job, e.g. he cannot receive visitors while on duty.
10. If he must operate his Kiosk, then it must be 'outside your gate'. No one should enter into your compound to buy something.
11. Show him how to screen callers and which window to submit visitors' cards.
12. Show him how to alert you if there is an emergency. In a recent incident in Victoria Island the *maiguard* observed the robbers, but could not communicate the emergency to the boss. The boss was later robbed and beaten by the robbers.

Source: 'The Place of *Maiguard* in Our Security Network'
http://www.smstransworld.com/redalert.html (accessed 5 July 2012)

Similar to the tips I shared on nannies in the Interlude, this indicates that male domestic

workers are not spared from these rules of engagement, even though they may have

relatively more mobility than female domestic workers.

8.4   Social Order in Homes

Employers' controlling strategies can include the exploitative methods I discussed in Chapter 6 with female live-ins. However, employers can also adopt less extreme forms of control towards their workers. Indeed, controlling strategies in this study ranged from 'positive' forms, such as giving of gifts, a pay rise or providing financial support, to 'negative' ones including restricting a worker's movement in the public sphere.

My findings suggest that male domestic workers also experience control. This could involve male employers developing rituals to demonstrate the superiority of their 'masculinity' over male employees by getting drivers to carry their briefcases from the car into the house, when the employers could carry their briefcases themselves. This is similar to the 'hammock tradition' Carolyn Brown (2006) discussed during colonial times in Southeast Nigeria, where 'workers carried white supervisors to work in a hammock from their residence high on a hill to the mines' (ibid:46).

As Radhika Chopra (2006:157) reveals in the context of male live-ins in India, men can still experience some form of maternalism, such as male domestic workers 'either sitting on the floor or on the edges of furniture when permitted to watch television with the family ... having to "remain unnoticed" in the presence of guests, and often being summoned by a bell' (see also Bartolomei, 2010 on male Keralan domestic workers in India). This is not the case in my study, as male live-ins did not live inside their employer's homes. Instead, one of the clearest expressions of maternalism is an absence

of respect for workers who are often called 'boys' – similar situations are found with female workers who are referred to as 'girls' (see also Anderson, 2000; Rollins, 1985).

8.4.1 Forms of Address

In Lagos, workers are always addressing their employers as 'Sa', 'Oga', 'Ma' or 'Madam' – never by their first name – while employers may address their workers as they choose to. Although this might be by the worker's first name, it could also be by the job they do, e.g. houseboy, washerman, gardener, especially if employers do not know, or care to know, their workers' names. Establishing norms with respect to the use of names in the household brings into play, as Chopra (2006:160) notes, 'relations between the powerful employer and the powerless employee' and leads to the 'undoing of personhood'. This is one way in which employers infantilised (i.e. stereotyping them as weak, helpless and childlike) their male domestic workers.

The perception of domestic workers as children is not new, as argued by Julia Martinez and Claire Lowrie (2009), writing on colonial constructions of masculinity. They suggest its origins could go as far back as seventeenth or eighteenth-century Europe's tradition in which an employer had 'fatherly care over their servants as if they were his own children' (citing Meldrum, 2000:37). Similar, the process of infantilising adult domestic workers with the term 'houseboy' or 'boy' was widely used in a range of colonial settings to refer to 'native' men working as domestic workers (e.g. Swapna Banerjee, 2004 in colonial Bengal; Martinez and Lowrie, 2009 on Aboriginal male servants in colonial Darwin; and Morrell, 1998 on colonial South Africa). When an employer refers to adult males as

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'househelps' or as 'boys' rather than 'men', they are not only reducing the worker to the status of a child, but also conveying perpetual inferiority and denial of full adulthood.

Writing on masculinity in the context of colonial South Africa, Robert Morrell (1998:616) explains how representing African men as 'childlike "houseboys"' helped support the project of colonial dominance, as it led to a denial of 'manhood' against the African men that did the 'menial work, which required strong, energetic and powerful bodies'. Thus, emasculating adult men was a strategy Europeans used to maintain power in the home, especially considering, as discussed above, Europeans worried about the interactions between African men and European women in the intimate space of the home (see also Martinez and Lowrie, 2009:307 on Aboriginal Australian men; Locher-Scholten, 1998:141; Stoler, 2002:6). While, in the context of contemporary Nigeria, the use of the term is grounded on class rather than racial differences, this gendered ideology of employer supremacy over adult workers is an ideological assault on their self-identity.

I asked domestic workers their feelings about having to refer to their employers in such terms and was met with different reactions. Some are indifferent, citing 'It is the way it is' or 'They are the Ogas', while others do not mind using such terms as they do not desire to form familial bonds with their employers. For them, referring to their employers as 'Sa' or 'Ma' enables them to distance themselves from their employers and, in turn, separate their working and personal lives in a context where employers are known for over-stepping boundaries. Similar sentiments are found in India, where older domestic

workers still use the colonial forms *Memsahib* and *Sahib* (Chopra, 2006; see also Dickey, 2000).

Age adds further complexity to forms of address, indicating how notions of respect for age have the potential to disrupt class relations, as illustrated by 33-year-old architect Idris, who employs a 45-year-old part-time houseboy. As Nigerian culture entails that younger people respect their elders, Idris refers to his houseboy as 'Sa' or 'Mr. David'. The use of terms associated with respect for elders is also common in other parts of the world, such as in the Phillipinnes (Arnado, 2002), Nepal (Shah, 2000), and Peru (Young, 1987). As an employer, Idris would be assumed to hold authority over his workers; however, owing to the fact his workers are older than him, referring to them as 'Sa' is done to maintain the age-based hierarchy that permeates Nigerian society.

Similar to Idris, in some households, families with younger children also encourage them to address the worker as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle', and never by their first name; this is to suggest respect between younger and elder. Especially for older workers, being referred to as Mama, Baba, or even Iya is embraced and respected as these forms of address are still held, despite their employment, showing that respect for elders is still present. However, in some households, I observed cases of children using the worker's first name, regardless of their parents insisting they call their nanny 'Aunty' or their driver 'Uncle'. This undermines any age-based respect and signals that the children of employers are already aware of the distinction between the low-class and inferior domestic worker and the middle-class/elite members of the household.

Interestingly, older workers may also be able to have more work autonomy than their younger counterparts, as indicated by Idris, who also expressed difficulty in giving certain instructions to his houseboy. Idris explains that he cannot dictate the days and times his houseboy chooses to come to work; instead, it was a mutual agreement between the two of them. He also cannot tell him not to do certain things, such as play music loud or sing loudly while he is cleaning the house, or watch the television and help himself to food. This suggests that employer control is not fixed and is ever-changing, based on the nature of their relationship with their worker.

Indeed, there are situations where an employer's strategies are meant to develop a feeling of loyalty and gratitude amongst domestic workers, which leads to them taking more 'positive' actions to achieve that. Unlike the more extreme forms I discussed in Chapter 6, this paints the employer in a positive light, endearing workers to their work. However, while it is less extreme, this should not mask the underlying fact that it is still a form of control. Examples of 'positive' control already discussed in previous chapters include permitting female live-ins to watch television with the family, or letting them move from sleeping on the floor in the living room to having their own bedroom. Over time, employers can extend this to allowing them to leave the house, make phone calls, have a day off and meet friends or relatives. Here, especially, are where factors such as age and length of time working in the employing household play a crucial role, with more positive experiences occurring when employers feel workers 'act right' and have established the necessary trust and reliability that are essential to employers.

8.4.2 Control 'in-kind'

Take the case of 56-year-old civil servant, Balogun, who, as a way of ensuring compliance, pays his five domestic workers 'well'. His live-in houseboy, driver and *maiguard* earn NGN18500 (USD$118), NGN25000 (USD$160) and NGN12500 (USD$80) a month, respectively; his live-out cook and part-time gardener earn NGN30000 (USD$192) and NGN8000 (USD$51) a month, respectively. This indicates that, while employers are ultimately trying to maintain the power hierarchy between themselves and their workers, they can also adopt 'positive' strategies to ensure workers fulfil their ultimate aim – to maintain households.

Employers also give gifts to their workers, which is often characterised as a form of maternalism. Employer maternalism is widely criticised as a principal source of exploitation of domestic workers (Anderson, 2000; Glenn, 1992; Gill, 1994; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 1992). Judith Rollins (1985), for example, asserts that gift-giving, like other manifestations of maternalism, 'serves to reify the differences between the women - be they in terms of class, race or human worth' (ibid:193). Yet, in my study, in cases where, for instance, the employer gives the worker – usually live-outs – some food to go home with, transport money to get home at the end of the day, or second-hand mattresses, furniture or cookware, workers see this as an act of kindness and generosity on the employer's part.

There are also those workers who do not receive 'gifts', such as second-hand clothes, shoes or furniture and complain about their employers' stinginess. This suggests that some workers support the giving of gifts, which are free and help subsidise their already low wages. This is the case in many parts of Southeast Asia, G. G. Weix (2000), writing on Japanese domestic workers argues that social and emotional ties between employees and employers are predicated upon gifts (ibid:140). Similarly, Barbara Johnston (2013) in her study on migrant domestic workers in Singapore contended that employees 'believed that gifts indicated that their employer held them in high esteem' (ibid:167). Specifically, Johnston (2013) argues that, for some, 'being considered a "member of the family"... signalled that employers would honour their expectation of receiving a Christmas bonus and/or a birthday bonus and would provide extra assistance for their families' (ibid:167).

In some cases, employers may also provide educational or vocational support to workers, with some going as far as contributing to the school fees of workers' children – although this is usually for fathers rather than mothers, especially because, as explained in Chapter 6, many women do not mention they have children for fear of not being hired in the first place.

Other 'positive' rewards my findings point to include pay rises for workers that have spent a certain number of years – usually six or more – working in the household, extra money (bonuses) and/or foodstuffs (full bags of rice, oil, beans, tea and milk) during Christmas and Ramadan, and increased responsibilities, such as a driver also delivering envelopes and depositing money, or a cook having full responsibility of the kitchen.

Employers may also offer additional financial support to workers in the form of loans to support their family needs, such as sending money back to their partners, parents or children. However, 56-year-old housewife, Biodun, had a negative experience with a housegirl who ran away after receiving a loan of NGN25000 (USD$160). As 56-year old civil servant, Balogun, makes clear:

> They [domestic workers] will come and ask for loan and ask for it to be deducted from their monthly salary [laugh]. Their salary is not much. We are helping them, they won't be paying it back.

Balogun's statement suggests that there are cases where employers like to see themselves as benevolent and willingly give money to their workers in need. However, as Biodun shows, in some situations this benevolence can lead to workers running away once the money has been received.

While workers who experience these 'in-kind' controls are often positive about their employers, treating a domestic worker fairly is sometimes met with disapproval from employers' peers. A number of employers recount numerous examples of how social pressures and norms make it so that even the simplest act, such as giving workers breaks during the day, might be condemned as going against accepted norms. As 53-year-old civil servant, Theresa, explains:

> My family and friends tell me a lot that I am too soft with my housegirl because I let her watch TV with the kids, or go outside in the afternoon to walk around and socialise with others in the estate. But to me it means nothing – as it does not affect me. She is able to do all these things after she has finished all her work for the day.

8.4.3 Containing Sexuality

The above does not mean to say men are exempt from extreme forms of control. For instance, owing to fears of their dangerous sexuality, male domestic workers may not be allowed to come inside the house – especially if young women are home alone – or to enter bedrooms and bathrooms.

Other ways employers seek to render male domestic workers as 'invisible men' (Chopra, 2006) is by controlling men's physical appearance, which, as Bartolomei (2010) argues aims to '"domesticate masculinity" (Chopra, 2006) by creating unequivocal relations of hierarchy, respect and distance through sets of practices' (ibid:102). Similar to female employees, men either wear uniforms or are expected to dress in a fashion that deflects attention from the sexualised body. It is more difficult to control men's movement, particularly live-ins, outside the house. Yet, employers still have strong feelings about their male workers' movements, as explained earlier with *maiguards*.

Finally, while less publicised, there are also cases of the female employer having consensual or coerced sex with a male domestic worker. As Chopra (2006) argues, cases of abuse of male domestic workers is less known and even less likely to be reported, reflecting the 'double invisibility' (ibid:165) experienced by men in this occupation. This relationship between female employers and male domestic workers is also often seen as 'preposterous' and 'wrong', as I was informed. This is due to the lower-income status of male domestic workers, and the shame it bestows on women.

Writing on the dangers of interracial sex in colonial southern Rhodesia, Oliver Phillips (2011) also describes 'white peril' as the danger presented by white women who consorted with black men. The least publicised of all the 'perils', it not only meant relations with white women and black men but, more important, the behaviour of particular white women or girls (e.g. 'prostitutes, careless innocents and "nymphomaniacs''' [Phillips, 2011:110]) who were thought to initiate, encourage or accept the advances of black men.

Although such relations may be less common than those between male employers and female employees, they should not be seen as any less problematic and exploitative. However, men were even more apprehensive than women to share their sexual encounters with me. This could be due to the fact that sexuality is rarely discussed in public, but it could also be as a result of my status as a young, unmarried woman discussing this 'taboo' subject with men. Additionally, discussing this topic with men raised a personal dilemma for me as it brought into question my own decency and my sexual availability.

As such, I was only able to get accounts from two male workers. The first was from 19-year-old live-in houseboy, Sunday, of Efik origin from Akwa Ibom State, who is single and has no children, whose first sexual experience was when he was 15 with a neighbour. The other was from 28-year-old live-out driver, Ade, of Yoruba origin from Ondo State, who is married with three children and had sexual relations with a former female employer. While these two accounts do not provide sufficient information to capture the

gamut of experiences male domestic workers face, they highlight, albeit briefly, the unknown aspects of sexual control of males in the domestic work.

I begin with 19-year-old Sunday, who explains his first sexual experience:

> She was a young housewife, lonely. And whenever I used to come back from errands she would stop me. She said she wanted to teach me. It was my first time.

When I asked him how he felt about it, he exclaims, 'I was proud of myself'. Sunday did not see his first sexual encounter with the female neighbour as sexual abuse, but as a 'sexual initiation' or a 'coming of age' – a rite of passage. In fact, due to cultural norms that define 'masculinity', studies on male sexual abuse perpetrated by females show that young victims usually do not associate it with abuse, but as a great way to learn about sex and how to be a 'real man' (see Ajuwon, 2005 for Nigeria; Barker, 1993 for the Philippines, Thailand, Colombia and Kenya; Raffaelli et al., 1993 for Belo Horizonte, Brazil). Yet, Sunday's case suggests that he may have been pressured to have sexual relations with an older, married woman.

Twenty-eight-year-old Ade, on the other hand, speaks about a former place of employment where his male employer asked him to give his wife some driving lessons. Ade describes how, in the beginning, the female employer would buy him small gifts, give him extra money or let him leave work earlier than usual to thank him for the driving lessons – suggesting the 'positive' control I mentioned earlier.

Ade explains how he initially enjoyed these extra perks he was getting and felt it signalled increased recognition and appreciation of his job as a driver in his employing household. However, one day, while in the car, Ade explains how his female employer touched his lap, which eventually led to a sexual relationship developing between them. Although his 'perks' continued, he also mentions how she blackmailed him by saying if he told anyone she would say he raped her. As Ade informs me, 'I couldn't tell anyone because they would not believe me'. This suggests the unequal power relations between employer and employee within sexual encounters that can lead to dismissal and which, I discussed in Chapter 6, can also extend to male domestic workers.

Although Ade gives no indication of the outcome of this sexual encounter, both he and Sunday suggest that female employers, like their male counterparts, are capable of committing sexual abuse and using sex as a means of control. However, the issue of female employers having sex with – and their sexual abuse of – male domestic workers hardly came up during my interviews with employers. This was possibly because the likelihood of middle-class and elite women having sex with lower-class men is seen as wrong. After all, it is understood that women cannot possibly be sexually attracted to these 'unclean men', let alone commit a serious crime such as sexual abuse or rape. Yet, the kind of sexual relationships Sunday and Ade describe cannot be classified as consensual. Ade's former female employer exercised sexual control over him by threatening to accuse him of rape if he did not agree to sex. In doing this, she was using the image of the sexually uncontrollable male domestic worker to exercise control over him.

As indicated in this section, men experience control, but they also struggle to combine their masculine identity within a feminised occupation (e.g. Bartolomei, 2010; Datta, et al., 2009). This section looks at how men challenge constructions of their safe and dangerous masculinities. Similar to their female counterparts, this includes making themselves less threatening sexually, moving between households and having a preference for employers.

8.5 How Male Domestic Workers Contest Constructions of their Masculinity

Looking first at how they offset the danger of their sexuality, men show their commitment to the household in the way they perform their work, such as polishing their male employer's shoes, and going that extra mile to take on additional tasks, such as washing the car on Sunday or preparing a favourite meal without being requested to. This indicates that they are willing to be part of the household and are vested in it - all in a bid to downplay any sense of danger (see also Chopra, 2006). Yet, men can also decline to do certain tasks, such as houseboys and washermen that will not wash women's underwear – as they are adamant it is not their work (see also Chopra, 2006). Thus, men are trying to keep their masculinity by distancing themselves from tasks they consider inappropriate for them. A similar case was observed in Maria Rita Bartolomei's (2010) study on Congolese male domestic workers who, 'by creating and maintaining the distinction between cooking and cleaning, seek to reduce the humiliation of being in women's service' (ibid:102).

Second, men can also move from one household to another doing the same job, as illustrated by 30-year-old live-out driver Tunde, of Yoruba origin, who left his previous employment – also as a driver – to work in his current household to increase his pay and improve his situation. He was able to find his current job through the personal recommendation of a driver working in his previous employer's neighbourhood. Men also sometimes opt to move from live-in to live-out situations – although only two men had lived in at some point during their time in domestic work, such as 68-year-old live-out driver Ayo, of Yoruba origin. He explains that, when he first joined domestic service at the age of 16, he lived in:

> I was new into the city [Ibadan]. Had come to work. Had nowhere to stay and so lived in my Oga and Madam's house. It makes sense for a young, single man who is not from the place to live with his employers.

He eventually moved out of his 'Oga's BQ' after he got married to have 'a place of his own'. This, however, was only possible after he had established himself within the sector. In a few cases, movement from one type of work to another is possible – although this is more likely with men. For example, Ayo, the oldest worker in the study at 68-years-old, has been working as a driver for about 43 years, but when he first joined domestic service at the age of 16 he worked as a live-in houseboy. Ayo's story of his journey from houseboy to driver reveals that upward mobility within domestic service is subject to experience and partially governed by available social networks, as well as the initiative of workers who are able to use the informational resources embedded in these social networks (see Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994:51).

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Ayo's account begins in 1962 when he was 16 and had to drop out of school as his parents could not afford to pay his school fees. Ayo was sent to Ibadan to work as a houseboy for a Nigerian family that worked at the University of Ibadan. Similar to most young domestic workers, Ayo explains working long daily hours. Yet, he also explains how this job gave him valuable skills in cooking, cleaning, speaking, reading and writing English. After working for that family for three years, they left Ibadan, but recommended him to another family, who lived in Lagos. Ayo explains how this particular experience was 'very hard' for him, as his new employers did not give him any days off for almost a year or the opportunity to visit his family. He was eventually able to leave for a short visit, where he met a family friend who worked as a bus driver in Lagos. Ayo explained his situation to the man and the man offered him the opportunity to become a bus conductor. This was in 1967 and Ayo spent the next four years as a bus conductor.

While Ayo did not earn much money, he explains how he would take every opportunity to teach himself how to drive. By 1971, Ayo was not only able to drive, but also knew the Lagos roads well. Around that time, a friend of his knew of a company looking for a driver and informed Ayo of the job. With his knowledge of the Lagos roads, as well as his ability to write and speak English well, he started driving for the company. Yet, Ayo found it difficult to save money in his new job. Fortunately, less than a year into this job his employer decided to leave the company and asked Ayo if he would like to work for him. While his salary with this employer would remain the same, the new job came with accommodation and food, which, at the time, Ayo could not refuse. Now in his mid-20s, Ayo is back in domestic service, but this time as a driver who lived in.

Men also have preferences for certain types of employers, such as 25-year-old Jonathan, a live-out houseboy of Ijaw origin from Delta State, explains why he prefers working for male employer because 'the job easy':

> Before I come here [Lagos], I was working [in Abuja] and it was just me and Oga in the house and the work is very simple. I enjoy working for him. Nah to ensure the house is clean and go to market. Oga nah busy person so he never fit stay house before he don comot [before he leaves the house]… so eh be like say I can do what I want. Different things. Watch TV when they bring light. When Oga don tire for Abuja he come ask me if I fit come with him to Lagos [his employer's wife and kids lived in Lagos]. The job easy and Oga nice so I say 'Yes, na!'. Come make I see trouble once I step leg inside his Lagos house. Madam no be Oga. This one too, too different. If it no say for Oga and the kindness he show me in Abuja, I no fit stay here. My Madam's wahala [trouble] nah too much.

Like Jonathan, a number of male domestic workers mention preferring not to work for female employers – although they explain it along the lines of finding it hard to obey female employers (see also Bartolomei, 2010 on 'boy cuisiniers' in Abidjan). Other workers say male employers are relaxed and tend not to get involved, leaving the workers to carry out their duties, while women are always monitoring, always shouting, always questioning.

The 'professionalism' of male employers is echoed in other studies, such as Pierette Hondagneu-Sotelo (2007), who noticed that male employers who were stay-at-home parents or who worked fewer hours than their wives preferred 'professional' relationships with domestic workers (ibid:177). Similarly, Johnston (2013) observed that 'self-described stay at home dads tended to frame relationships with migrant domestic workers as professional only' (ibid:165).

While the above three practices indicate that male domestic workers can adopt similar ones to female employees, an additional response that comes about as a result of men being in domestic work is their wish to validate their presence in this occupation.

8.5.1 Redefining Masculinity

As stated in Chapter 5, men who do paid domestic work choose this employment usually for the sake of the family. As such, men challenge the perception that they are 'less than men' by focusing on their roles as providers (Bartolomei, 2010; Ray, 2000). Thus, the ideology of the man as breadwinner remains through a re-evaluation of what, to others, is socially stigmatised labour. To them, it is simply work.

Quite interesting within this is the case of uniforms, which most studies on domestic workers point to as a form of employer control as it signals class divisions within the home (Stoler, 1995). Yet, drivers such as 68-year-old live-out Ayo and 57-year-old Rufai speak fondly of it as it signifies they are in paid employment and able to provide for their families. As Rufai, from Osun State of Yoruba origin, who lives out and is married with five children, explains:

> You need to understand that in Lagos you need to hustle to survive. You hear about housegirls suffering, going through abuse. But we [drivers] we don't experience the same thing. Our job is much higher than common housegirl work. It requires skill to drive the cars, to carry yourself in a proper manner. You are the Oga's face. I take him to his meetings, I deliver important documents for him. It is a prestigious job to be a driver. It is much better than hawking on the street. As long as my family can eat. That is all that matters. The uniform shows to them and to others that I am working hard for my family and not begging on the street.

Second, there are other men who emphasise the new skills they have learnt by being a domestic worker (see also Datta et al., 2007; Qayum and Ray, 2010). An example is 68-

year-old driver, Ayo, who, when narrating his first job as a houseboy, mentioned the new skills he learnt – cooking, cleaning and speaking English well. By stating his new-found skills and experiences, Ayo is redefining his work as more highly skilled and challenging. Thus men see their ability to learn, and do, feminine tasks as a skill.

This was also observed by Bartolomei (2010) in Congo where male employees explain they 'had no problem learning domestic chores ... [and] men can learn and do everything if they want' (ibid:95). This was also observed among 'Fordist men' moving into cleaning work (Allen et al., 1998:100) who attempted to translate the work into familiar masculine terms, such as men in contract cleaning services reinterpreting cleaning tasks associated with 'heavy' machinery as 'suitable for me, due to 'the "skill" of handling the more complex or weighty technologies' (ibid:101).

Third, male domestic workers also stress the difficulties and physically challenging nature of their work, such as 37-year-old, live-in houseboy Tosin, of Yoruba origin, who is married with three children. He previously worked as a casual day labourer, where he used to wait on street corners with other plumbers, electricians and bricklayers looking for work. While Tosin finds that his previous job provided him with essential skills for his job as a houseboy, as he can 'perform a lot of other work in the house… plumbing, painting ...', he still explains how he finds this work difficult – possibly even more difficult than his previous job. This emphasis on skills is also quite evident in 'masculinised' jobs, such as driving and guarding, where men mention being able to

check the engine, change tyres or open heavy gates as a way to redefine the job as masculine and emphasise the 'male' aspects of domestic service.

Further indicating the extent to which men in this occupation rationalise their presence, male domestic workers repeatedly describe their jobs as difficult, tough, hard and requiring physical strength to do, which only men had. Thus, men are reinterpreting domestic labour jobs by drawing upon familiar masculine traits, such as physical strength, to legitimise their presence. Forty-seven-year-old Praise, a part-time washerman of Efik origin from Cross River State, who is married with two children, is adamant that employers never give the heaviest work to women as they do not have the energy or stamina to 'wash heavy linen, lift them, starch, them, iron them'. As he explains, he finds it tiring and, as men are stronger than women, they would 'never be able to manage it'. Moreover, these accounts suggest that what men do in domestic work is different and requires the ability to learn new skills and to bring unique skills to the job.

8.6   Conclusion

In exploring male domestic work, this Chapter not only highlights the variety of tasks in this sector, but the kinds of people doing this work. It also suggests that domestic service, like most workplaces, is socially constructed in ways that define who will and will not be able to comfortably work in that setting. Moreover, while men experience greater 'freedoms' in their daily lives, such as higher pay and greater mobility, these 'positive' aspects can be altered by the fact that they do effeminate work. Moreover, men are still subjected to stereotypes around their sexuality and also have to adopt strategies to

attempt to minimise such threats. At the same time, men try 'masculinise' this occupation through their practices – drawing on discourses around providing and physical strength, for instance.

What this suggests is that while there are similarities, men and women are also confronted with domestic work differently – based on their gender, their class, their age – which leads to quite different way in which they engage with domestic work and experience their everyday lives.

9

Concluding Thoughts

I set about doing this research because I wanted to understand the everyday lives of paid domestic workers in Lagos – a 'hidden' group of low-income workers that serve the wealthier population in Nigerian homes. I wanted to explore what it meant to be in this occupation for them, and specifically to investigate the terrains of struggle and negotiations in the places they work, often live and move through on a daily basis, i.e. the homes of employers. Doing this, I argued, would reveal the importance of the 'here and now' in the lives of low-paid urban residents trying to make a living and to survive in a developing city like Lagos.

To do this, I used a framework of everyday life, drawing on the work of Susie Scott (2009) that consisted of rituals and routines (specific practices), social order (rules that organise these practices) and challenging the taken-for-granted (norm-breaking acts). Within this framework, the interactions of workers' gender, class, age and ethnicity were kept at the forefront. This was to suggest the centrality of intersecting identities, which exist simultaneously in workers' lives, in understanding employees' everyday lives – which, as I illustrate, shift according to the context and situation workers find themselves in.

I was also able to reveal the diversity in this occupation – young, single women working as live-in housegirls; older, married women working as live-out nannies with their own children with them in Lagos; young married men working as drivers and residing in their employer's homes while their families are in different parts of Nigeria. As well as this, I emphasised the importance of employers in shaping this diverse group of workers' experiences of everyday lives. This enabled me to delve into the different areas of contestation between employers and employees in this occupation – the fear of young, female live-ins' sexuality; the issue of motherhood of female live-outs; the safe and dangerous sexuality of male domestic workers – and the ways in which, fundamentally, domestic workers are not seen as workers, but as 'informal helpers' recruited to serve the employing household.

Domestic workers' low-class status in Nigerian society plays a role in this construction; however, as the regulatory system for domestic workers in the country is one of *some* recognition, but mostly of implicit and explicit exclusion, employers are able to set their own conditions for allowing workers to enter, work and, in most cases, live in their homes. As such, forging an identity as a worker, but also as an individual with a family life, or even a social life, is extremely difficult - as it is not uncommon for workers to lose their livelihoods if they go against the status quo. In this context, some domestic workers must either leave their family, or the notion of having a family – or even a social life – behind if they want to work and help build a better future for themselves and their family. This could mean being miles away from their home for months, often years.

Yet, domestic workers are not passive men and women, and I also paid attention to workers' efforts to challenge employer control over their everyday lives. I discussed the female live-ins, who experienced the most control, but resisted the isolation and exploitation by negotiating for days off or finding opportunities to bring the outside in through media. I also considered the female live-outs, who are denied the rights to be 'good' mothers by employers and the Nigerian state, but still juggle their care work with the paid work in spite of the challenges of long daily commutes and concerns around accommodation, transport and low service provision in their own communities. Finally, I analysed the experiences of male domestic workers, who can be said to be the most autonomous of all employees in my study, but find themselves in an occupation that is increasingly seen as feminised, and the ways in which they attempt to redefine their masculinity in such contexts. Through this, I unraveled the dynamics of everyday life in this occupation in which daily rituals and routines are greatly shaped by the relationship between control by employers and resistance by domestic workers.

By taking a closer look at the specific practices, underlying structures and norm-breaking acts of everyday life among domestic workers in Nigerian households, I hope I have succeeded in providing an insight into the complex nature of this occupation in order to answer the main research question: *How do domestic workers, both within and beyond their workplace, experience everyday life?*

In what follows, I summarise and reflect on my main findings by drawing out the key themes that emerge from the research. These are: i) the crucial role that employers play;

and ii) the 'same, but different' everyday experiences of female live-ins, female live-outs and male domestic workers. I discuss these findings in relation to their potential implications for theory and practice. Following on from this, I address a few limitations of this study and where areas for further research can aid in filling those gaps.

9.1   The Significant Role of Employers

My thesis had four additional sub-questions to help in answering the main question. In this section, I address the following sub-research question: *What roles do employers play in structuring the underlying rules that organise domestic workers' everyday lives?* A significant one, according to my findings. By focusing on middle-class and wealthy households in Lagos, I illustrated that an employer's gender-, age- and ethnic-preference for particular types of domestic workers is extremely powerful in understanding employment patterns and everyday experiences of domestic workers. Yet, while hierarchical categories of class, gender, age and ethnicity shape this informal labour market, I suggest that stereotypes fall into one distinction in the employer discourse over employees – that domestic workers are not like them, owing to their low-class status and the 'dirty work' (disgusting and degrading tasks) they do. Thus, employers assume they have the right to control and workers the right to obey.

In addition, there is a complex interaction of these stereotypes with notions around cleanliness and sexuality (i.e. sexual availability) used to establish differences between employers and their workers, who maintain order in their homes by adopting controlling strategies around certain necessary qualities. These 'values' which are illustrated in

Figure 9.1 below aim to ensure that workers do the work properly, are clean, do not steal or gossip, and the most important, do not threaten the moral standing of the home thorough their promiscuity and immorality. This suggests that, in order to fully understand the outcomes for domestic workers in terms of their everyday lives, it is crucial to understand the ways in which employers construct differences through their preferences and prejudices.

Figure 9.1 Consideration in Employer Hiring of Domestic Workers: Least to Important

```
Quality of    Cleanliness    Reliability    Trustworthy    Sexuality
  Work
```
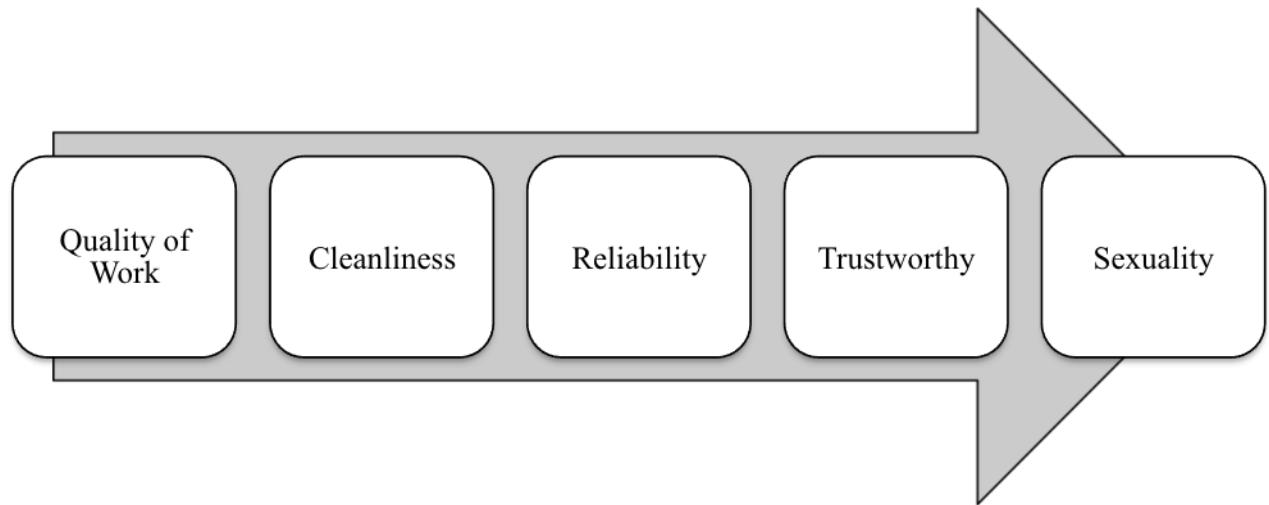
Source: Author's Own (2013)

These distinctions between employers and employees, which lead to control and exploitation, have also been allowed to continue in Nigeria because the worker's workplace is the employer's private and intimate home. Thus, domestic workers become invisible within the household, placing it beyond the purview of public interference from government and outside the domains of employers or trade unions.

The strategies that employers use to maintain order because 'these people, sometimes they cannot always be trusted', 'if these people [domestic workers] have too much knowledge, they can rob us and ruin our family', 'these girls are extremely dangerous' are diverse. They could involve restricting workers' access to bedrooms, monitoring workers' movements in the public sphere or giving 'gifts'. These serve one function to strip the work of any identity beyond that as 'helper'. As such, workers' are made to experience a lack of control over their own everyday lives.

The lack of control over working time, for instance, makes it so that female live-out mothers are unable to accommodate childcare into their working arrangements. They also create a situation where employees may be unable to initiate a dialogue or negotiate with their employers. Workers may lack the confidence to ask for what they are rightly entitled to, such as time off or reduced working hours, as they do not want 'to make trouble', which could lead to the docking of their wages or dismissal. In this case, workers may just get on and do their work or feel it is not worth asking for. Thus, I am suggesting that employer control, which can make it extremely difficult for a domestic worker to manage their work and private life, forms a huge aspect of the 'lived experience' of domestic workers.

Finally, I revealed in Chapter 4 that in the past decade, international organisations, such as the ILO, have been working on ways to ensure decent work in this occupation, which resulted in ILO's Domestic Workers Convention Number 189. There are also certain provisions in Nigerian legislation for the recognition of domestic workers. Yet, even with

such laws, due to the low status of domestic workers in the country, there are no formal mechanisms in place to enforce them. Moreover, employers themselves may not even be aware of the existence of such laws. This allows the exploitation of domestic workers to endure and become rooted inside so many households, where the experiences of domestic workers become dependent on the goodwill of employers.

In the context of this study – where domestic service is taken for granted and seen as 'natural' by the employing class - while mobilisation for rights is essential, a suggestion to resolve these structures that shape domestic workers everyday lives requires recognising that a profound change in existing social norms is essential. Indeed, looking at the everyday may have revealed something about how informal rules matter in domestic service in this occupation in Nigeria, such as the ones that determines who earns a certain amount and why. As such, any adoption and implementation of laws such as decent work for domestic workers will be affected by the informal rules and practices in Nigeria that structure this occupation. By that I mean it will affect any formal written rule that may be introduced that challenges a system in which many, often, wealthier people – including the State itself – benefits. Therefore, a shift in the discourse – the legitimising narratives of employers that surround domestic workers could potentially change the current nature of their everyday lives.

9.2 The Same, but Different: Everyday Experiences of Paid Domestic Workers

My thesis had three additional sub-questions to help in answering the main question, and which I address in this section. Namely:

- *What are domestic workers' everyday experiences both within and beyond their workplace?*
- *In what ways are experiences of everyday life as domestic workers linked to social divisions of gender, social class, age and ethnicity?*
- *How do domestic workers uphold or challenge assumptions about their everyday life in their efforts to create meaningful lives beyond the sites of work and residence?*

As detailed above, employers play a central role in domestic workers' everyday experiences. However, the level of this control is determined largely by the identity of the domestic worker. My findings reveal that this occupation consists of men and women of different ages and ethnic backgrounds, who may be living in, living out or working on a part-time basis serving an equally diverse range of employers. While this thesis is based on a small number of narratives that clearly can provide only a partial account of the interrelationships between these different facets of life in domestic work, I hope that the findings contribute to an understanding of the ways in which gender interacts with other axes of differences, such as class, age and ethnicity, within domestic work in Lagos.

For example, owing to their low-class status, all domestic workers everyday lives can be *the same* – long or unpredictable working hours, heavy workloads, the unspecified nature of tasks and little control over certain aspects of their working conditions – but these can also be *different*, revealing that domestic workers are not a homogeneous category. Here, I want to address some of these differences, focusing on life 'inside' and 'outside' the home for female live-ins, female live-outs and male domestic workers.

9.2.1 Female Live-ins: Life 'Inside' and 'Outside' the Home

What my findings revealed is that life 'inside' and 'outside' for female live-ins is the most extreme of all the workers in this study, as working and residing within an employer's household severely constrains their privacy and freedom of movement. This is heightened by the fact that the employer treats their home not as the public sphere of the domestic worker, but as their private sphere.

This is particularly so for young, female live-in domestic workers who tend to experience more isolation than other workers, high income insecurity and close physical and personal proximity to their employer, which places them in a weak bargaining position and makes it difficult for them to claim their rights to a private life. Additionally, employers may restrict their freedom of movement and they are particularly vulnerable to abuse; for instance, employers may prevent pregnancy or subject them to virginity or pregnancy tests – in which their bodies and right to families are violated – in order to ensure they remain childless.

My findings, therefore, suggest that being female may lessen one's bargaining power within domestic service – as reflected by women's overall lower wages as compared to men, and their higher likelihood of living in – but that the intersection of class and gender with age and living arrangements can further lessens one's power. Indeed, age is quite a useful predictor of workers' experiences, as young women are often the most vulnerable - they receive the lowest wages, have the longest working hours and are the most likely to be separated from their families. This is exacerbated by their initial mode of recruitment, via middlemen, which means they are usually not involved in any form of discussion with employers prior to employment, while living-in further limits any opportunities to build networks. Ethnicity seems to be less so – beyond determining the types of workers employers deem are suitable for certain tasks. Moreover, while there is a stereotype of 'Calabar' women as sexual, and one which the media even portrays, my findings reveal that age was a lot more threatening in terms of sexual availability than the ethnicity of the worker.

Indeed, for female live-in domestic workers my findings suggests that at the core of their everyday life is the construction of their identities as sexually dangerous and threatening, which employers used to justify their control over them and to maintain order through discourses of containing their sexuality, or protecting them from getting in trouble. Female live-ins' daily rituals and routines, e.g. the activities they do, the meals they can eat, their movements within and outside the house and so on, are deeply intertwined with their employers' controlling strategies, who in essence create their everyday for them –

one of isolation and lack of independence, thus making it extremely difficult for them to manage their own lives.

While female live-ins do experience extremely harsh conditions, their different responses to employer control, e.g. moving from live-in to live-out, sometimes dressing in a way to construct a positive identity, or addressing isolation through TV, reveal how they both resist and embrace the forms of self-discipline that their employers impose on them. I have tried to show how domestic workers are both complicit in, and express agency toward, various forms of control. Overall, it indicates how, for female domestic workers, their everyday lives may be based on a structure heavily controlled by their employers, but that the making of their everyday life and the relationships that form within it are as a consequence of everyday struggles and negotiations between employer and employee.

9.2.2 Female Live-out Mothers: Life 'Inside' and 'Outside' the Home

Unlike female live-ins, live-out workers (whether male or female) are more able to separate their paid domestic work from their personal lives. However, the nature of the job, such as unpredictable work schedules, does make this quite hard in reality. Female live-out workers who are mothers experience an extra layer of vulnerability in their lives as a result of an intersection of their low-class with their gender and parental status – balancing their domestic work, often vital for the subsistence of their households, while trying to meet their domestic responsibilities.

These low-income mothers may enable female employers to balance their motherhood with their paid work, but as indicated in Chapter 7, the live-out mothers I interviewed are not afforded the same luxuries. Their daily rituals and routines are shaped by *increased mobility* - being able to maintain some degree of autonomy from employers on a daily basis and having the capacity to maintain an independent familial and social life, which leave them with *mounting strains* – long daily commutes that are not subsidised by employer, long and arduous working days and often being monitored when at work due to employer anxieties around theft, for instance.

This is compounded by a lack of maternity rights or access to affordable childcare facilities for these mothers, who have a socially prescribed role as carer. Their daily rituals and routines are then also a balancing act, juggling the total demands of their paid domestic work with their responsibilities to unpaid care work in their own home, with little or no support from employers, the State, and – for those for whom it is applicable – male partners.

Providing adequate care for their children is also difficult, since they are among the lowest-paid workers and they can ill-afford to lose their job and are unable to pay for care services. As a result, they are more likely to resort to complex and unfavourable child-care arrangements, such as having to leave their children at home alone while they are at work if they are unable to find 'other' mothers. They also have to deal with the limited public service provisions in their communities. In short, they lead strenuous lives.

9.2.3 Male Domestic Workers: Life 'Inside' and 'Outside' the Home

Finally, bringing men into the picture enabled me to indicate the wide array of domestic service tasks – cooking, caring, cleaning, driving, guarding and gardening – that are integral to the functioning of wealthy households in Lagos. It also reveals that certain jobs are seen as more suitable for men, e.g. the work of *maiguards*, drivers, gardeners, cooks, washermen and houseboys. This suggests a further segmentation of this occupation, in which men are seen as having skills that women do not possess.

While having similar experiences to their female counterparts, male domestic workers also experience more autonomy in this occupation – those who live-in have their own 'spaces', such as 'boys' quarters' in employing compounds and their movements in the public sphere are less restricted, while those who live-out may be provided with rent and transportation allowances. Men, on average, also earn more than women.

These differences are significant. Female live-outs have to also deal with long commutes and costly rents; however, by not subsidising these costs, this adds strains to their lives – worsened by the fact that they earn significantly lower wages that men. Additionally, women who live out have to deal with domestic responsibilities when returning home, but only a few men who live-out or work part-time cite this as a problem. Then there are the male live-in fathers who are able to be more present in their wives and children's lives – either via mobile phones or in person (although that is not regular) due to their less constrained working lives and higher wages.

At the same time, men still do the 'dirty' work and are stigmatised as dangerous. Like female live-ins, they are perceived as having a threatening sexuality due to their low-class status and association with dirt; like female live-outs, they can take what belongs inside outside through theft. Thus, men are not spared from anxieties employers have over workers. Unlike women, they are seen as less than men because they undertake low-paid menial work and are in jobs that are often associated with 'women's' work. This construction of safe and dangerous masculinities, of being skilled and able to do certain domestic tasks better than women, is the complex backdrop of their everyday; one in which control centres on their masculinity and emasculating them by, for instance, calling them 'boy', or restricting them from spaces inside the house to protect women. Male workers also resist – they move between households, redefine their masculinity on the basis of doing this for their family, emphasising the new skills they have learnt, or stressing the difficulties and physically challenging nature of their work. Men are, therefore, distinguishing themselves, and the work they do from female domestic workers.

9.3   Towards a Conclusion

The point here is to suggest that everyday life of domestic workers in Lagos is diverse as workers have multiple, intersecting identities – a man can be a man, a low-paid man, a live-out man and a father. It is also easy to assume that domestic workers in Lagos are victims in the households they work, and sometimes reside, in. Older workers also seem to experience more respect on the job. For example, they are more able to dictate the terms of their work; say what they will and will not do; are often referred to with terms of

respect; seen as mature, responsible and able to get the job done; and not sexually threatening. These workers are also more likely to experience more 'positive' forms of control to ensure gratitude and loyalty, e.g. gifts, pay rises, loans, indicating that control is not always exploitative.

However, it is equally important to recognise the way they aim to challenge taken-for-granted assumptions about their sexuality, motherhood, masculinity, within the context of the conditions in which they often work. This is apparent in the diverse and heterogeneous actions that they develop in order to improve their working conditions and create spaces for care, leisure and friendship in their lives.

For domestic workers, then, while their often low and sporadic wages, among other things, ensure their lives are precarious, these workers still reveal the small joys of living – Sundays at church, spending time visiting family and friends, reading, resting, watching television or listening to the radio, of friends gossiping and playing cards, or music; the 'hidden' side of workers' everyday lives that came alive in a number of their accounts.

Employers may play a significant role in defining the rituals and routines of everyday in this occupation, but the workers themselves constantly challenge these attempts to shape and structure their everyday lives. Ultimately, this is a study of the life experienced by male and female domestic workers in Lagos, Nigeria which suggests that by looking closely at what people actually do, and why, through appropriately contextualised and situated analysis, it may be possible to make sense of everyday life for this group of

workers that are trying to make a living and survive in a city that needs them, but doesn't see them.

Through workers' narratives, I suggest, therefore, that analyses of everyday life must begin from the empirical content of what people actually do as they confront the particular effects of the workings of power relations. By considering the diversity of this workforce, this also enables recognition of the many different factors that influence experiences and how these need to be analysed within the context of who is experiencing what and how.

9.4 Challenges and Further Research

In this final section, I reflect on the challenges in undertaking this study and where future research can help in addressing these limitations. Namely, I focus on two areas: 1) male employers and ii) additional intersecting identities.

9.4.1 The Domestic Arrangements of Male Employers

When I started this study, I wanted to have an equal representation of male and female employers. This is because I felt that an assumption that employers are usually women can lead to an incomplete understanding of the dynamics of the domestic power relations, in which men also employ domestic labour. As Majella Kilkey et al. (2013) state, in their work on masculinities, male labour and fathering in the UK and USA, as a way to 'resolve or at least mitigate the "father time-bind"' (ibid:2), fathers in the UK are drawing on handymen services to enable them to spend more time with their children.

Yet, as observed in this thesis, I was only able to interview two male employers. Additional informal conversations with men who employ domestic workers, as well as interviews with male domestic workers who work directly for men, indicate the importance of also addressing male employers when looking at social order in paid domestic work. Indeed, I was briefly able to analyse the ways male employers restrict their male workers' ability to have a life beyond the workplace, the same way female employers constrain the lives of female domestic workers.

Therefore, an area for further research is the domestic arrangements of different kinds of men in Lagos. A study of this nature has been done in the context of fathers in the UK (see Kilkey et al., 2013), where fathers who express a desire to be involved in the nurturing of their children alongside their breadwinning activities outsource male domestic work. There has also been a study in the Italian context by Ester Gallo and Francesca Scrinzi (2015) on male employers' outsourcing of elderly care services to migrant care workers.

 A similar study on men and their outsourcing of male and female domestic labour could provide useful insights into the gender division of labour within contemporary Nigerian households. Specifically, what types of men are employing domestic workers, what are the rationales behind men drawing on domestic workers and what is the nature of the employer-employee relationship when men are involved? What does hiring male and/or female domestic labour mean for the men who are relieved from these tasks? What do these men do with their free time saved – work, leisure or caring? While I touched on

some of these questions in this thesis, there is a need for more in-depth analysis to address these questions and more.

9.4.2 What About Other Differences?

I went into this research thinking ethnicity would play a major role in workers' experiences and, while it did play a part in shaping workers' lives, it was a less important one than I initially thought. Where it did have a role was in determining, to some extent, which worker was suitable for certain tasks, such as the Hausa *maiguard*, the Calabar housegirl and the Yoruba driver. My findings did also reveal that majority and minority ethnic groups can be found in this occupation, indicating that it is less about ethnic status and more about social class, and also that these are usually internal migrants regardless of their ethnicity. However, as seen throughout this thesis, class, gender, age, living arrangements and parental status played a more significant role in workers' everyday experiences.

This leads me to ask, what other characteristics will impact on workers' experiences in Lagos? Nuancing understandings of domestic service and adding multiple identities of course means that the picture becomes very complex, very quickly. It leads to a proliferation of potential categories of inequalities. Clearly, one study cannot cover them all in any depth; however, I maintain that this complexity is crucial to truly make sense of domestic service.

For example, towards the end of my research, it was revealed that, in addition to workers from Togo and Benin Republic, a number of wealthy Nigerians are increasingly

employing Filipino maids, despite their higher financial cost, as a way to further indicate their higher social status. An informal conversation at a social gathering revealed that Filipino maids are usually paid around NGN65000 (USD$416) a month and are preferred because of the many bad experiences employers have had with local maids, such as stolen items, gossiping and sexual relations with male members of the household. There is also a perception that foreign maids, and particularly Filipino domestic workers, are cleaner and more obedient. As such, another area for future research could entail exploring the reason behind the rise in foreign, and particularly Filipino, domestic workers in Nigeria. For example, what impact does this have on traditional Nigerian domestic workers, particularly as my findings reveal that many workers are in this line of work due to lack of employment opportunities?

Another potential area of research could be around religion. While I briefly explored religion as a form of resistance, a future study could analyse whether there are different preferences along religious lines from the perspective of employers, and if there are experiences between employers and employees based on religion. Nigeria is divided evenly between Muslims and Christians (45 per cent each, the remaining 10 per cent being traditional religions), and research of this nature could explore the relevance of religion in a city like Lagos, which is in the Christian south. For example, Bina Fernandez (2014) in her study on migrant domestic workers in Lebanon, observed cases where workers are made to change their religion if it differs from the employing household. Is this the case in Lagos? And what does that mean for a worker's identity and how does that shape their everyday life?

Finally, Nigeria is a diverse country, with each of the six geo-political regions having different characteristics. What would this workforce look like in other major cities in the country, such as Abuja, the capital of the country located in the centre, or Port Harcourt in the South-South? This would further reveal the importance of context in exploring this occupation, and might also reveal some additional insights into this occupation.

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Appendix I
List of Participants

1. Female Live-in Domestic Workers

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	State of Origin	Distance from Lagos (km)	Marital Status	No of Children/Ages/Location	Occupation	Salary (NGN)
Bukola	19	Yoruba	Oyo	240	Single	None	Housegirl	Don't know
Chidi	18	Igbo	Mbaise in Imo	530	Single	None	Housegirl	3500 (USD$22)
Bola	20	Yoruba	Oyo	240	Single	None	Housegirl	1500 (USD$9.6)
Tope	19	Tiv	Benue	785	Single	None	Housegirl	3500 (USD$22)
Khadijat	18	Yoruba	Ilorin in Kwara State	350	Single	1/(age – 3)/with family in Kwara	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Kudirat	19	Yoruba	Kwara	350	Single	None	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Ama	No idea (guessed around 18/19)	Ijaw	Ekpoma - Edo	340	Single	None	Housegirl	Don't know
Joy	No idea (guessed around 18)	Tiv	Benue	785	Single	None	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Ada	31	Igbo	Enugu	575	Married	4/(ages - 8 to 13)/with relatives in	Nanny	12500 (USD$80)

Name	Age	Ethnicity	State		Marital status	Children	Job	Pay
						Lagos		
Nancy	25	Ibibio	Akwa Ibom	676	Single	2/(ages- 3 and 6)/with family in Akwa Ibom	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Happiness	No idea	Efik	Cross-Rivers	748	Single	None	Housegirl	7000 (USD$44)
Ngozi	18	Tiv	Benue	785	Single	1/(age – around 3)/with relatives in Benue	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Blessing	19	Efik	Cross-Rivers	748	Single	None	Housegirl	2000 (USD$12)
Ijeoma	53	Igbo	Imo	531	Widowed	3/(ages – 20 to 27)/Lagos	Nanny	8000 (USD$51)
Lola	21	Efik	Akwa Ibom	676	Single	1/(age – 5)/with relative in Lagos	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Funmi	19	Efik	Cross-Rivers	748	Single	1/(age - 4/with family in Cross Rivers	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Rita	45	Efik	Cross-Rivers	748	Married	3/(ages – 10 to 16)/relatives in Lagos	Nanny	16500 (USD$105)
Pamela	19	Efik	Akwa Ibom	676	Single	None	Housegirl	2500 (USD$16)
Tina	30	Igbo	Anambra	486	Divorced	None	Nanny	10000 (USD$64)
Carol	37	Ibibio	Akwa Ibom	676	Single	None	Nanny	15000

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	State of Origin		Marital Status	No of Children/Ages	Occupation	Salary NGN
								(USD$96)
Faith	18	Efik	Akwa Ibom	676	Single	1/(age – 3)/with family in Akwa Ibom	Housegirl	Paid in kind
Patience	No idea (guessed around 18)	Adja (Rep of Benin)	Rep of Benin	330	Single	None	Housegirl	5000 (USD$32)
Lota	31	Igbo	Rivers	600	Single	None	Nanny	8000 (USD$51)

Source: Author's Survey (N = 23)

2. Female Live-Out Domestic Workers

Pseudonum	Age	Ethnicity	State of Origin	Marital Status	No of Children/Ages	Occupation	Salary NGN
Chidinma	42	Igbo	Anambra	Divorced	4 (ages between 12 – 22)	Nanny	15000 (USD$96)
Chinwe	33	Igbo	Anambra	Widowed	3 (ages 5-10)	Cook	20000 (USD$128)
Efem	34	Efik	Cross-Rivers	Married	2 (ages 9-15)	Nanny	10000 (USD$64)
Nneka	28	Ijaw	Rivers	In a relationship (boyfriend)	None	Housegirl (Part-time)	10000 (USD$64)
Doris	21	Tiv	Zaki-Ibiam in Benue	Single	1 (aged 2)	Housegirl	7500 (USD$48)
Precious	28	Efik	Cross-Rivers	Married	4 (ages 3-8)	Nanny	17500 (USD$112)
Efe	No idea	Adja (Rep of Benin)	Rep of Benin	Single	None	Housegirl (Part-time)	Varies
Abeni	No idea	Tiv	Benue	Co-habiting	None	Housegirl	8500 (USD$54)
Priscilla	23	Ibibio	Akwa Ibom	Single	None	Housegirl	8000 (USD$51)
Mopelola	55	Yoruba	Oyo	Widowed	1 (aged 14)	Housegirl	Varies

								(Part-time)	
Regina	35	Efik	Cross-Rivers		Married	3		Nanny	20000 (USD$128)
Samantha	22	Efik	Akwa Ibom		Single	1		Housegirl	12500 (USD$80)

Source: Author's Survey (N = 12)

3. Male Live-in Domestic Workers

Pseudonym	Age	Ethnicity	State of Origin	Distance from Lagos (km)	Marital Status	Occupation	No of Children/Ages/Locationn	Occupation	Salary NGN
Emmanuel	19	Ewe (Togo)	Togo	365	Single	Houseboy	None	Houseboy	10000 (USD$64)
Hassan	Don't know (Guessed around 20s)	Hausa	Maiduguri	1691	Single	Maiguard	None	Maiguard	5000 (USD$32)
Nasir	27	Hausa	Jigawa	1258	Single	Maiguard	None	Maiguard	5000 (USD$32)
Husain	Don't know (Guessed around 20s)	Hausa	Kaduna	887	Single	Maiguard	None	Maiguard	5000 (USD$32)
Sunday	19	Efik	Akwa Ibom	677	Single	Houseboy	None	Houseboy	6000 (USD$38)
Ola	35	Yoruba	Oyo	240	Married	Driver	2 (aged 5-8) – in Oyo	Driver	50000 (USD$320)
Tosin	37	Yoruba	Ondo	240	Married	Houseboy	3 (aged 2-14) – in Ondo	Houseboy	16000 (USD$102)
Musa	27	Hausa	Jos	978	Single	Driver	None	Driver	35000 (USD$326)
Muhammed	Don't know	Hausa	Maiduguri	1691	Single	Maiguard	None	Maiguard	9000

	(Guessed around late 40s)								(USD$57)
Lucas	30	Igbo	Imo	530	Single	Maiguard	None	Maiguard	10000 (USD$64)
Amadi	37	Adja (Rep of Benin)	Rep of Benin	330	Married	Cook	3 (aged 7-14) – Rep of Benin	Cook	35000 (USD$288)

Source: Author's Survey (N = 11)

4. Male Live-out Domestic Workers

Psuedonym	Age	Ethnicity	State of Origin	Marital Status	No of Children/Ages	Occupation	Salary NGN
Etok	Don't know (guessed around 20)	Igbo	Abakaliki in Ebonyi	Single	None	Houseboy	7500 (USD$48)
Jonathan	25	Ijaw	Delta	in a relationship (girlfriend)	None	Houseboy	12000 (USD$76)
Ade	28	Yoruba	Ondo	Married	3 (aged -2 to 5)	Driver	22500 (USD$144)
Rufai	57	Yoruba	Osun	Married	5 (aged (18- 27)	Driver	50000 (USD$320)
Felix	46	Igbo	Rivers	Single	None	Gardener (Part-time)	20000 (USD$128)
Tunde	30	Yoruba	Ondo	Married	2 (aged 4—6)	Driver	25000 (USD$160)
Ali	35	Hausa	Kaduna	Married	None	Cook	28000 (USD$179)
Ayo	68	Yoruba	Kwara	Married	7 (aged 24-40)	Driver	48000 (USD$307)
Sampson	38	Efik	Cross-Rivers	Married	3 (aged	Cook	30000 (USD$192)

Femi	25	Yoruba	Ogun	in a relationship (girlfriend)	None	Driver	50000 (USD$320)
James	33	Efik	Akwa Ibom	Married	3 (aged 2-9)	Washerman (Part-time)	15000-18000 (USD$96-115)
Tobi	22	Yoruba	Osun	Co-habiting	None	Houseboy	13000 (USD$83)
John	33	Igbo	Imo	Married	5 (aged 4-15)	Gardener (Part-time)	10-15000 (USD$64-96)
Friday	37	Efik	Akwa Ibom	Single	None	Cook	30000 (USD$192)
Praise	47	Efik	Cross-Rivers	Married	2 (10-15)	Washerman (Part-time)	6000 per household (USD$38)
Akpan	39	Efik	Cross-Rivers	Married	5 (8-16)	Washerman (Part-time)	6000 per household (USD$38)
Chima	25	Igbo	Imo	Co-habiting	None	Gardener (Part-time)	15000 (USD$96)

Source: Author's Survey (N = 17)

5. Employers

Pseudonym	Sex	Age	Ethnicity	Occupation	Marital Status	Number of Children	Average Monthly Household income[1]	Types of Domestic Workers Employed/Ethnicity
Bolanle	F	62	Yoruba	Self-employed, Shop Owner	Married	7	450,000 (US$2700)	Live-in House-girl (Tiv) Live-in Driver (Yoruba) Live-out Driver (Yoruba) Live-in Maiguard (Hausa)
Theresa	F	53	Igbo	Civil Servant	Widowed	4	200,000 (US$1200)	Live-in House-girl (Efik) Live-out Driver (Yoruba)
Tolani	F	41	Yoruba	Caterer	Married	4	350,000	Live-in House-girl (Yoruba)

							(US$2100)	Part-time Washerman (Igbo)
Kehinde	F	50	Yoruba	Doctor	Married	3	350,000 (US$2100)	Live-out House-girl (Efik) Live-in Maiguard (Hausa) Live-out Driver (Igbo)
Damilola	F	72	Yoruba	Retired	Married	5	100,000 (pension) (US$600)	Live-in House-girl (Yoruba)
Adama (50k)	F	35	Hausa	Teacher	Married	2	250,000 (US$1500)	Live-out Driver (Hausa)
Balogun	M	56	Yoruba	Civil Servant	Widowed	3	550,000	Live-in House-boy (Yoruba) Live-out Cook (Hausa) Live-in Driver (Hausa) Live-in Maiguard (Hausa) Part-time Gardener (Efik)
Biodun	F	56	Yoruba	Housewife	Married	4	Did not say	Live-in House-girl (Yoruba) Live-in Nanny (Yoruba) Live-in Maiguard (Hausa)
Idris	M	33	Yoruba	Architect	Single	None	120,000 (US$730)	Part-time House-boy (Yoruba)
Eno	F	29	Igbo	Bank Manager	Married	2	250,000 (US$1500)	Part-time Washerman (Igbo) Live-out House-girl (Efik)
Taiwo	F	27	Yoruba	Designer	Married	1	250,000 (US$1500)	Live-in House-girl (Ijaw)
Rachel	F	38	Delta	Housewife	Married	2	200,000 (US$1200)	Live-out Nanny (Igbo) Live-in House-girl (Benin Republic)

Source: Author's Survey (N = 12)

[1] Income sources in urban Nigerian households are diverse, with incomes coming from non-agricultural enterprise (a small shop or other form of household self-employment), wage or salary income (having an employer), and other non-labour income. In this study, all employer households reported having the following income sources – income from wages and salaries, non-agricultural enterprise, with some also mentioning remittances from family abroad, as well as transfers from family and friends, and rental income. However, the figures include estimates of the participants' (and their spouses) main source of income.

Informal Conversations

	Informal Conversations with	Location
1	PR Consultant	Wedding
2	Hairdresser	Self Centre Salon
3	Relative	Social Gathering
4	Taxi Driver	Social Gathering
5	Tailor	Ogba LSDPC
6	Mechanic	Garage
7	Friend	Researcher's Home
8	Market woman	Alade Market
9	Shop owner	Omole Estate
10	Friend	Friend's Home
11	Driver	Friend's Home
12	Nail Technician at Nails Rooms	Nails Room
13	Client at Nails Room	Nails Room
14	Shop Girl – Mates Supermarket	Mates Supermarket

Participant Observation

	Activity	Location
1	Family lunch day – on Sundays	Various locations
2	Weddings/Birthdays	Various locations
3	Employers' Homes	Various locations

Key Informants (Pilot Study)

	Interviewees Details	Location
1	UNICEF Nigeria Child Protection Specialist	UNICEF, Lagos
2	Founder of PaulaBlack Domestic Help Recruitment Agency	Email
3	Professor of History (UNILAG)	University of Lagos
4	Founder of the Centre of Women's Health and Information (CEWHIN)	CEWHIN

Focus Group Discussions (Pilot Study)

	Participants	Focus Issue	Location
1	6 participants	Hired-Help/The 'House-help' Phenomena	Omole Estate [Researcher's Home]
2	8 participants	'House-helps' being abused using Maya Hunt's song 'Ekaette'	Omole Estate [Researcher's Home]

Appendix II
Topic Guide for Semi-Structured Interviews with Employers
<u>Section A - Background information</u>
Demographics (age, marital status, number and ages of children, education, ethnicity, place of origin)
Profession, number of working hours per week, monthly salary
Size of house (number of rooms)

<u>Section B - Employing a Domestic Worker</u>
How many domestic workers are working at the moment for you?
Are they full-time/part-time?
How long have you been employing domestic worker(s)?
Why do you employ a domestic worker?
How did you find the domestic worker that you are employing now? (recruitment agency, middle-man friends/relatives, other domestic workers?)
In case of agency/midde-men, costs?
What do you look for in a domestic worker? (e.g. sex, age, nationality, ethnicity, religion, educational background, language, skills, appearance, employment background, marital status, children?)
Why?
What are the advantages/disadvantages of employing a domestic worker with these characteristics?

<u>Section C – Working Conditions</u>
What type of domestic tasks do you do?
And what type of domestic tasks do your workers do? (cleaning, cooking, washing, ironing, cooking, childcare, driving etc.)
What is your workers' working day like?
How much do your workers' earn?
Any other benefits (accommodation, food, medical bills)
How many days per week/hours per day does s/he have to work?
Do your workers live –in?
Live-in, where do they sleep?
Are live-ins allowed to enter all rooms/spaces in the house?
If not, which spaces are they not allowed to enter? Why?
Live-out, where do they live?
Who pays for rent?
How do they go home? Who pays the transport costs?
Do workers have days off/regular breaks?
Are they allowed to leave the house during a break? If not, why not?
Do they have any friends/other domestic workers?
Do they have contacts with family? If yes, how?
Do they visit home often?
What problems do you experience with your workers?

Appendix III

List of Legislations and Policies Reviewed[27]

National Legislation and Policy Reviewed

National Legislation and Policy Reviewed

Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999)
Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (First Alteration) Act (2010)
Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Second Alteration) Act (2010)
Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (Third Alteration) Act (2010)

National Legislation (by order of year of enactment)
Labour Regulations (1936)
Immigration Act (1963)
Immigration Regulations (1963)
Immigration (Control of Illegal Aliens) Regulations (1963)
Labour Act (1974)
Social Development Act (1974)
National Minimum Wage Act (1981)
National Institute for Labour Studies Act (1984)
Immigration and Prison Services Board Act (1986)
Factories Act (1987)
National Commission for Refugees, Etc. Act (1989)
National Directorate of Employment Act (1989)
National Population Commission Act (1989)
Labour Act (1990)
National Commission for Women Act (1992)
National Primary Heath Care Development Act (1992)
Trade Unions (International Affiliations) Act (1996)
National Health Insurance Scheme Act (1999)
Child Rights Act (2003)
Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act (2003) – Amended 2005
Pension Reform Act (2004)
National Health Bill (2008)
Employee's Compensation Act (2010)
National Electoral Commission Act (2010)
National Minimum Wage (Amendment) Act (2011)
Pension Reform Act (2014)

National Policy Documents
National Employment Policy (2000)
Labour Migration Policy for Nigeria (2013 revised draft)

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[27] Not all legislation and policies reviewed are discussed in the thesis