

**Understanding Childcare Choices amongst Low-Income
Employed Mothers in Urban and Rural KwaZulu-Natal**

By Nonzuzo Mbokazi

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Supervisors: Professor Elena Moore and Professor Jeremy Seekings

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Abstract

This study explains how low-income employed mothers navigate care strategies for their young children (0-4 years). The study considers the constraints within which they make ‘choices’ about caring for their children using the market, kin and state. In addition, the study argues that these ‘choices’ are immensely constrained and that the low-income employed mothers have no real choice.

For many women, the ‘feminisation of the workforce’ – the growing number of women in paid work – has entailed enormous stress and pressure, as they combine strenuous paid work with the demands of mothering. Low-income employed mothers must balance paid with unpaid work, in ways that are different to women who have more resources. This study analyses how women do this within households where gendered roles and a gender hierarchy continue to prevail. In some cases, low-income employed mothers must take on not only do the ‘work’ of managing the household but also the additional ‘work’ of soliciting the fathers for financial support and involvement in at least some aspects of their children’s lives. This is a phenomenon that existing literature has not captured.

The work performed by low-income employed mothers is shaped by changes in the family structure and kinship relations. The family structure in South Africa has been described as disintegrating and in crisis. I argue that the presence of paternal kin had traditionally been a pertinent one in the life of a child (specifically in KwaZulu-Natal, the study site) based on patrilineal belonging. This has significantly shifted and has implications for low-income employed mothers already stretched thin balancing work and childcare with limited support.

The ‘choices’ made by working women are also framed by their understanding of motherhood, which are in turn framed by cultural and societal expectations and perceptions. Having engaged with the balance between paid and unpaid work (and other forms of work – cognitive work and the work of chasing money and involvement) that the mothers must do (mothering practices), the thesis makes sense of Zulu ideals about motherhood, and how these have shaped and informed the experiences of the mothers, in the present context of the changing position of women.

Mothers are nearly always the gatekeepers for the provision of care for children. This study uses the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers to show that they cannot exercise much choice in determining how to provide care for their preschool children. Most of the

institutional options – both through the market and the supposed state – are constrained by their inability to afford to look for better options and by their lack of time to travel to better options. Familial or kin options are constrained by the ambivalence of kin and mothers' own expectations and understandings of their own roles. The result is that employed mothers are often on their own, piecing together a combination of childcare arrangements that is very far from the ideal childcare they would like to provide for their children.

Low-income employed mothers need to be supported in their roles as employed mothers; this would be possible through subsidized public provision of quality early childhood services. However, policy implications of this would need to be considered. For instance, what would quality childcare provision cost the state? Is it feasible in a country still working on undoing the policy implications of the apartheid state? It could be that the state might not have the capacity to organize this. The South African state has a very poor track record in converting public expenditure into high quality public services. Lessons from this can be drawn from a few examples, for instance health care, education and housing (which are problematic).

This thesis adds to the literature in using the lived experiences of employed mothers to show that neither the state nor the market nor kin provide an adequate safety net for the care of the children of low-income employed mothers.

Plagiarism Declaration

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Name: Nonzuzo Mbokazi

Student number: MBKNON006

Signature: Nonzuzo Mbokazi (Signed in original)

Date: 9 January 2020

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Abbreviations

ANC – African National Congress

ECD – Early Childhood Development centres

IFP – Inkatha Freedom Party

HIV/AIDS – Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome

KZN – KwaZulu-Natal

UCT – University of Cape Town

Glossary

Amabizomfakela – English terms used in IsiZulu

Amadlozi – Ancestors

Ilobolo – Bride price

Imbeleko – A ceremony introducing a child to paternal ancestors

Imigomo – Procedure

Impi yamandiya – Battle with the Indians

Inhlawulo – Damages

Inhlonipho – Respect

Inkosazane – Eldest daughter

Inkosikazi – Wife

Isithunzi – Dignity

Intsika – Rondavel pole

Intsika yekhaya (singular)/ izintsika zamakhaya (plural) – symbolically a mother, seen a pillar of a household

Inyongo – Gall bladder of a cow or goat

iQhugwane – Hut dwelling

Kubo kwayo – Their home

Nabasekhaya – Paternal Kin

Obaba – Fathers

Omalume – Maternal kin

Ubaba – Father

Ukubika Isisu – Reporting a pregnancy

Ukubumba umuzi – Building a household

Ukuthenga umntwana – To buy a child

Umama – Mother

Umakoti omdala – Eldest bride

Umchanguzo – A traditional Zulu wedding

Sangoma – Traditional healer

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Introduction

Childcare in South Africa is provided by state, family and market providers. Family friendly policy such as the White Paper on Families in South Africa (Department of Social Development, Republic of South Africa, 2013) endorses a collaboration between private and public sector support for families. Such an endorsement has made an important contribution to a rise in female employment and subsequently the employment of women who are also low-income mothers.

This research explores challenges facing low-income employed mothers face in their participation in the economy as well as their role as the primary caregivers to children. For the purposes of this study low-income employed speaks to low income work and is also associated with poor working conditions and job insecurity. It speaks to the contention of being employed yet poor (Posel, 2014; Yu, 2019; Feder, 2019). Further, the labour force includes those working and not working. More women have moved into work, but more women also became unemployed. Low- wage employment and working poverty in South Africa; shapes the lived realities of the low-income employed mothers in this study. The increased labour market participation of low-income employed mothers has only a limited effect in emancipating women as many of them have to grapple with the dynamics of childcare, part of which involves the costs. I attribute this to weakness in government policy with regards to childcare. While one cannot overlook the fact that childcare state policy contributes to poverty eradication to a certain extent (Budlender & Lund, 2011), I argue that the cost of care arrangements for low-income employed mothers can prove to be taxing as shown in this study. This is because the burden of care is often carried by low-income employed mothers. By improving childcare state policy, there would be a move away from a hierarchical structure which marginalises employed mothers in low-income settings. Employed mothers in the low-income settings are navigating their public roles as low-income workers and their other roles as mothers with difficulty. This difficulty is predicated on the inadequacy of childcare provision accessible to low-income employed mothers.

As an alternative, many low-income employed black mothers¹ in South Africa relied heavily on kin for support in childcare provision so that they could participate in the labour force.

¹ Both under and after apartheid, South African governments have classified people as either white (to refer to settlers and immigrants of European origin), Indian (to refer to immigrants of South Asian origin), African (to refer to most of the

However, this family and kin support has changed significantly and many low-income employed mothers, as reflected in this study, draw on the market as a care strategy for their child/ren. It is important to note that this is not a new phenomenon. Cock's seminal work in 1981, *Disposable nannies: Domestic servants in the political economy of South Africa*, found that over half of African working mothers used as a sample in a research she conducted were paying for childcare, as found with the sample in this study. This study interrogates the place of women as low-income employed mothers who are carers and providers, whilst existing literature on childcare is focused on the children. For instance Hatch and Posel in *Who cares for children? A quantitative study of childcare in South Africa* (2018) focus on the children, although their main finding is that primary physical care and financial support of children is most likely to be provided by women, as this study finds. This study goes further, in order to understand the lived experiences of women as carers and providers for the children and how their lived experiences inform their childcare strategies or 'choices'.

This study adds to existing literature on the gendered dimensions of care, concurring with work done by scholars such as Kenny (2004), Fakier and Cock (2009), Mosoetsa (2011), Posel and Rogan (2012) and Daminger (2019). The study builds on this work, which focused on the gendered dimensions of care that affect low-income employed mothers who are providing care whilst balancing paid, unpaid and cognitive labour. This study goes beyond the gendered division of and presents a new form of work, namely 'More Work: Chasing Money and Involvement'. This is the invisible work that low-income employed mothers do by desperately seeking father involvement, financially, physically and socially, and, by chasing father involvement, also chasing the involvement of paternal kin.

Whilst scholars such as Madhavan and Roy (2012) examine "how low-income black men in South Africa and the US work with their kin to secure fathering and ensure the well-being of children", this study disputes this assertion. Due to the nature of changing kinship relations and the reconfiguration of kin (Button, Moore and Seekings, 2018; Spiegel, 2018), this study found it is often the case that if the father is absent, kin also exempts itself from involvement in the child's life, even cultural customs of *inhlawulo* (damages, which traditionally connected paternal and maternal kin of a child) appear not to be securing kinship and father involvement.

indigenous population) and 'coloured' (with each label changing over time). This last category encompassed the indigenous Khoi and San populations of the Western Cape, slaves brought to the Cape from South-East Asia and people of mixed racial descent. This study uses Statistics South Africa's definition of the main population groups, and the use of 'black' to include black African, coloured and Indian/Asian people.

South Africa's social history attests to the central role played by grandparents in looking after their grandchildren, orphaned or not (Bray, 2003; Sidloyi, 2016). The grandparents providing childcare in this context are particularly grandmothers, as explored by Damien (2017) who showed that grandmothers act as primary caregivers for their children's children in Thohoyandou, Limpopo and by Button (2017) who showed the burden of care experienced by low-income grandmothers in Khayelitsha. This study does not dispute that grandmothers act as primary caregivers in many contexts in South Africa, but expands our understandings of the ways in which mothers seek/navigate support from paternal and maternal grandmothers as all the mothers (except for one mother who is a live-in domestic worker) live with their child/ren and are the main caregivers for the child/ren. (This research follows 0-4-year-old child/ren.) This dispels the common narrative that it is grandparents (grandmothers) doing all the work in terms of childcare in low-income settings. In some contexts, this is may be the case, but this study is merely depicting an alternative narrative.

This raises the question of "who has duty to support" as posed by Moore (2019). What is found in this study is that when kinship relations and dependence on kin mutate, and the state's support is scant in terms of adequate welfare provision, the care of children falls on "the unpaid and paid resources of women" (Moore, 2019). The research revealed the necessity of understanding the inequalities faced by low-income employed mothers regarding childcare responsibilities, and how women navigate being mothers and low-income earners. The navigation of these roles often means drawing on a mixture of market, kin and state support for the care of young children; this is new given that state support across races has only been available for the last 25 years, and more significantly in the last 10 years.

The impetus of this study is that it is crucial and imperative that we understand the contexts low-income employed mothers are faced with, all of which influence the kinds of decisions women are able to make regarding childcare in light of the changing households (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Mathis, 2011; Mhongo & Budlender, 2013; Hall & Mokomane, 2018); the decline of marriage rates; the sometimes precarious presence of fathers or lack of father involvement in care work; and the feminization of poverty. The study is seeking to add to the scholarship on gender inequalities in terms of care and the burden of childcare which falls on low-income employed mothers.

1.2 Thesis contribution

In attempting to understand the realities of low-income working mothers, it was important to unveil the realities and the intricacies of childcare faced by the mothers in their households. The study also allowed for the understanding of care strategies made use of by the mothers and their lived experiences of being low-income working mothers and all this entails.

This thesis contributes to literature by using the lived experiences of working mothers to show the inadequacies of the state, market and kin in providing an adequate support and guard for the care of the children of low-income working mothers. The thesis uses the lived experiences to explain that low-income working mothers are stretched so thin that the ‘choices’ they make regarding childcare are not necessarily ‘choices’ as such, but strategies they can organise or arrange to ensure that their children are in some form of care when they are at work.

1.3 Thesis outline

Chapter two provides the context for the study sites in this research. The sites are situated in KwaZulu-Natal, in two townships (Umlazi and Sundumbili) and two rural areas (Macambini and KwaNdaya). The socio-political and economic framings of this chapter contextualise and locate this study. This gives context to the situations which low-income employed mothers find themselves in; the context of the areas speaks to the mothers’ race, class and gender. The chapter reflects on colonisation and the land question (specifically in the rural area), apartheid (which shapes the kind of work the mothers find themselves in) and the fragmentation of the family. The chapter provides a look at the townships the women live in, and their design during apartheid for black people to reside in. This township design put people in conditions of structural violence and had consequences that can be seen today in high rates of socio-economic disadvantage. The background of these areas paints a picture for difficulties faced by these women, navigating childcare in areas marked by underservicing and unemployment.

This study uses qualitative research methodology with techniques such as semi-structured and structured interviews, as well as observations. Chapter 3 explores the research questions that informed the methodological choices made during the study. The chapter also outlines the rationale for selecting qualitative research methods and techniques. The chapter provides an outlook to the relationship between the researcher and participants. A pilot study undertaken at the preliminary phase of this research is also presented. Access issues, reflexivity and the limitations of the research are discussed.

Chapter 4 focuses on paid and unpaid work the mothers do. The chapter provides a detailed look of the day to day work women do, from the time they get up, prepare for work and for their children, their commuting to work, their typical days at work and the commute back from work to home, to resuming work within the home. The topic of commuting is one that was quite pronounced because KwaZulu-Natal (and South Africa more broadly) urban (townships and informal settlements) and rural areas are on the periphery of the cities, where the low-income employed mothers in this study work. The chapter draws in some of the difficulties faced by the women at their places of employment from their superiors and how all of this is combined with the work that is invisibly done by the mothers in their private spaces at home. The chapter captures how the lived experiences of the mothers are largely defined by their socio-economic situations by integrating literature on the feminisation of labour and social reproduction theory.

Chapter 5 identifies the level and ways in which fathers and paternal kin provide practical and financial support to low-income employed mothers; the interactions between fathers and paternal kin and children; and their involvement in the lives of children given the important roles fathers and paternal kin are supposed to play in a child's life (regardless of being born outside of marriage) based on patrilineal belonging. Before commencing to speak about Zulu culture, cultural practices and customs, it becomes important to frame the perspective from which this derives. In this study Zulu culture refers to the traditional and historic cultural practices, social mores and customs pertinent to Zulu communities (Edwards et al., 2011). However, it is important to note that culture is not static, the history of South Africa, colonialism and apartheid have shaped what is meant about culture. There is a strong link between understandings of culture historically and how it is practised today. Further, there are potential contradictory definitions of culture - there is the traditional and historical relation to pre-colonial practices. In Zulu the word *isiko* carries an ethical claim to cultural practice which denies the colonial imposition of colonial practices. At the same time, cultural practices are not static and have evolved through both apartheid and the colonial encounter but also through living practices. The co-existence of different ideas of customs and culture creates ambiguity in debates over specific cultural practices but also draws our attention to the problem of essentialising culture.

As such, the cultural practices of *inhlawulo* is engaged with in much detail because of the links between the payment of *inhlawulo* and father and paternal kin involvement; and the non-payment of *inhlawulo* and the lack of father and paternal kin involvement. Herein, the character of intra-household relations, including tensions and strains in relation to care provision for children, will be accessed. The presence of fathers as characterised by financial provision is delved into, in this chapter. Whilst existing literature focuses on the presence and absence of fathers, this chapter considers the place of paternal kin in the life of a child because of the strong place and role that paternal kin is traditionally supposed to hold and play in a child's life. The study furthers the discussion on the role of fathers by evaluating the norms of the role of kin by engaging with father presence and absence. Only focusing on the role of fathers, would not provide a full picture of childcare and kinship ties.

The care strategies mothers develop to provide childcare, often a combination of the family, market and state support, are engaged with in Chapter 6. This is done through engaging with welfare and social policy frameworks to make sense of the place of the market, state and kin in childcare. In doing so, the study examines how support from different sources is experienced and how it has changed or changes over time. The chapter centres on depicting that, to ensure that their children are in care during the time they are work, women often need to piece together whatever childcare arrangements are affordable and available to them. The chapter outlines the difficult socio-economic circumstances of low-income mothers and the subsequent childcare choices mothers make about care provision, and whether these can be considered as choices, and outlines the predicaments, challenges and constraints faced by the women.

Chapter 7 theorises motherhood and mothering, using intersectionality and black feminist theory to depict the position of low-income mothers and how this shapes their lived experiences of mothering. The chapter explores the choices mothers make in decisions about childcare provision and how these impacts their constructions of motherhood. The chapter also deals with cultural and social norms of motherhood, experiences of motherhood, the expectations society has of them as mothers, and expectations they have of themselves as mothers and the guilt which follows in cases where these are not achieved.

Finally, chapter 8 concludes the thesis by providing a summary of thesis findings and provides an overview of arguments as well as thesis contributions. Given that each chapter deals with separate yet interconnected parts of the experience of managing care, the thesis is structured in a way that presents the literature in each chapter.

Chapter 2: Context of study sites

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a history of the research study sites selected in this study situated in KwaZulu-Natal: Sundumbili, Umlazi, KwaNdaya and Macambini. The socio-political, historical and economic background of the study sites serve to contextualise the study. The background of the two townships (Sundumbili and Umlazi) tell a story of underdeveloped urban areas which were reserved for established for those classified as ‘Africans’. Townships, as they exist today, were built on the periphery of towns or cities where the non-white people were needed for labour. The background of the rural sites (KwaNdaya and Macambini) tells a story of border politics which define many rural areas in South Africa, and what it means to straddle between being a democratic citizen of South Africa and a subject under a chief in a rural settlement.

The advent of democracy in South Africa has allowed black mothers from low-income background new opportunities (such as the ability to enter the labour force) but it has also imposed upon them new burdens: having to balance their public roles as labour force participants and their private roles as mothers. Although black women are entering the labour force in increasing numbers, the type of employment most available to these women is low-income employment, which is partly because black women were intentionally under-educated by the apartheid government. Many fathers are absent due to choosing or being forced into the migrant labour system which fractures families. Absences and an inability or unwillingness to provide financial or emotional support are often the result. Rural women are also increasingly migrating to urban areas for work, often taking their children with them.

This chapter aims to depict how although a lot has changed for women from these areas, a lot has still remained the same for them, how the legacy of colonialism and apartheid can be seen through the educational attainment of most of the women interviewed in this study, and how the employment the women participate in is often low-skilled and low paid (due to low educational attainment). Thus, although these women’s circumstances are different from their mothers, and a lot has changed, a lot has remained the same.

Although none of the participants reflected on the political-historical background of their families, it seems likely that their current predicaments are highly located in their pasts. Due to

institutional restrictions during segregation (colonisation) and later apartheid, black people were squashed into areas that will be discussed in this chapter, and many were never able to move past the limitations put upon them. This chapter illustrates how the fracturing of families, declining marriage rates, reconfiguration of kinship, the question of land, and poor education have happened against a particular backdrop, and the chapter depicts how these aspects of South Africa as a country, and specifically the study site areas, have been a catalyst for the predicaments faced by low-income employed mothers in South Africa.

2.2 Understanding kinship and family

The most basic institution in any society is the family and it is the social context from which members of a society derive their primary identity. Okudu (2010) defines the family as a domestic group in which parents and children live together, and in its elementary form consists of a couple and their children. Farley (1994) described the family as a group of people related by ancestry, marriage or other committed sexual relationship, or adopted and living together. Similarly, Smith and Preston (1982) defined the family as a social group whose members are related either through common ancestry or marriage and are bound by moral and economic rights and duties. It is important to highlight the difference in the terms, family and kin. The family is a more concise unit, kin is wider and is more inclusive beyond relation, primarily on the grounds of ancestry and marriage (Jackson, 2015:3-12).

Kin includes relationships between individuals who are commonly thought of as having family ties. Kinship is culturally constructed, as Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (1955) and Onwuejeogwu (1975) defined kinship as a social construct that expresses the social relationship between an ego, his parents and siblings. Kinship includes consanguineal relatives, i.e. people on both sides of your family related to you by blood; affinal relatives, i.e. relations through marriage (Manderson & Warren, 2013); and fictive kinship, i.e. patterned on kin-like relations but not actually based upon blood or marriage (Ibsen & Klobus, 1972). Fortes (1969) understood that kinship was governed by unconditional altruism whilst relationships between non-kin were governed by expectations of reciprocity. However, there is not much clarity whether the norms and morality underlying kinship are entirely unconditional (Sagner & Mtati, 1999: 401). In post-apartheid South Africa, it seems likely that claims and responsibilities among many kin are decided based on both expectations of reciprocity and the norms and obligations of kinship. For instance, kin help each other both because they feel that they ought to do so and because they expect reciprocal 'rights' (Seekings, 2008:3). And this is the concept used in this thesis

because when it comes to childcare, the network women draw on is wider than their families. Some are geographically in a position where they are far from their immediate family and therefore cannot draw on their family. However, kin being a more expansive term and transcending biological relations can be inclusive, for instance, of neighbours (and, as will be discussed in chapter 6, play an active role in childcare in this study).

Whilst the precise pattern of responsibility to kin in South Africa remains uncertain, it seems likely that kinship is much less 'binding' than in the past (Seekings, 2008). I will now look at possible reasons for these changes in South Africa. The reconfiguration of kinship relations is also tackled in detail in chapter 6.

2.3 Changing kinship relations

The black South African family has historically never been nuclear. The concept of the traditional family in South African black families has historically been marred with marital structures such as polygamy. Polygamy is still an existing marital structure which was lawfully and officially recognised in South Africa in 2000, through the legislation of the Customary Marriages Act 2000. This supports the reason why the concept of kin or kinship is used in this study. As discussed by Radcliffe-Brown and Forde (1955), it is important to recognise that in the African context a system of kinship and marriage can be looked at as an arrangement which enables persons to live together and co-operate with one another in orderly social life. Unlike in Western societies which traditionally supported and favoured nuclear family living, most families in South Africa are more fluid and may comprise a range of related people over time and space.

The structure of the family is existing in changing times. For instance, the institution of the family as historically understood in terms of what makes a family, and certain practices which marked a family, have decreased significantly, for example, a man being able to marry 30 wives (Schapera, 1941:18). The traditional structure of marriage and family as understood in the African context has fundamentally changed. In addition to low levels of employment, young South African fathers are particularly unlikely to live with their children because of the precipitous decline in formal marriages among black South Africans (Posel, Rudwick, & Casale, 2011). Fewer than half of men and women living in KwaZulu-Natal reported being in a formal marriage by age 40 (Hosegood, McGrath & Moultrie, 2009). In rural South Africa about half of all births to women age 12–26 occur out of wedlock (Garenne, Tollman, & Kahn, 2000).

Subsequently, the performance of customary practices such as *ilobolo* and *inhlawulo* (Hunter, 2006; Swartz & Bhana, 2009; Bhana & Nkani, 2014), as well as that of *imbeleko*, which were ways of bringing together families, create kinship networks and maintain relationships, have declined. The practice of paying *ilobolo* has declined considerably because of the declining marriage rates which could be attributed to unemployment. The payment of damages or *inhlawulo* is a custom in the Zulu culture carried out when a child is born outside of marriage, as a father's acknowledgement of paternity, is also in decline. As a result of the performance of the *imbeleko* ceremony (which introduces a child to their paternal ancestors) is in decline. All of these are processes which were negotiated and led by kin, allowing for kin to meet and build relations and ties. Given this change in the ways in which kin relates and engages, it becomes possible to understand the change in kinship relations.

This section has described the concepts of family and kinship, and what these relations look like in the context of KwaZulu-Natal. It cannot be ignored that the traditional concept of the family is indeed mutating and this section will attempt to identify what may be the cause of this and establish why the traditional definition of the family is being deviated from, given declining marriage fertility rates and the general fragmentation of the family unit.

2.4 Marriage patterns

Mhongo and Budlender (2013) looked at the declining rates of marriage in South Africa and observed that the decline in marriage rates has stalled since 1995, but also argued that those who claim that post-apartheid factors are driving the decline in marriage need to confront the fact that this is not a new trend. However, before understanding the change in marital patterns and subsequent decline in fertility patterns, it is key to have a clear and deep understanding of South Africa's history as many determinants of these patterns are rooted in the background of South Africa.

The institution of the family is essentially multidimensional in nature in that it affects and is affected by the various institutions, such as social, economic, cultural and political institutions, which together form the social structure in society. Social change is a function of two main sets of factors, namely endogenous and exogenous factors. Segregation induced processes such as urbanisation and industrialisation, and what followed was the political structure of apartheid which imposed restrictions on the family and household formation patterns in society, especially among black people who bore the ultimate impact of the policies (Amoateng &

Richter, 2007:3). Three pieces of legislation passed by the apartheid government, which had a significant role in fragmenting of family structure among black people, were:

Group Areas Act, Act No 41 of 1950

Population Registration Act, Act No 30 of 1950

Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No 55 of 1949

One of the main aims of apartheid as enforced through legislation was to reserve the cities for the white population with the black population living in separate 'homelands'. However, apartheid could not have survived without a poorly paid supply of labour of African workers, who could live in the cities as well as on commercial farms, on a migrant basis to work for white owned interests and support white families. Men usually left their families, leaving their wives and children behind, and leaving women to child rear independently.

Herein, it is clear to see the impact the apartheid regime had on the institution of the family. Because of apartheid, the family unit was marred by fragmentation and demise. The Group Areas Act meant that people were grouped according to their race in terms of where to live. The policy meant that if an individual looked a race different than that of their family, they were separated from their family based on their phenotype. The Population Registration Act classified and registered individuals based on their racial characteristics as part of the system of apartheid. Again this fragmented the family. Family relations were essentially reduced to control by the pigmentation of ones' skin.

During the apartheid era the state created and implemented policies on how families were to be constituted and which families would be accepted by the state. The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act is a true reflection of this policy (Worden, 2000:120). The policy was demeaning and prohibited people who loved each other and wanted to enter the institution of marriage from doing so. The state charged and put on trial people found guilty of committing any form of 'immorality'. This policy mirrored the apartheid states' vision of what the ideal family was or was supposed to look like. Any diverging form was a criminal offence.

As already discussed, the migrant labour system was another product of the apartheid regime which broke the family unit. The migrant labour system included men from many black families leaving their families and going to work in the mines in Johannesburg to provide for their families. For many black families, the system birthed family patterns such as female-headed families, infidelity, children born out of wedlock and an unstable composition of the family unit in the rural areas (Amoateng & Richter, 2007:4; Hosegood, McGrath and Moultrie,

2009:281). Segregation and subsequently the migrant labour system fragmented the institution of marriage and family. For instance, it meant that for 11 months a year a husband and wife would be apart. It is important to understand what this meant, what activities took place between the couple, and what it meant for the couple and the family at large. Upon return from the mines in the city the man often tried to assume his role as the head of the household and to establish authority upon his return. In this, woman suffered abuse physically and emotionally (Ramphela, 1993). The labour migrant system separated husbands and wives, curbed co-residence, disrupted the basic unit of a nuclear family (Watson & Wilkinson, 1996:10), led to various forms of families forming in hostels where migrant labourers resided, changed the family unit, and fragmented families.

The unnatural arrangement put a severe strain on most families and stripped both parents of the various roles played by parents. The bond formation between parents and children was significantly weak. In addition, Makiwane (2004) observed that there were noteworthy delays in entering marriage, as well as very low marriage rates in South Africa. Makiwane (2004:48) stated further that consensus had not been reached among observers on the reason for the decline in rates of marriage. Makiwane did not clearly indicate the time period to which he referred. The article raised awareness that chronology and political and other developments at different periods must be central to any investigation of changes in marriage rates (Makiwane, 2004:48). The article drew on census data to demonstrate changes in marital status of Africans between 1936 and 2001. His presentation shows a clear decline in marriage rates from 1960 onwards. Thus, the decline of marriage and fertility rates cannot be understood independently without a framing historical background of South Africa.

2.5 Female headed households

A female-headed household is a household where there are only adult women and no adult men, or where there are both women and men, but a woman is identified as being the nominal household head (Rosenhouse, 1989; Handa 1996; Posel 2001; Budlender 2007; Hall & Mokomane, 2018:37). The increase in female headed households could also be because of the increasing number of women joining the labour force. As presented by Casale and Posel (2002), an increasing number of women joining the labour market in a country may be viewed as a positive trend – women’s increased access to earnings independent of men might not only serve to provide them with more control over their lives, but also contribute significantly to their households’ welfare levels (Casale, 2003). Women joining the labour force, although

usually in low-income precarious work, affords women agency, such as being able to pursue households of their own, headed by them.

2.6 Multigenerational households

The concept that ‘it takes a village to raise a child’ is a strong premise in the South African context of households. The concept that everyone should play a part in a child’s life is quite pronounced, as will be discussed in detail in chapters 6 and 7. The principle of ubuntu, which is premised on unity, humanity and cohesion is solemn in the concept of a community, relation by blood or not coming together in childrearing. Skip-generation and multigenerational households are common (Hall & Mokomane, 2018:38). Schatz and Ogunmefun (2007) highlight the need for multigenerational households, given the HIV/AIDS era, where older women in rural South African multigenerational households play a significant role contributing towards care. The following section of the chapter will illustrate how the fracturing of families, reconfiguration of kinship, the question of land, and poor education have affected the study sites and have been a catalyst for the predicaments faced by low-income employed mothers in South Africa.

The history, geographical positioning and political economy of Sundumbili, Umlazi, KwaNdaya and Macambini are rich and specific, thus providing a very strong background for the research. To ignore it, or touch on it scantily, neglects a strong story about the effects borne by the townships and rural settlements; which explain the position of low-income employed mothers as will be depicted in this thesis.

2.7 The politics of space

Due to South Africa’s history, space was used as an apparatus to ensure separation and division amongst racial groups; the implementation of colonisation and later apartheid in South Africa was about the expropriation of space. As a result, space and mobility within space are strong features in the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers, who often live on the periphery of cities they work in.

The geographical spatial structure as constructed by the apartheid government speaks to space providing uneven distribution of social goods and amenities in favour of white people (Madlalate, 2017:447). In the urban areas, this meant cities with commercial centres owned dominantly by white owned businesses, as well as suburban areas; on the outskirts, this meant townships accommodating the black labour force, and characterised by poor servicing and

overcrowding (Williams, 2000:167). In the rural areas, this meant a significant amount of black people who occupied spaces where they had insecure tenure as labour tenants, farm dwellers and other occupiers of white owned land (Williams, 2000:167).

By confining black people to underserviced, overcrowded areas with poor access to health care and education facilities, the apartheid state was able to direct the trajectories of their lives by restricting access black people had to economic spaces and high-quality educational institutions. Black people were confined within an environment where residents' isolation was compounded by poverty. This even affected 'opportunity structures' where the racial ideology of the apartheid state produced unequal outcomes (Galser,1993:71). This chapter aims to use this idea that space is political to depict how space has cultivated the circumstances of the low-income working mothers in this study.

2.8 Pre-apartheid: land dispossession

Colonialism in South Africa ended in 1910 with the Union of South Africa but the segregation of people in urban areas continued. During this pre-apartheid area, legislation such as the 1913 Native Land Act targeted blacks. This act stated that only 13% of the land in South Africa could be owned by the black majority. In many cases this was land that was in bad shape, making it hard to grow crops and increase productivity or survive. This also forced many black farm owners to work on white owned farms or mines. In many cases they worked for very low wages (Kariuki & Van Der Walt, 2000: 1). The Native (Urban Areas) Act of 1923 required all black African men in cities and towns to carry a permit, called passes, always. This resulted in an increase in the outward displacement of African people to locations on the periphery of cities and towns. Another issue experienced in this 'Segregation City' (1911–1950) is the lack of provision of adequate housing and infrastructure for non-white African people. As a result, there were squatter settlements (slums) that mushroomed on the peripheries of major cities (Schoeman, 2018:29).

From 1948 to 1990 the apartheid government relocated millions of black people, in both urban and rural areas, attempting to create separate racial zones and ethnically-defined 'homelands'. Black people were forced into Bantustans or Homelands. Gender inequities in land access and ownership were exacerbated by the fact that low-income employed women faced the additional burden of care and trying to balance care and unpaid care. As Weideman (2006:380) explained so fittingly:

“Like many rural men, many rural women look at the urban sector and urban employment as a route to household economic survival and advancement. In a context of already high unemployment rates, women are less likely to secure employment and are paid less when they do. Access to land thus remains a crucial factor in the economic survival of female-headed households in rural areas”.

However, access to land is not the easiest to be obtained by women in low-income rural parts of KwaZulu-Natal South Africa. This means that the freedom, agency and the ability to realise a sustainable livelihood using land is not the easiest thing for women in rural KwaZulu-Natal.

2.9 Post-apartheid

Post-Apartheid South Africa has largely remained spatially divided and segregated with a vast number of poor black people still residing in townships, informal settlements and rural settlements, far removed from amenities and job opportunities. Although the post-apartheid South African government has implemented redistributive programmes to provide housing to poor people, through the Reconstructive Development Programme (RDP) (even in rural areas). The provision of such a programme has resulted in the intensification of urban movement (Schoeman, 2018:29), with the result that cities have grown rapidly, especially in townships and informal settlements.

In townships, and in informal and rural settlements, basic service delivery remains a challenge for urban areas in this context. It is important not to ignore the progress that has been made in providing services such as water, sanitation and electricity to townships (and some rural settlements, although in South Africa broadly, running water remains unavailable in many informal and rural settlements, including the ones explored in this study). Herein, hinderances which existed during apartheid continue to prevail. For instance, there is still no proper road infrastructure in informal and rural settlements. People in these low-income settings continue to be marginalized and, on the periphery, have trouble navigating space and access to centres of employment and social amenities.

These conditions speak to those addressed by Mosoetsa (2011) presenting findings on the micro-politics of poverty and inequality from Mpumalanga and Enhlalakhle townships in KwaZulu-Natal. Mosoetsa depicts the dire circumstances faced by older women, battling for survival in settings marred by socio-economic difficulties inherited from the apartheid regime. And in this situation the household becomes a site of survival, where the fight for survival is

borne by women. Fakier and Cock (2009), drawing on findings from Emnambithi, speak about the gender crisis of social reproduction where poor living conditions and lack of services make good care more difficult to obtain and increase women's work, as women are faced with unemployment, poverty, inequality and the burden of disease.

The crisis of social reproduction is intensified by inequality rooted in low-income employed mothers being located on the periphery of the cities where they work (in townships and rural settlements), which means higher transport costs, difficulty in terms of accessing good schooling and other resources. The failure to invest in the townships and rural settlements means a lack of economic opportunities and growth close to where people live (Schoeman, 2018:30). All of this has a direct consequence for women, mothers and their performances of paid and unpaid work. The following sections aim to provide an overview of the urban and rural study sites. Before providing the overview and background to these sites it becomes key mention why I decided to use sites as case studies. As a person from KwaZulu-Natal and with family connections in two of the specific sites, I have always been intrigued by the existing divide between urban and rural areas. I was interested to understand the lived realities of mothers with scant economic resources from each area.

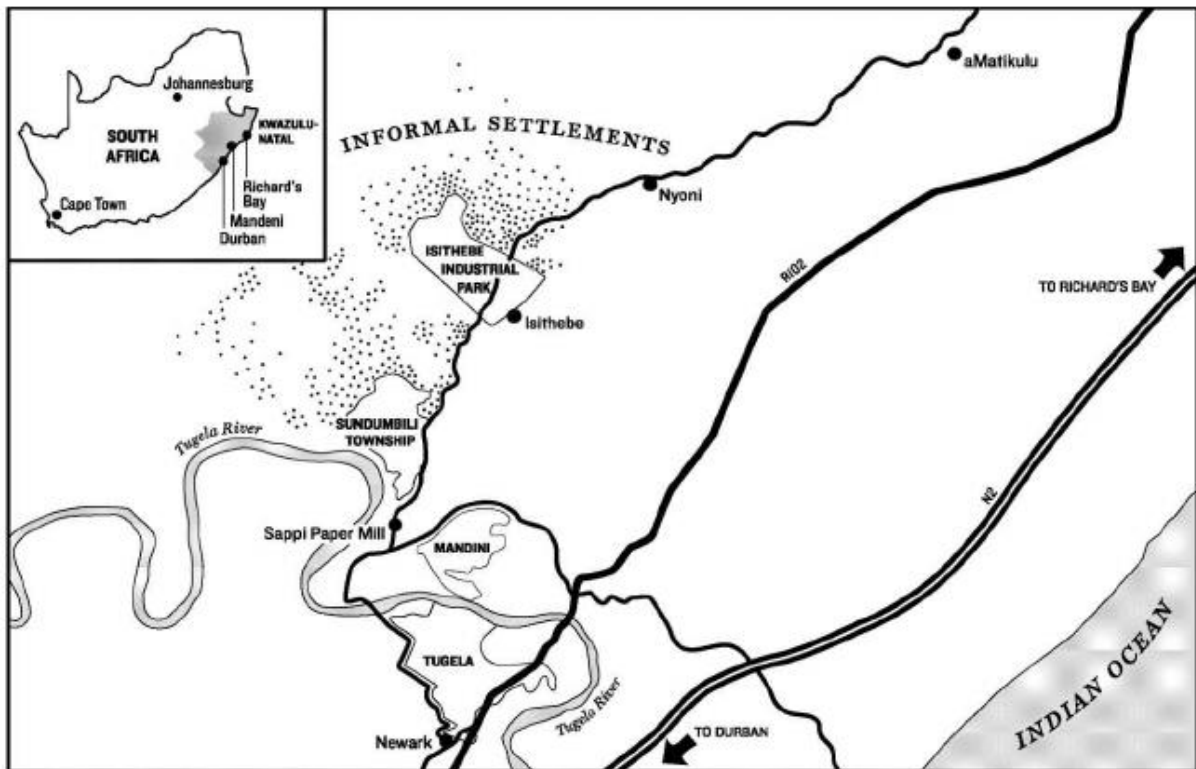
2.10 Urban areas: Sundumbili and Umlazi townships

2.10.1 Sundumbili township

Sundumbili is a township that falls under Mandeni Municipality which straddles urban and rural quite distinctively. As well explained by Hunter (2010), the Municipality of Mandeni incorporates the geographical and social scars of colonial conquest and apartheid. Sundumbili Township owes its existence to the borders drawn by apartheid authorities, which outlined the KwaZulu homeland. Sundumbili was built for residents of SAPPI; Isithebe Industrial Park was built later. Where 'border industries' were created, Isithebe was described by the *Sunday Times* in 1989, as being 'one of the largest and fastest growing decentralisation areas' (de Haas, 1994:23). Isithebe's heavily subsidised factories were part of an apartheid social engineering project aimed at deterring black South Africans from entering large white towns. Isithebe's industrial success made the area something of 'a jewel in the apartheid crown' (Hunter, 2010:19).

The geographical positioning of Sundumbili Township is unique due to its conjuncture with urban and rural Mandeni.

Figure 1: Map of present-day Mandeni (Hunter, 2010:20).



The township is approximately 100 km north of Durban and 70 kilometres south of Eshowe. Sundumbili is 6 kilometres west of the national road number two that links Durban with Empangeni and Richards Bay (Mzoneli, 1976:3). To the east of the township is Mandeni Railway Station and SAPPI (South African Pulp and Paper Industries, Limited); to the south and southwest is the Tugela River (the largest river in KwaZulu-Natal); to the west of the township lies the densely populated squatter area made up of tin shanties, wood and daub structures. Roughly northwest is the Isithebe growth point (Mzoneli, 1976:3); three kilometers north from Sundumbili is the Machibini rural settlement and 6 km further north is the Macambini rural settlement. Thus, this speaks to the peri-urban character of the township. Although it has all the institutions which mark it as an urban area, not too far from the township are rural settlements which are extremely underdeveloped.

2.10.2 Sundumbili today and low-income earners

The Mandeni/Isithebe urban node and surrounding economic emphasis is on commerce and manufacturing industry, as well as social and business services (Mandeni Local Municipality, 2018). The Isithebe Industrial Estate (owned and operated by Ithala Development Finance Corporation) is well positioned between Durban and Richards Bay; the area serves as a site of employment for people from Mandeni and Richards Bay. However, although the area had

previously been a jewel in the queen's crown, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and United Democratic Front (UDF) conflict, and consequently trade union politics, saw the move away of many companies and firms which had been in the Isithebe Industrial Estate.

Trouble has continued to mar Sundumbili. More recently, in 2016, community members were disgruntled over the re-nomination of the ex-mayor to stand as a councillor in an upcoming local government election (in 2016) (Wicks, 2016). As a result, 150 businesses in Isithebe lost three weeks of production due to protests caused by the African National Congress (ANC)'s internal power struggle, and 2300 jobs were confirmed to be lost as three factories closed (Herbst, 2016). In 2019, more factories and trucks were burnt following heated protests by residents; protesters were demanding the removal of Mandeni mayor Siphesihle Zulu. A protester said: "We are tired of Zulu, he must stepdown as the mayor because he is full of corruption. We tried to voice our concerns before no one wanted to listen, so we thought it was best to protest" (Nene, 2019).

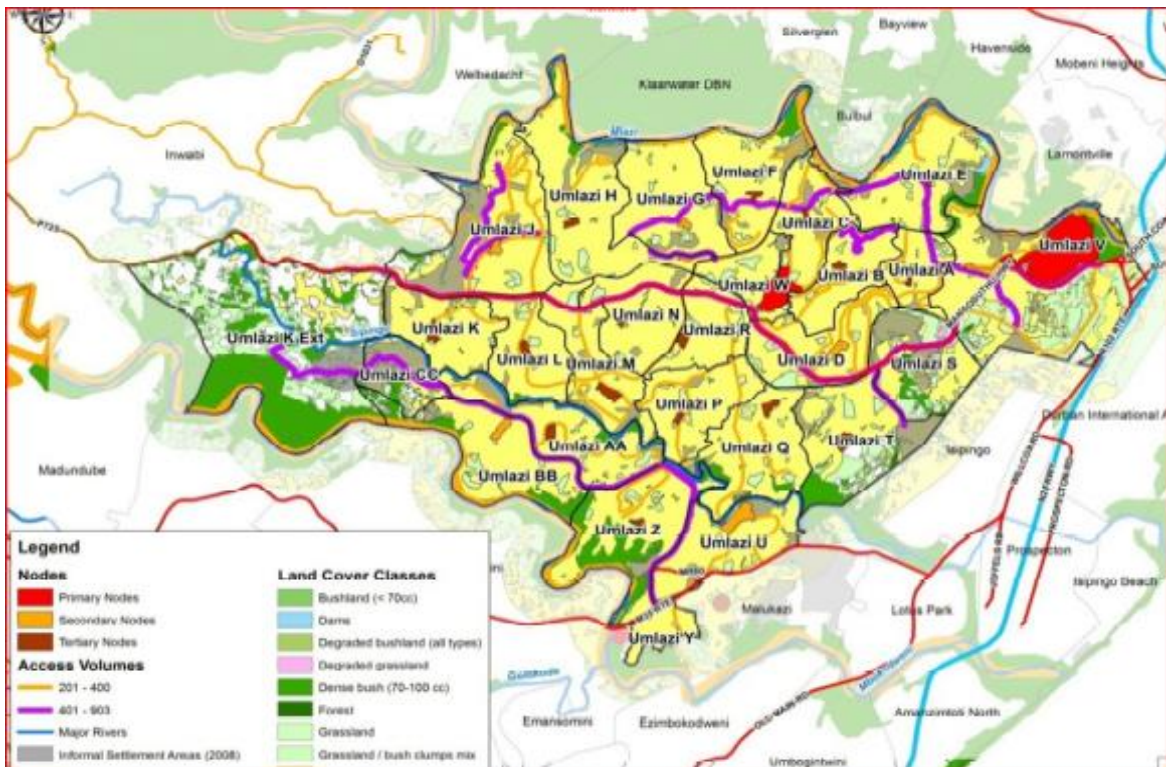
2.10.3 Umlazi township

KwaZulu-Natal is regarded as the second most densely populated province in South Africa with some 404, 811 people living on its 47,46 km² of land (Statistics South Africa, 2011). Umlazi is part of the central metropolitan local council of the greater Durban metropolitan area.

Umlazi is situated 30 km south west of the city of Durban. East of Umlazi is the Borough of Isipingo and further eastwards is Chatsworth, which is predominantly and historically an Indian township. Indians from all over Durban were moved to Chatsworth under the Group Areas legislation (Freund, 1996:129). The poor socio-economic aspects of the Umlazi township affect many of the people in the township and impact on their quality of life. The socio-economic situation of Umlazi forms the basis and context for development in the specific local economic development strategy which the eThekweni Municipality tries to implement.

Below is a map of Umlazi township (marking specific sections of the township), extracted from Umlazi & Malukazi Local Area Plan & Township Regeneration Strategy, Final Report (2011:155).

Figure 2: Umlazi township (marking specific sections of the township)



2.10.4 Umlazi today and low-income earners

Umlazi, like many South African cities, is characterised by institutional problems. Historically, administration has been fragmented and uncoordinated in townships; Umlazi is no different in this regard (United Nations Human Settlements Programme [UN-HABITAT], 2007:10). Much of the development in Umlazi is a characteristic of the township's general deficiencies relating primarily to residential accommodation, provision of facilities and services, and lack of urban and economic opportunities (Rothaug, 1998:3). In sum, whilst the historical influences in the development of Umlazi have to a large extent been mutually supportive, the historical effects have been quite profound and varied. Umlazi finds itself in an unfortunate position of having to suffer the effects of various widely recognised failed policies and approaches which the eThekweni Municipality (UN-HABITAT 2007:10) has attempted to implement in the area post-1994. Although there has been considerable improvement in the area, such as street lamps in every part of the township (a feature which was not present during apartheid) and running water in most of the formal houses in the township, there are still gaps which the municipality has not been able to address effectively.

Having provided the background to the townships Sundumbili and Umlazi and mapped the employment circumstances and what has shaped these, it is important to ask questions about women's work, the separation of families and the responsibility for care, taken on by women,

which does not shift regardless of difficult employment circumstances. This has depicted how political, economic, social and spatial conditions make life in these areas challenging in specific ways for women, employed women, and employed women who are mothers, who carry the responsibility to care and provide for young children. The burden of care is almost always carried by women; the circumstances presented in these townships do not alleviate this burden on women; and these are significant factors in how the low-income employed mothers who participated in this study narrated their feelings. The following section provides an overview of the two rural study sites, KwaNdaya and Macambini.

2.11 Rural Areas: Rural Settlements

2.11.1 KwaNdaya

KwaNdaya is a small rural settlement just outside of eSikhawini (in Empangeni). At this moment it becomes important to mention that I have battled immensely finding background information pertaining to KwaNdaya, there are only two Master theses that I found which have information on the area. One by Hadebe (2008) which does a case study on KwaNdaya, provided information on KwaNdaya pre-colonisation and what the area looked like after adopting Christianity through missionaries. The second thesis was in town planning but provided a very useful background of eSikhawini the main town next to KwaNdaya. Although KwaNdaya is not reflected in this map (because I could not find a map that illustrates the small rural area. This municipal map of areas with the uMhlathuze Municipality provides a look into the area.

Figure 3: uMhlathuze Local Municipality (Municipalities of South Africa, 2012-2019).



ESikhawini falls under Umhlathuze Municipality which is in the northern part of KwaZulu-Natal Province. Since the borders of the municipalities have changed some of the previous municipal areas fall under new municipal areas. Umhlathuze Local Municipality falls under UThungulu District Municipality (Ngubane, 2009:9).

ESikhawini is located at approximately 5km from the coast of the Indian Ocean and approximately 180 km north of Durban. The settlement of KwaNdaya is situated 2km away from the N2 route and consists of mixed settlement types and land uses. Richards Bay and Empangeni are closest towns located at an estimated distance of 15-20 km away from ESikhawini. The towns are accessible via public transport and private transport. Richards Bay and Empangeni dominate the region as prime sources of employment, Richards Bay functions mainly as the industrial hub and Empangeni as the commercial, shopping and service centre of the area (Ngubane, 2009:12), the research participants in this study site worked mainly in these areas with the exception of one participant who travelled vastly for her work as a sales representative.

A brief historical background, ESikhawini was established during the early 1970s at the time of global Industrial and Commercial Revolution in South Africa. During the early 20th century, large Industries moved into the area of Richards Bay and other commercial activities around Empangeni (uMhlathuze Municipality, 2018). As a result, a large population migrated to

Empangeni and Richards Bay since these areas provided people with job opportunities that required both skilled and unskilled labour. People with qualifications especially those with matric certificates were the priority since there were few black people who had access to education. Because these industries needed cheap labour, many people were employed but most black people occupied lower positions that required less expertise given that they lacked formal and professional training. Although this has significantly changed, many people in this area are in informal work. Such people include residents from KwaNdaya, who live in this rural area but work in urban Empangeni and Richards Bay.

Most recently (2018) KwaNdaya has been covered in the media in reports regarding community protests in the area, where an angry crowd burned tyres all in reaction to a report that R 17.5 million donated by Richards Bay Minerals to the community of KwaNdaya in 2010. The community was demanding transparency from traditional leaders regarding the expenditure of the funds (Makwakwa, 2018) as one resident said: *'All we want is to know what happened to the money and which developments in the community it was used for. This is the community's money and we have the right to be informed'*.

This depicts a changing time where members of the community of KwaNdaya are holding their traditional leaders accountable, this embodies core of Mamdani's (1996) sentiments that indirect rule created two categories of people, the 'citizen' and the 'subject'. The key to dissolving these categories is through true democratisation, and this may prove to be a challenge because reforming a power that institutionally enforced tension between town and country and between ethnicities may prove to be a problem to democratic reform.

Similar findings define eMacambini's current standing as it surfaced in the media regarding a Dubai Theme Park deal that would displace thousands of families, however, before venturing into this I will paint a picture of the geographical positioning of the rural site Macambini.

2.11.2 Macambini

Macambini is within the iLembe District under Mandeni Local Municipality. Mandeni Local Municipality covers the area from the Amatikulu River to south of the uThukela River, just north of Darnall. Mandeni Local Municipality is located midway between Durban and Richards Bay, and lies on the development corridor on the North Coast between these two major port cities in KwaZulu-Natal. It is located on the major railway and road transportation routes which link these two economic hubs in KwaZulu-Natal (Mandeni Local Municipality, 2018).

Mandeni is acknowledged in the Provincial Spatial Framework which has identified Mandeni as the growth node in the north coast corridor. Mandeni Municipality is well located between two of Africa's largest trade ports, for instance, Durban and Richards Bay with the N2 eThekweni-iLembe-uThungulu Corridor, also referred to as a Multi-sectoral Service Corridor, passing through its economic core (Mandeni Local Municipality, 2018).

As already discussed in the section on Sundumbili Township as the township and the rural area of Macambini fall under one municipality; Mandeni consists of fragmented pockets of intensive urban settlement separated by areas of little or no development. Four rural settlements, Hlomendlini, Macambini (research study site), Mathonsi and Ndulinde, are each under an Inkosi (Chief). All are underdeveloped and have major backlogs in service provision. The municipality has no capacity to supply the whole area with electricity. Transport infrastructure is well developed, with a high standard of road and rail services into the area.

2.11.3 Economy and Industrial Development

The Mandeni/Isithebe urban node and surrounding economic emphasis is on commerce and manufacturing industry, as well as social and business services (Mandeni Local Municipality, 2018). The Isithebe Industrial Estate (owned and operated by Ithala Development Finance Corporation) as has already been discussed in the section covering Sundumbili's background, is well positioned between Durban and Richards Bay; the area serves as a site of employment from Mandeni and Richards Bay. However, although the area had previously been a jewel in the queen's crown, trade union politics of the 1980s (as discussed in the section on Sundumbili) saw the move away of many companies/firms which had been in the Isithebe Industrial Estate. Further, more recently, in 2016, disgruntled community members over the re-nomination of the ex-mayor to stand as a councillor in upcoming local government election (in 2016) (Wicks, 2016).

Agriculture is a sector which forms a huge part of Mandeni's economy; Mandeni includes substantial areas of commercial agriculture, with the bulk of these areas under sugarcane (Mandeni Local Municipality, 2018). Agriculture is a main employment sector in the area; many people are farmworkers on sugarcane fields, for farm owners directly or through a farming company, Simamisa Farming (a participant from this study site works for Simamisa). Simamisa is a secondary company of the sugar producing company Tongaat Hullet; it focuses

on an agricultural revitalisation programme which cultivates land under the Ingonmyama Trust (Motha, 2015). Herein, is pertinence for support of small-scale farmers and subsistence farmers as a means of ensuring the economic sustainability of the sector of agriculture, such an approach would be extremely necessary for farmworkers and those who rely on subsistence farming for food security that live in this area.

2.11.4 More recently eMacambini: The Zulu theme-park

A lesson which can be learnt from Macambini more recently is that initiatives to exploit locational advantage of Mandeni should be sensitive to the social dynamics and undertaken in an all-inclusive manner. An example of this would be how the state is keenly working on a deal that allows a Dubai property developer to build a Zulu theme park, in isizwe saseMacambini. The success of the deal means that ten thousand families will lose their land (Pithouse, 2009). Macambini is 23, 000 hectares; the developer proposes that it needs 16, 500 hectares for the theme park. Many people from this area are anti the project as it means to many, losing land which has been owned by the families for generations (approximately 15, 000 people would be displaced) all in name of ‘developing’ the area. The people’s voices for the most part were not heard, ignored and disregarded by those who hold power (Pithouse, 2009). However, upon much resistance from the community of the Macambini community and the situation being captured on media platforms such as YouTube, the stance of the community has been made clear, that they do not want the development, and this has put any proceedings of the project on imminent hold.

2.12 Conclusion

In urban KwaZulu-Natal, the townships of Umlazi and Sundumbili were purposefully selected as study sites. The purpose of selecting these two townships was to capture and compare the experiences of low-income working mothers in an urban township such as Umlazi (30 km from Durban and urban) and Sundumbili (100 km away from Durban). Sundumbili is a township approximately fifteen-minute drive away from the rural villages of Mandeni; it is very developed in comparison to the rural villages which neighbour it. It is a peri-urban township, a stark contrast to Umlazi which is situated at the centre of Durban and is the largest township in Durban and the fourth largest township in South Africa.

By understanding the context of Umlazi and Sundumbili, this chapter can provide an understanding of the narratives of low-income working mothers and of childcare state policy,

in the context of townships with significantly different geographical positioning. Umlazi is under the eThekweni Municipality which purports development of township communities and women. And, Sundumbili falls under Mandeni Municipality which consists of fragmented pockets of intensive urban settlements separated by areas of little or no development, such as the research study site Macambini, a rural area (114,3 km from Durban). The second rural area which is a study site in this research is KwaNdaya (59,8 km from Durban), a small rural area outside of Esikhawini.

What these study sites depict is the politics of space which is continuous and consistent in South Africa. As discussed earlier, the 1950's saw forced removals of black people. The Group Areas Act meant the separating of racial groups, with white people getting the best land and black people getting the worst land. Black people were forced into Bantustans or Homelands. Those who worked in the city were forced to move to the outskirts of the city – townships (Thwala, 2003: 2). This chapter has grappled with the social, political and economic histories of the study sites. I was able to understand the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers who live in urban and rural KwaZulu-Natal; these areas were also useful for me to comprehend whether space affects the choices made by low-income employed mothers when it comes to childcare, given the significantly different geographical positioning stemming from a history of disadvantage.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The thesis presents the findings of a qualitative exploration into the experiences of being a low-income employed mother and what childcare arrangements to draw on for children between the ages of 0-4 years (before entry into formal schooling). The purpose of the study was to describe and understand the choices low-income employed mothers made in relation to the care of their children, and to explore the possible consequences of these choices.

In using a qualitative approach, this study set out to

1. Explore the choices made by low-income mothers in relation to childcare
2. Describe the involvement of kin (maternal and paternal) in childcare
3. Explore the options of childcare in rural and urban areas of KwaZulu-Natal (KZN)

It is hoped through the analysis of the material gathered that the study can generate:

1. Understanding of the role of kin in childcare
2. New understanding of the role of the market in providing childcare support
3. Understanding of gaps in the provision of state care.

This chapter describes the research design and methodology and includes a discussion of the methodological framework and data collection methods and sampling procedures, data analysis, and ethical issues raised by the research. The chapter also outlines some of the limitations of the study.

3.2 Research questions

Low-income mothers experience poverty regardless of whether they are unemployed or in low-skilled and poorly paid employment (Ntshongwana, 2010). Although state support has had an impact and has been instrumental in lifting many households out of poverty, there is still a significant absence of adequate resources. This is primarily due to welfare policies, which are directed towards women and children and the alleviation of poverty, but which dominantly reproduce social conditions that disadvantage those with the burden of care, and that keep women at the periphery socially and economically. This means that societal status continues to

intersect and disadvantage women in low-income brackets. The gender dimension in poverty in South Africa has low-income employed mothers at a disadvantage as they try to balance the tension between a mother's unpaid care responsibilities and paid work. The study set out to understand the work low-income employed mothers do, both paid and unpaid. How do they balance this work with the responsibility to care? What are the care strategies used by women? How does this change over time, especially during periods of unemployment? What necessitates and justifies the study is the need to evaluate the cost incurred by taking responsibility to care, and the state's role in passing over of care. State institutions supporting constitutional democracy support social services; in this context the most relevant is the Child Support Grant (CSG) and that of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, implemented in 2011.

3.3 Problem statement and research questions

The main objective of this research is to understand and explain how low-income employed mothers who are recipients of the childcare grant navigate care strategies within the realm of family, state and the market. The subsidiary objectives include:

3.3.1 State, Market and Kin

- To identify the care strategies mothers develop, which possibly draw on a combination of family, market and state support. In doing so, the study will examine how support from different sources is experienced and changes over time.
- To examine the perception of the quality of childcare arrangements used by low-income working mothers.
- To compare similarities and differences in urban and rural KwaZulu-Natal about care strategies.

3.3.2 Kinship and childcare

- To identify the level and ways in which family and kin members provide practical and financial support to low-income working mothers.
- To assess the character of intra-household relations including tensions and strains in relation to care provision for children.
- To explore the biological father's role and paternal kinship's role in childcare.

3.3.3 Mothering and motherhood: practices, norms and perceptions

- To investigate women's experiences of mothering and motherhood.

- To understand how mothers balance their working and family lives.
- To explore the choices mothers make in decisions about childcare provision and how this process impacts on their constructions of motherhood.
- To understand cultural or social norms of motherhood.

3.4 Research methods

The qualitative research method attempts to study human action from the insiders' perspective, also referred to as the 'emic' perspective. The goal of research is defined as describing and understanding (verstehen) rather than explaining and predicting human behaviour (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:53). This was a key factor for the study, to understand the perspectives of the women who are at the receiving end of the childcare state policy. This also allowed for the understanding of childcare strategies low income working mothers adopt and the factors which shape their choices.

For this reason, the research paradigm that was adopted in this study was the interpretive paradigm, which concerns itself with explaining subjective meaning that people attach to social action (Terre-Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006: 6). It is important to adopt this paradigm for this study on low-income working mothers because qualitative inquiry recognises the complex and dynamic quality of the social world. The exploratory nature of the current research was well suited to a qualitative design and the assumptions underpinning a qualitative approach. This approach increases ability to understand the mother's perceptions and experiences of the challenges they face and to understand the multifaceted issues pertaining to providing care for their children; to understand mothers who need a living wage and need services to provide care for their children and for the development of their children; and furthermore, to understand the position of fathers and paternal kin providing care for children. The chosen paradigm believes that social reality can be studied by accessing the subjective meanings, so qualitative research techniques were the most appropriate. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:269), "qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves."

3.5 Case study approach

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), "[q]ualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts". Using a case study approach was useful in that it allowed me to gain an understanding of the context, and I was able to get

an in-depth picture of the research question in the broader environment of KwaZulu-Natal. Using KwaZulu-Natal, I was able to explain why my research phenomenon was occurring as it was. Using a case study approach, I was able to understand the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers with young children, within urban and rural low-income circumstances of KwaZulu-Natal.

3.6 Sampling methods

According to Cresswell (1998:110), sampling is the process of finding people or places to study; to gain access to study sites; and to establish a rapport so that participants share their experience. During the process of sampling, the aim is to get a sample that is as representative as possible of the target population (Mouton, 1996:110). In qualitative research, participants are carefully selected for inclusion based on the possibility that each participant will expand the variability of the sample (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:45). Qualitative researchers set out to build a sample that includes a selection of people, with different goals in mind. In selecting participants to provide a rich case, 20 low-income employed mothers who are mothers from the townships of Sundumbili and Umlazi and the rural areas of Macambini and KwaNdaya were recruited to participate in the study: 10 women in urban KwaZulu-Natal (five from Umlazi and five from Sundumbili) and 10 women in rural KwaZulu-Natal (five from Macambini and five from KwaNdaya).

3.7 Choosing the research sites

The geographic situation of the study is in the province of KwaZulu-Natal., In order to ascertain the experiences of low-income working mothers in both contexts, the study looks at four areas in urban and rural areas, namely, Sundumbili and Umlazi townships (in urban KZN) and Mandeni and Empangeni (in rural KZN). These research sites were purposefully selected for the purposes of this research.

Sundumbili is a township that falls under Mandeni Municipality which straddles urban and rural quite distinctively. As well explained by Hunter (2010), the Municipality of Mandeni incorporates the geographical and social scars of colonial conquest and apartheid. Sundumbili Township owes its existence to the borders drawn by apartheid authorities, which outlined the KwaZulu homeland. Sundumbili was built to accommodate workers in nearby Isithebe Industrial Park, where ‘border industries’ were created during Apartheid, South Africa (de Haas, 1994:23).

Umlazi is part of the central metropolitan local council of the greater Durban metropolitan area, and is situated 30 km south west of the city of Durban (Freund, 1996:129). Umlazi is situated at the periphery of Durban, which speaks to the commuting which must be done by people living in Umlazi whilst working in the city, Durban.

3.8 Sampling criteria

For the purposes of this study, low-income and working are defined as low-income working mothers with an income that is a low wage, and they were beneficiaries of the childcare grant. Thus, they do not earn more than R36 000 per year (R3 000 per month) if the low-income earning mother is a single mother. If they are married the combined earnings with the partner should not be more than R72 000 per year (R6 000 per month), as per the Child Support Grant criteria in 2016 which is the year I commenced with fieldwork.

There are two participants, Lale² and Thembi, who were single mothers earning more the R3 000 per month, but I included them in this study because regardless of the fact that their earnings were more than R3 000 per month, their circumstances were not noticeably different from those of the other 18 low-income employed mothers in this study.

3.9 The mothers: description of the sample

A purposive sampling approach was used for the cohort of women interviewed. Low-income working women who were mothers from the townships of Umlazi and Sundumbili were recruited to participate in the study. Table 2 maps out certain descriptions such as their marital status, living arrangements, housing type (and location), description of the work they do, their distance between their home and work, the number of children they have, and the ages of these children because this influences the decisions made by low-income mothers in terms of childcare and outlines their circumstances as low-income working mothers. Because the selected study sites were dominantly black areas, the sample comprised 20 black Zulu mothers. The mothers could either be in the formal or informal economy.

² All participants' names are pseudonyms - to ensure their anonymity.

Table 1: Description of the sample

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Living Arrangements	Housing Type (and location)	Access to childcare	Job Description	Income per Month	Distance to mother's place of work and back	Number of Children	Ages of Children
Busi	38	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the child]	Lives with her 2 children	1 room shack, Umlazi	10 min walk	Cleaner	R2250	130 km, 1 hour by taxi (x2)	4	23 year old boy, 15 year old girl, 10 year old girl and 4 year old boy
Lale	24	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the child]	Lives with her mother, brother and child	4 room house, Umlazi	Child has a live in nanny	Project Assistant	R5000	80 km, 30 min drive by taxi (x2)	1	1 year old girl
Nokubonga	26	Single	Lives with her parents, 4 siblings and her 2 children.	1 room shack, Umlazi	Her mother looks after 1 year old child and 5 year old child is in grade R.	Hairstylist/dresser	R2500- R3000	Works locally, trips to clients never more than 10/20 km, 20 min/25min work away from home. (x2)	3 (2 living)	1 year old boy and 5 year old girl
Zinhle	35	Married	Lives with her in-laws, husband and her 2 children	3 bedroom house, Umlazi	10 minute drive	Assembly line worker	R3600	10 km, 15minute drive by taxi (x2)	2	14 year old boy and 4 year old girl
Thembi	32	Single [engaged]	Lives with with her 1 child (Thembi is a stepmom)	4 room house, Umlazi	Child is looked after by his grandmother at home.	Administrator at a dental surgery	R5800	4 km, 10minute drive by taxi (x2)	1	3 year old boy
Anele	35	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend]	Lives with her daughter; her niece visits occasionally on weekends	1 room shack, Sundumbili	7 minute walk	Domestic worker	R3500	1 km, 5 minute drive by taxi (x2)	3	17 year old boy, 5 year old boy and 3 year old girl
Angel	31	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the children]	Lives with her mother, sister, niece, nephew, cousin and her two children	4 room house, which has been extended, Sundumbili	Cousin, mother and sister look after child whilst she is at work. Her 4 year old goes to crèche	Cashier at Grocery Store	R3400	1 km, 5 minute drive by taxi (x2)	2	4 year old boy and 5 month old girl

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Living Arrangements	Housing Type (and location)	Access to childcare	Job Description	Income per Month	Distance to mother's place of work and back	Number of Children	Ages of Children
Bongi	28	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the child]	Lives with her daughter	1 room brick house, Sundumbili	Child attends crèche, car pool service collects child from home to crèche and drops the child off at home. 9 min drive.	Liaison and administration assistant at Butchery	R4000	Approximately 2 km, 10 minute drive by taxi (x2)	2 (1 living)	3 year old girl
Kholiwe	44	Single	Lives with her son	4 room house, Sundumbili	Child walks to crèche and back home with neighbour's 12 year old daughter. 15 minute walk	Assembly line worker	R3280	40 km, 30 minute by taxi (x2)	2	4 year old boy and 24 year old girl
Sindy	23	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the child]	Lives with her son	1 room shack, Sundumbili	9 minute drive by car pool	Store Assistant at Clothing Store	R2200	3 km, 15 minute drive by taxi (x2)	1	1 ½ year old boy
Zamile	38	Married	Lives with her grandmother and four children	4 room house on land acquired by her father in the early 1970s, Rondavel also on site, Macambini	Approximately 8 minute walk to neighbour's house	Administrator	R6000	1 km, 10/15 minute walk to the court (x2)	4	13 year old boy, 10 year old girl and 1 year old twins (boys)
Unathi	24	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the child]	Lives with her two children; her sister visits occasionally on weekends	3 room RDP house, Rondavel on site, Land acquired by paternal grandfather, Macambini	5 minute walk to the neighbour's house	Farmworker	R2800	10/15 minute walk to the Simamisa office.(x2) A vehicle is arranged to drop the farm workers off at the farms (distance to farms ranges between 1hr-3hrs)	2	3 year old girl and 1 year old boy

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Living Arrangements	Housing Type (and location)	Access to childcare	Job Description	Income per Month	Distance to mother's place of work and back	Number of Children	Ages of Children
Thandi	44	Married [estranged from husband and father of the children]	Lives with her four children	1 bedroom house, Rondavel on site, Plot of land acquired by her husband when they got married,, Macambini	Minds the youngest child at home because she is usually at home, as she is self-employed and works from home	Traditional healer	R1000 (usually), R1500-R2000+ (in a good month)	Works from home, does house calls on request. For such an event she takes public transport. Distance varies on where the patient is located.	4	11 year old girl, 9 year old girl, 8 year old girl and 4 year old boy
Nikiwe	40	Married	Lives with her husband and two children	Shed as the house they are to live in as a family is under construction, Land acquired by father in law, Macambini	Four year old child is looked after by a neighbour (5 minute walk away)	Works at a fabric factory, garment cutter	R2500	12 minute walk to the taxi stop and 15 minute taxi trip to town (12 km) (x2)	2	4 year old boy
Senzile	36	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend and father of the children]	Lives in a backroom at employer's house in Stanger; comes home on the weekend at the end of the month	2 bedroom house, Built on land acquired by her maternal uncle on behalf of her mother, Macambini	Four year old child is looked after by her mother at home in Macambini	Domestic Worker	R4000	Lives on work premises. Stanger is 30 min taxi drive (34 km) from Macambini (x2), visits on month end weekends	3	11 year old boy, 8 year old girl and 4 year old boy
Buhle	27	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the children]	With her two cousins, rents a four room house in KwaNdaya because it is close to Empangeni, a town where they work; lives there with her one year old child;	4 room house, Land and house belong to landlord; she and her two cousins are the tenants, KwaNdaya	Daughter is in crèche. 20-minute drive from home. Car pool service is used.	Sales Representative-insurance company	R4500, R2000 bonus every three months if her sales are good	9 minute walk to the taxi stop and then 15 minute trip to Esikhawini (town) where she works, 10 km (x2)	1	1 year old

Participant	Age	Marital Status	Living Arrangements	Housing Type (and location)	Access to childcare	Job Description	Income per Month	Distance to mother's place of work and back	Number of Children	Ages of Children
Gabisile	36	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the child]	Lives with her two children; her parents in law live on the same plot of land in a different house.	Two 4 room houses and two rondavaals on site, The land was acquired by Gabisile's father-in-law from Chief Mkhwanazi, KwaNdaya	Child is looked after by their neighbour (7-8 minute walk away)	Sales Representative at Furniture Shop	R3600	10 minute walk to taxi stop and 20 minute ride to town, 35 km (x2)	3	19 year old girl, 10 year old boy and 1 year old boy
Lungile	36	Single [father of the child passed away]	Lives at her family home with her parents, her cousin	Spacious 3 bedroom house, KwaNdaya	Child is looked after by her parents at the home they all reside (no distance)	Cleaner at a school	R2800	Roughly 8 minute walk to the bus stop; 25 minute ride on the bus, 38 km/40km (x2)	1	3 year old child boy
Phumela	20	Single [long term relationship with boyfriend/father of the child]	Lives in two bedroom house built on land acquired by her maternal grandmother	2 bedroom house, KwaNdaya	Child is in crèche (R230). A 2 km walk from their home	Sales Representative at a herbal product company	R2800/ R3000	5 minute walk from crèche to taxi stop; 15 minute taxi, 10 km (x2)	1	3 year old child girl
Simile	37	Single	Lives with her daughter	Rents a 2 room house, KwaNdaya	Child is in crèche (R200 per ?) Transport to crèche is R120 per ?	Hairstylist	±R1500 per month	15 minute walk to taxi stop; 20 minute taxi ride to town (35 km) (x2)	1	4 year old girl

3.9.1 Access

The selection of the participants followed a purposive process where five low-income women who are mothers were selected from L, M and N sections of Umlazi township (under the eThekweni Municipality) through snowball sampling. A social worker who is based at Emaweleni in Umlazi referred two women whom she was familiar with and knew fitted the criteria for the study. There are not many differences between the sections. They all have a section of houses, which are the formal 4 room apartheid style house, and portions where informal settlements have been erected on land that was unoccupied.

A social worker who works in Umlazi N section, Emaweleni, referred me to two participants, and through snowballing, those two participants referred me to three other participants. A participant who was of the three snowballed participants, Nora, decided to discontinue with the study but was replaced by another who was referred by one of the participants. This was advantageous in the sense that it allowed the researcher to grasp and utilise the existing social networks between the women in the community.

The interviews lasted around 30–45 minutes per session. The topics covered in the two sessions included: understanding their biographical backgrounds and circumstances, childcare options they utilise (family/kin, market or state), the role played by paternal/maternal kin in childcare, work experiences, economic and social constraints, and the balancing of work and domestic/care responsibilities. The two interviews for each participant were usually 2-3 months apart (for each participant). The significance of having the two phases is that it gave me an opportunity to analyse and review the first interview and develop questions for the second interview, where I could probe further on questions that needed further detail or to be understood in detail rigorously. I was able to see patterns and similarities in the interviews and was able to ascertain emerging themes; interviewing the participants for a second time allowed me to unpack these with the participants.

3.10 Data collection

The research technique and data collection employed were qualitative research using 20 semi-structured interviews. The aim of qualitative research is to illuminate how the complexities of the sociocultural world are experienced, interpreted and understood. Though questions were asked in a consistent order, semi structured interviews allowed freedom for the researcher to explore the answers of the respondents to try to find out their meanings. According to Neuman

(2003:66) this allows the researcher to observe “expressions, words, sentences and symbols portrayed by the participants” (Neuman, 2003:66).

Through the semi-structured in-depth interviews, the respondents were able to fully explain their economic and social lives and explain how these, coupled with political instability, had spurred some of them to become part of the informal sector. I also took extensive fieldnotes, especially when observing the living conditions of these mothers and their immediate physical environments, and I saw how these observations could be enlightening in explaining how a certain social phenomenon can be construed by observing natural surroundings. In this case, I was observing surroundings in the informal settlements of Umlazi and Sundumbili, as well as in rural areas in Macambini and KwaNdaya. When interviewing the majority of the women, there was absence of proper housing facilities; overcrowding and squalid living conditions served as an insight into how the participants live and manoeuvre within their risky spaces, and what it means to raise a young child in such surroundings.

3.11 Pilot study

As the researcher, I constructed an interview schedule by which the interviews would be guided but with allowance for interviews to deviate away from this schedule where avenues of interest presented themselves during the interview process. I undertook 5 pilot interviews to examine the interview schedule. The early interviews showed some flaws and strengths of the interview schedule and corrections were made for the later interviews. For example, the questions specifically related to biographical information tended to be close ended; the participants in the pilot study did not see them as an opportunity to broadly share about their lives. Thus, for the actual study I fine-tuned the questions into one, asking participants to provide a broad description of their lives as opposed to a series of questions to probe about their backgrounds.

3.12 Data analysis

As given by Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006:321), data analysis involves moving from the qualitative data that has been collected, arranging and analysing it into some form of explanation, and understanding or interpreting the people and situations we are investigating.

As the interviews were carried out in isiZulu which is the mother tongue of all the participants and a main language in KwaZulu-Natal, the interviews had to be transcribed by typing them out in isiZulu, and then translating into and typing in English. The use of isiZulu was to cater

for those participants without a good command of the English language. However, some respondents tended to mix English and IsiZulu; this is mainly due to what can be understood as *amabizomfakela*. These are English words which have been integrated to the Zulu language (or directly borrowed from the English language). At this point it becomes key to explain that in the urban sample, three participants preferred for the interview to be conducted in isiZulu, and the other two preferred for the interview to be conducted in English (with a few phrases in isiZulu). In the two rural areas, all the interviews were conducted in isiZulu.

From there, a thematic analysis of the interview transcriptions and field notes was carried out. According to Blanche, Durrheim and Kelly (2006:324) this means breaking the information into themes and marking different sections of the data as being instances of, or relevant to, one or more of your themes. Once this was done, I divided the data collected into themes and sub-themes based on recurrent themes or concerns which the respondents referred to time and again. These included being socio-economically disadvantaged, financial strain, lack of support (in majority of the cases), the varying degrees of father and paternal kin involvement, cultural norms and adherence, societal expectations, self-expectations as mothers, paid and unpaid work, and maternal guilt. In identifying the themes, I sought to remain sensitive to the concerns of the research participants by understanding issues that were sensitive to the participants; for example, pauses, silence or nervous laughter was indicative that a participant may not be comfortable with a question. I had to understand this and steer the interview in a different direction, so as to make the participant comfortable. I also made sure to offer to have our interviews outside of her home (for privacy so they would be able to speak comfortably, without fear of being heard by other people in the household), or to meet at restaurant in an environment where they would be able to relax and feel comfortable.

3.13 Ethical considerations

This research project addressed ethical issues by getting the participants to sign consent forms agreeing to allow the researcher to publish or share the findings with other people. The consent forms were translated into Zulu verbally that it could be guaranteed that the participants understood what they were agreeing to. The participants were also kept anonymous, pseudo names were used during the interviews and alterations were made to names of family members (family of the participants) they may have mentioned and discussed, as well as of the areas mentioned. The participants were also made aware of the risks involved in participating in the

research. They were made aware of their right to terminate their agreement at any point during the research (Altheide & Johnson, 1997: 178).

And most importantly, the relevant research ethics protocols of University of Cape Town were abided by throughout all stages of the research processes. The ethics guidelines were read in conjunction with University of Cape Town policies for responsible research.

3.14 Limitations

A major limitation of my study is that I looked at study sites occupied disproportionately by Zulu people; thus, my study participants were all Zulu speakers. KwaZulu-Natal also comprises formerly 'coloured' and 'Indian' townships. In hindsight, I wish I had included areas such as Chatsworth (predominantly Indian) and Greenwood Park (predominantly Coloured) for the purposes of diversity in the study. By not including such areas I have limited understanding the lived experience of a low-income employed mother in a coloured or Indian community in KwaZulu-Natal. I do not have an understanding what strategies such a mother draws on for childcare; and how they balance their roles as mothers and employees. And perhaps this links to the necessity to be reflexive in a qualitative study; this is a classic depiction of how my Zulu history has influenced my choices in study sites.

3.15 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research questions that informed this case study. I have discussed the research methodology and techniques utilised in the case study. It is through the discussed method and techniques that I was able to capture data relating to childcare navigation and lived experiences of low-income employed mothers.

Chapter 4: Omama abasebenzayo [Working mothers]

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the work done by mothers, and the actual practice of mothering. It looks at the work that mothers do in what has been conceptualised previously in separate spheres as productive and reproductive work, as well as the consequences of the collision of these two roles.

The seminal studies understanding women and work and examining the lived experiences of working women in the South African context, include Cock (1980) and Lawson (1985). The authors write of the strife experienced by black working women during apartheid. Unfortunately, after more than 30 years, much of the subject matter in these texts continues to exist (the findings section of this thesis will reflect these). However, it is important to note that since the publication of these texts there have been key points of social change, for instance the advent of democracy in South Africa in 1994, and as a result there has been a rapid feminisation of the labour force and black women are no longer confined to domestic work as reflected in these publications and as reflected in more recent texts by Rogan and Reynolds (2019). However, although there has been a rapid increase of the feminisation of the workforce, the kind of low-income work entered into by a majority of women (and specifically in this study) is often precarious, low-skilled and low-paid (Kenny, 2004; Kenny, 2007; Benya, 2016).

A key contribution of this study is to depict how experiences of work among working women has (and has not) changed in recent decades. This captures what is often overlooked in literature, namely what happens in the home as women enter the labour force, given that the reproductive work they do in the home has not changed (i.e. their responsibilities, childcare responsibilities, and the management of the household) (Mosoetsa, 2011; Fakier & Cock, 2009; Hatch & Posel, 2018). The increase of their participation in the labour force just means that they are now performing this reproductive work in addition to productive work, which is often marked by long hours, long commutes and physical exhaustion.

The chapter also goes beyond the scope of existing literature to look at unpaid work, such as the work of 'chasing money'. Women in this study spoke of the work that goes into chasing fathers for financial maintenance of the child (outside of the court) and chasing fathers to be generally involved in the lives of children, i.e. to be present fathers. This is unseen work not discussed by existing literature. Whilst time use surveys reflect the unpaid work done by

women, they do not capture this additional unseen work. The chapter provides insight as to how low-income employed mothers navigate their paid and unpaid work.

The chapter speaks to the impediments faced by low-income mothers in their roles as labour force participants and as mothers, whilst trying to maintain being a specific kind of all giving, selfless and present mother.

4.2 The economy of paid, unpaid and cognitive work: literature review

In understanding paid and unpaid work it is difficult to ignore that there is a gender dimension to the structuring of paid and unpaid work; this is the sexual division of labour and it shapes the access and control of resources, often at the cost of women (Elson, 1991a, 1991b). The sexual division of labour is the most evident in the division of responsibilities between productive (market) and reproductive (household) work and women take the main responsibility of reproductive work (Blackden & Wodon, 2006). This sexual division of labour means that women spend more time than men doing unpaid care work and housework, with multiple and overlapping activities, and women are doing this whilst navigating paid work or productive work. Thus, some scholars argue that since women participating in paid work are also responsible for the reproductive work, which is unpaid, in their private spaces, they perform a ‘second shift’ (Hochschild, 1989; Schor, 1991; Kenny, 2004; Kenny, 2007; Benya, 2016).

This ‘double burden’ becomes a ‘triple burden’ when the cognitive work done by women is incorporated. Cognitive labour or household labour, as explained by Daminger (2019:609), is the “non-physical activities related to household management, but these are typically mentioned in passing, imprecisely defined, or treated as equivalent to physical tasks”. And as so well explained by Hill (2015), the cognitive work endured by women shifts in productivity from the body to women’s soul as workers, vastly confiscating their mental energy. Cognitive labour speaks to the management of the household, which requires women to think, plan and strategize ways which are most efficient and effective for running a household. It is the work of always having to remember aspects of running a household, planning meals, organising childcare arrangements and keeping up to date about whether a child is reaching milestones. The mental load (which the findings part of this chapter depicts, implicitly and explicitly) is almost always borne by women; it is permanent, exhausting and invisible.

This crisis is ultimately rooted in the thinking that caring is women's work; caring is seen as a moral that should be innate for women. It is important to understand further that paid and unpaid care is occurring within the perimeters of two main changing factors, namely changing households and the feminisation of labour. This chapter aims to present that although much has changed in South Africa, post 1994, there are many mitigating circumstances which keep women in strife, although supposedly so much has changed.

4.3 The feminisation of labour

Low-income employed women's ability to participate in the labour market is for the most part restricted by the unpaid care work they are involved in their households or, more broadly, their communities. Thus, the unpaid care work women are involved in and the balancing they have to do with their paid work mean that more women are involved in precarious and low-income employment (limiting their earnings and benefits).

Universally, the increasing participation of low-income women in the labour market has meant that many women are being faced with the double burden of market and non-market production (Chen et al., 2005). While there has been an increased participation of women in the labour market, there is no evidence of any change in the amount of unpaid work that women do (UN Women, 2016). Essentially, low-income employed women are carrying a dual burden of care, or as explained by Hochschild (1989), working the 'second shift'.

The case study of this thesis in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, is not different from the universal experience just described, as will be discussed in the findings section of this chapter. This is particularly true for black low-income employed women in the South African context (Casale & Posel, 2002; Ntuli, 2007, who historically have been disadvantaged on the grounds of race, gender and class, although the advent of democracy in South Africa has allowed black low-income employed women new opportunities. For instance, they now have the ability to enter the labour force, but this has also imposed upon them new burdens, such as having to traverse their public roles as labour force participants and their private roles as mothers. Although they are no longer oppressed, and are entering the labour force in increasing numbers, the kind of employment entered by the majority of black women is low-income employment and coincides with the burden of care, leaving the women carrying the dual responsibility of paid and unpaid work.

Low income employed women's greater responsibility for unpaid work, including caring labour and childcare specifically, has been well documented in the quantitative analysis of data collected in South African Time Use Surveys (Esquivel et al., 2008). The provision of childcare in South Africa has been described quantitatively using data collected in Time Use Surveys. Two Time Use Surveys have been conducted in 2000 and 2010. Both surveys show that women spend considerably more time on childcare than men. Women spend an average of 5.9 hours per week on childcare compared to 0.6 hours spent on childcare by men (Budlender, Chobokane & Mpethseni, 2001; Charmes, 2006).

Gender differences are identified in the more recent survey, where the average amount of time that women spend on childcare is more than eight-fold more than the time spent by men (Statistics South Africa, 2013:36). Therefore, there is a clear gender imbalance in terms of the amount of unpaid work done by women, in addition to the paid work done by women. The circumstances have changed significantly for women of colour. They are entering the labour force in increasing numbers but the conditions under which this participation has occurred, have not changed, thus doubling the burden for women.

In conducting this research and attempting to understand the lived experiences of the low-income mothers, it was clear that the bulk, if not all, the responsibility and duty to care fell on women alone. A common thread that ran across the 40 interviews conducted was how low-income earning mothers are disadvantaged economically and socially.

It is clear to see that a welfare approach is needed to ensure the improvement of women's position in the economy, and women need to be put at the centre of mainstream development (Muyoyeta, 2007:11). Economic reforms are needed that will not undervalue the paid work of women and will guarantee that women are not burdened with unpaid work.

4.4 Social reproduction

Marx's historical materialism hinges on the premise that the production of the necessities of life, such as food, clothing and shelter, is fundamental to human societies. The form that this production takes, for him, defines historically the different forms of human societies (Arnot, 1940; Marx, 1976; Heinrich, 2012). Production, distribution or exchange, and consumption are therefore fundamental to the social reproduction of a society. The way a society organizes its production, exchange or distribution, and consumption informs the prevailing standard of living and well-being of its population.

The organization of production, distribution or exchange, and consumption to foster the social reproduction of a society bring to the fore the interaction between three institutions: the family or household, the economy, and the state. The interaction between these institutions is, to a large extent, informed by the nature of the relationship between wage-labour and capital, as well as how individual, productive and collective consumptions are structured by the framework of these institutions. These consumptions are imperative to the production and accumulation of capital, the reproduction of labour and labour-power, and the reproduction and endurance of a society (Dickinson & Russell, 1986; Picchio, 1992). Individual consumption is the province of the maintenance and reproduction of the family or household (all social classes are engaged in a form of subsistence consumption, though the capitalist class has the privilege of the consumption of luxury goods). Productive consumption includes wage funds incurred by labour-power (variable capital) and means of production (constant capital) used up in the course of production.

In using social reproduction as an anchor, it becomes important to understand what social reproduction is, what it stems from, what it means and how it will be utilised for the purposes of this study. The concept of social reproduction has its origins in Marxism. Marx and Engels included biological reproduction as part of the material basis of society, as “the production of life in procreation” (1962:50). Engels (1978) went further to explore this twofold character. The first fold is the production of the means of subsistence, namely of clothing, shelter and food, which is necessary for production; the second fold includes the production of human beings and the propagation of the species (Engels, 1978:4).

This twofold understanding of social reproduction was also explored by Bakker and Gill (2003). They considered firstly the site of unpaid reproductive labour – the household – and secondly the provisioning of basic needs – such as food, water and sanitation – which are essential for the survival of poor households (Bakker & Gill, 2003:18). In this, social reproduction is implacable in South African context, where it allows for the understanding of dominant social relations. The theoretical concept of social reproduction is useful for this study in making sense of the caring work involved in the reproduction of unpaid work, i.e. work which takes place in the household through the unpaid domestic labour of women. It speaks to the study’s attempt to explore the social reproduction carried by black low-income mothers in urban and rural KwaZulu-Natal. It is important to note here that much of the social reproduction literature comes from the 1980s at a time in South Africa and in other parts of the world when women were not entering the work force in the same way as they are now.

The feminisation of the labour force has not been followed by adequate changes in care policies that allow women, who historically accumulate all the care responsibility, to reconcile work and family life. As in most societies across the globe, social reproduction of households and families in South Africa remains the responsibility of women, irrespective of whether they are residing with their families on a fulltime or temporary basis (Fakier, 2010). In the South African context of inadequate social provisioning by the state and the retraction of social benefits associated with employment, social reproduction is disembedded from economic production and placed in the household (Fakier, 2010).

The location of social reproduction in its ‘natural’ place and the ‘privatisation’ of social reproduction relies on the unpaid work of household members, the commercialisation of reproductive needs, or both (Fakier & Cock, 2009). The gendered nature of social reproduction is not peculiar to South Africa or developing countries (Fakier, 2010). Even where the working mothers are absent, the care of the children of employed mothers often become relegated to the remaining female household members, even in the presence of men (Orton, Barrientos & McClenaghan, 2001). The literature on social reproduction, however, mainly identifies a maintenance of the responsibilities of social reproduction among employed mothers but does not focus on who pays for care or how the person who is paying for dependents is also the same person who is taking care of dependents.

The South African case of low-income mothers, childcare policy and social reproduction is interesting because it reflects on the experiences of poor women in townships and rural areas of post-apartheid South Africa, whose burden and responsibilities persist within their family and at work. The issue of childcare is one that proves to be trying for mothers, who are dominantly the primary caregivers for children. In the South African context, as explained by Fakier and Cock (2009), the African working-class households are sites of a crisis of social reproduction in contemporary South Africa, and African working-class women are the shock absorbers of the crisis. This is precisely the reason this research has explored how low-income working mothers provide care for their children within sites of care such as the state, market and kin. Women as ‘shock absorbers’ of this crisis are with difficulty navigating their way to provide care for children in the mist of the apartheid legacy, which disadvantaged many black women in educational attainment and consequently economic opportunities. Although the ways in which the welfare structure was structured during apartheid has shifted enormously, state provision is insufficient and meagre, and does not provide the adequate support needed by caregivers – who are mostly women.

Findings

To look at the phenomenon of paid and unpaid work, this part of the chapter intends to look at the typical working days of the mothers (in their respective areas of work as domestic workers, factory workers, sales representatives, administrators, hairstylists and farm workers). This is precisely why it is important to use social reproduction as a theoretical anchor for this study, as it provides an understanding of the narratives of low-income working mothers (in the formal and/or informal economy) and an understanding of their personal layers as poor working mothers and how these layers play out in their respective households where they continue to bear a double load of unpaid reproductive labour and provisioning of basic needs which are essential for the survival of poor households. Low-income employed mothers are engaged in low paid work to pay for their children's education and well-being. Mothers want their children's lives to be different and better than their lives.

4.5 Paid, unpaid and cognitive work: the collision faced by women

Gabisile narrated her lived balance between unpaid and paid work, in which she ensures the functioning of her household, ensures that her children are ready for school, and makes lunch for her children:

"I wake up at 4am I bath first, I get ready. I then make lunch for us. I make all three lunch boxes. I then wake them up, the 10-year-old does not need my assistance much. I bath the one year old, I dress her and make sure she is ready for school. They leave earlier than me, their car fetches them at 6.45am. I leave at 7am, I walk to the transport stop and take a taxi at 7.15 am".

All of this is invisible work, and for Gabisile, like the other mothers in this study, her working day starts when she wakes up and ends when she retires to bed in the evening:

"I leave work at 5pm, I get home at about 5.40pm. When I get back, I am very tired but there is nothing I can do because I have children, so I get back and cook supper for us. When we are eating, I check her homework [points at 10-year-old daughter]. I then check on the laundry that needs to be done. I wash uniforms hers and mine and also the little one's clothing, you know they get through clothes so easily when they are little. I hang the laundry, we watch Generations, Uzalo and then go to bed".

Another mother whose typical working day is like Gabisile's is Lungile, although Lungile has the support of her parents as she and her child live with her parents. Although this relieves

Lungile of a lot of aspects, she is still not exempt from unpaid and paid work she needs to do. As she shares her typical day:

“My day at work, in the morning when I wake up, I wake up and I look what I can make my child for lunch, because the child stays behind with the granny and grandfather. I prepare clothes for him, throughout the day, you know sometimes children mess themselves, so I have to make sure that they are close to them....

Then I prepare bathing water, I then bath and go to work. I then get ready and then leave her sleeping, and my parents sleeping as well. I catch the bus to work, it is like a 25-minute ride. We work hard, especially because we work with children, we clean classrooms, toilets and verandas and when I get back it’s my job to look after the child and clean the house and cook. I must see my child is doing well”.

Although Lungile’s parents take on most of the work of childcare during the day when she is at work, she still needs to do some preparation for her child, in terms of making lunch, and ensuring her child has a change of clothes available to her parents. Her daily routine is like Phumela’s who explained,

“I wake up at 6am, I get dressed, I do my make-up and hair. I then make snack lunch for my child. Like a sandwich which I cut into four slices, a fruit and a packet of peanuts and raisins or chips. Then I wake him up at like 6.45. I bath him and get him dressed, at about 7.30 we leave the house. I walk her to the crèche, it is not far from our home and then I take a taxi to town”.

Women typically spend disproportionately more time on unpaid care work than men. Due to gendered social norms that view unpaid care as a female prerogative, women across different regions, socio-economic classes and cultures spend an important part of their day on meeting the expectations of their domestic and reproductive roles. This is in addition to their paid activities, thus work concerning care has important implications for the achievement of gender equality, it can either expand the capabilities and choices of women, or confine women to traditional roles associated with femininity and motherhood (Razavi, 2007).

In contrast to the mothers above who explained the exhausting demands on them, a mother who has a rather flexible typical working day because she works from home is Thandi. She is a *sangoma* (traditional healer). In most cases the patients come to her but there are instances where she needs to go to the patient’s home, for instance, if the patient is too ill to travel to her or if she needs to heal an entire family. Thandi said:

“I usually work from home, as I said, I seldom go to my patients they usually come to me”.

Also, Thandi plans her appointment times with patients around her housework and her care for her children who are not in crèche but are looked after by her during the day.

The women in this study start their working day the minute they wake up on a typical working day. They wake up very early to prepare for their day and importantly prepare for their children. So, although a mother may say ‘I clock in at 8am’, it is important to be cognisant of the fact that her day may have started as early as 4.30am. For instance, Unathi’s typical day starts at 4.30am. She is a farmworker for a sugarcane company called Simamisa, and ploughing has to start at 5.30am in order to ensure that by the time the KZN sun is at its peak in terms of hotness (by 12pm), ploughing a field is finished (of course depending on the hectare size of the field). If the field is so large in hectare size that it cannot be finished in one day, the work is then extended to more days of ploughing.

Unathi intricately explained what her typical working day entails:

“I work for Simamisa. We work on different farms; farmers make a booking requesting our services and we go to the farm. If it is the season to plant the sugarcane, our tractor goes to do the lines and then us the farmworkers plant each line, placing each segment of sugarcane in a row. It is the remaining sugarcane from the previous harvest which we break into pieces and then plant. When it is time to harvest, the sugarcane is burnt in portions, we burn it in portions and then using a panga we cut it from the ground, it is gathered into heaps and then put into the truck which takes it to Hulett. It may seem simple as I am saying it but it is a lot of work. The farms are all in different phases so at one farm we may be planting and at another harvesting. We operate in the Macambini area which has a lot, a lot of sugarcane farms. Tongaat Hulett Sugar is in partnership with Simamisa (sugarcane farming) and the Macambini Tribal Authority”.

Another key finding from Unathi’s interview extract is the seasonal nature of farm employment. In the case study, Unathi said that there are sometimes months where she is not called into work because there is no work, and she explained that it has very rarely occurred since she started working for Simamisa, but it does.

This seasonal use of women’s labour means the farmers’ flexibility could leave women unemployed and unpaid when they are not needed. However, it is important to note that there have been strides in the formalisation of farm work. For instance, a study by Sunde and

Kleinbooi in 1999 reported that more than one-third of women employed on fruit farms had a contract (Orton, Barrientos & McClenaghan, 2001:474). Such contracts set out the terms and conditions of their employment, thus strengthening women's bargaining power as employees. As a result, women with employment contracts are more likely to enjoy employment benefits (Orton, Barrientos & McClenaghan, 2001:474-475). Formalising women's work through contracts promotes gender equality in labour participation and this is commendable. Unathi herself has not signed a contract with Simamisa. She did not seem to find this particularly worrisome because in her words:

"I just need money to feed my child and run my home".

It is clear to see that seasonal work is insecure and badly paid.

This speaks to the site of unpaid reproductive labour, the household, and secondly, the provisioning of basic needs, such as food, water and sanitation, which are essential for the survival of poor households. Adequate provisioning is an essential component of care that ensures the reproduction of healthy individuals. The concept of care in the household involves a very wide range of tasks involving financial provision, and physical and emotional labour.

Bongi and Sensile are two participants who provided a timeline of their typical working day. Like the experiences discussed above, their typical working days are marred by the mixture of unpaid and paid work. For Sensile, the domestic work and care work she performs for her employers is her paid work. As a domestic worker, she is paid to perform the tasks which women interviewed in this study generally performed for themselves.

Bongi's roster reinforces the fact that during the times the participants are at home, in the morning and the evening, they perform invisible labour.

Bongi's outline was as follows:

"5.30-6: I wake up, bath and get dressed and ready.

6am-6.30: I bath the child and make our lunch for the day.

6.30: We leave home, I take a taxi to work and the nanny comes to pick her up and takes her [she minds her at her home].

7am-7.45: I clock in at work, I tidy the office and go over stuff from yesterday I did not complete and need to finish. I then take a bit of a break.

8am-9.30: I start answering email and making necessary phone calls for arrangement.

9.30-10.30: I meet with the butchery manager and we discuss orders by customers.

10.30-11.00: I confirm orders with customers on the phone.

11.00-11.45: Tea time

12.00-1.30pm: I am at the butchery finding out orders that need to be made to the farmer – our meat supplier.

1.30-2.00: Its lunch

2.00-3.30: Stock taking

3.30-4.00: I plan for the next day and then go take a taxi home.

It is very busy; this is the main butchery in Sundumbili so it's a lot of work. Not quite where I want to be but I need the experience and I am learning and growing.

We live alone in a 1-bedroom rental so I do all the cleaning. The space is small enough. I come back from work at 4.30pm and do some brief cleaning just so the place is neat. The nanny brings her back at around about 4.35pm. I cook almost every day; I am all about her eating healthy and nutritious food”.

It is easy to deduct that the bulk of care work falls on Bongi, as experienced by all the women in this study, and this further supports the finding that women are expected to carry many domestic household responsibilities, whilst balancing mothering and paid work.

This is also echoed in Lungile’s explanation of her typical working day:

“My day at work, in the morning when I wake, I wake up and I look what I can make my child for lunch, because the child stays behind with the granny and grandfather. I prepare clothes for him, throughout the day, you know sometimes children mess themselves so I have make sure that they are close to them. Then I prepare bathing water, I then bath and go to work. I then get ready and then leave her sleeping, and my parents sleeping as well. I catch the bus to work, it is like a 25-minute ride. We work hard, especially because we work with children, we clean classrooms, toilets and verandas and when I get back it's my job to look after the child and clean the house and cook. I must see my child is doing well”.

Such an account of a typical working day as is expressed and explained by all study participants supports the finding that women typically spend a disproportionate amount of time on unpaid care work than men (Stiglitz, Sen & Fitoussi, 2007). Indeed, this is seeming to be the case in the households of the participants, as the majority of the urban sample were single women,

living in female headed households, often with themselves as the head of the household. In the rural sample, the majority of the sample was married but the unpaid care work fell on them, although they had husbands who could share the load with them. This is due to gendered cultural social norms that place unpaid care work as women's work solely. Herein, women as working mothers feel the need to meet the expectations placed on them to meet domestic and reproductive roles, in addition to their paid work. Herein lies the "double burden" of work rested on women.

4.5.1 Women as domestic workers

In *Maids and madams: a study in the politics of exploitation* (1980), Cock explored the institution of domestic service. Cock explained that both maids and madams are both victims of exploitation, albeit with different experiences based on race and class. At this moment it becomes important to mention that paid domestic, 39 years after the publication of this book, remains the single largest category of women's employment in South Africa. Approximately one out of every five employed women is a domestic worker in a very gendered and racialized occupation.

This speaks to the racial tensions Sensile said she feels between herself and her employers who are Indians, and Sensile relates this tension to *impi yamandiya* (battle with the Indians) which happened in the late 1940s between Zulu people and Indians in KwaZulu-Natal (Ramamurthi, 1994); the reminiscences of this have filtered through. Also, the apartheid government implemented the tricameral parliament which meant that Indian people had representation in parliament. This speaks to the racial heat between different races in KwaZulu-Natal and, in this case specifically, this is how Sensile understands her employer's apprehensiveness towards her.

Sensile's typical working day as a live-in domestic worker was outlined by her as follows:

"7.00-7.30: I wake up, clean my room, shower and get dressed and ready

7.30-8.00: I make lunch for the four children who are in primary school and high school. The children in high school do extra murals so I need to make more lunch for them because they spend more time at school. For lunch, their mother usually gives me a list of what they are to carry. Breakfast is really simple, I put everything out, the yoghurt, milk, cereal and coffee and tea – they serve themselves.

8.00-8.15: The parents leave with the children in high school because the school is quite far. I walk the two young ones who are in grade 2 and 6 to primary school which is like 10 minutes away. I then walk back to the house to start cleaning.

8.30-8.45: I make myself breakfast.

8.45-11.00: I do the washing, madam wants me to wash every day, she does not want there to ever be dirty clothes in the laundry basket. This includes hanging the clothes outside.

11.00-11.15: I take a tea break.

11.15-1.00: I clean the whole house. The bathroom, floors need to be mopped and polished. I dust the furniture, make sure the kitchen is clean.

1.00-2.00: I take another break where I listen to the story on radio, Ukhozi FM.

2.15: I go fetch the children at primary school.

2.30: I prepare the children something to eat.

2.45-4.00: I look at the board for supper meals and I make the supper.

4.30-5.00: The parents and two elder siblings return.

5.00: I dish supper for them.

5.15: I eat supper but alone in my room.

6.00-6.30: I wash and dry the dishes.

I am finished for the day after this I usually just stay in my room and watch TV. I got myself a TV because I did not want to watch TV with them, they are nice, but they are Indian and different.”

During apartheid several full-time live-in domestic workers in white homes described themselves as ‘slaves’. Has this changed? While domestic workers have formal legal rights, national minimum wages are still much below other sectors, as presented in the official figures of the payment rates for domestic workers from Cape Labour and Industrial Consultants (Andersen, 2017):

Area A – Major metropolitan areas

Hourly rate : R13.05

Weekly rate: R587.40

Monthly rate: R2 545.22

Those not in Area A

Hourly rate : R11.89

Weekly rate: R534.91

Monthly rate: R2 317.75

The weekly and monthly rates are indicative for employees working a maximum of 45 ordinary hours per week.

Minimum wages for domestic workers working 27 hours per week or less:

Area A – Major Metropolitan areas

Hourly rate: R15.28

Weekly rate: R412.60

Monthly rate: R1 787.80

Those not in Area A

Hourly rate: R14.03

Weekly rate: R378.83

Monthly rate: R1 641.48

The weekly and monthly rates are indicative for employees working a maximum of 27 ordinary hours per week.

Looking at the figures above, it is clear to see that domestic workers work for a low income, given the kind of work they do. Domestic workers remain a racialized and gendered cheap labour force. They perform the cooking, cleaning and childcare work that is essential to social reproduction, and domestic workers are women who continue to work for long hours and low wages, and are subjected to demeaning treatment (in this study as narrated by Sensile in her experience).

Anele is also a domestic worker but her experience is on the opposite end of Sensile's experience, as her employers are black and very well receptive towards her and even support her role as a mother. This is not to suggest that employers who are black treat black domestic workers better because of shared racial identity; it is merely an observation made from the finding shared by these two participants who are both domestic workers, but have diverging experiences of domestic work. Anele explained:

“I do housework. I am a domestic worker. I wake up at 5am, I bath, get dressed and make snack time food for my child. I then wake her up at 5.45am, I give her a bath and get her dressed and we leave the house at 6am. I drop her off at crèche at 6.20am and then I take a taxi to work. It is a local taxi, it leaves not that far from the house I work and I just walk a few steps. I arrive at 7am, my employers' child who goes to a nearby high school, Mpoqabulungu High leaves for school as soon

as I arrive. I first sweep the house, I then mop the floor. Then when the floor is dry, I dust the furniture, then I wash and dry the dishes and put them in the cupboards. I am done with that by like 11am. I then take a break and have tea and a sandwich. I am to eat whatever food they have in the fridge. I do not pack lunch”.

It is hard to ignore the fact that, although they are both domestic workers, Anele is treated substantially better by her employers than Sensile is treated by hers. The balance of working and mothering is vividly explained by Anele. She works at home, and she works at the home where she is employed. What is interesting about Anele is that she is a domestic worker, and thus the kind of domestic work she does at work is almost identical to the work, that she does at home; the work ensures that her household functions are carried out and her child is cared for.

4.5.2 Women as factory workers

There is no denying that much has changed significantly in South Africa, and domestic work is no longer the main source of employment for black women. In the 1960s African women started to enter factory work in increasing numbers than before (Lawson, 1985:54). During the 1960s, factory owners bought new machinery for profitability of their factories, and these machines took the place of many skilled workers; consequently, semi-skilled jobs were offered to African women (Lawson, 1985:54). In this study, two of the participants were factory workers, Kholiwe and Zinhle, and what they depict is the re-emerging theme in the study, namely the undeniable and fatiguing collision between paid and unpaid work. This collision can be understood in the case of Kholiwe who works at an assembly line that assembles car controls. She operates a switch board which correlates cables with specific car parts in a car. The assembly line is contracted to Toyota. Kholiwe explained:

“Where I work, we deal with making cables for car control. Like for the radio to play that is a cable, for windows, airbags and all of that. We connect the cables, when we have connected, we take it to its position. My job is to take the cables and gather them together and then they are taken to Toyota in Isipingo and there they are fitted into the car”.

The main issue Kholiwe faces on her typical day at work is that she stands for long periods of time. Her left leg has developed a misalignment from the standing and she limps. The connecting tape she connects on the switch board is also hard on her nails, and breaks or chips them. Her work is extremely exhausting and in addition to the paid work which she does during the day, she has to get home and do the unpaid work in the home.

“My main challenge with my job is that I stand for very long periods. I clock in at 7am, then we have a tea break for 10 minutes; our lunch is from 11.45 to 12.30. We have another break at 2.40 to 2.50. It is a very exhausting job like is tiring. I have to cut the tape and because the tape is so hard when I cut it, it chips at my nail as you can see [shows me her broken nails]. I get very tired. I just sit on the sofa and take some time to breathe when I get home. Then I have to get up and cook and clean the house a bit”.

Kholiwe and Zinhle, like Sensile and Anele, do the same job. They work at factory assembly lines, albeit for different companies. They share many similarities in terms of the long hours, tedious nature of work and the exhaustion.

Zinhle wakes up early every morning to prepare for work and to get to work on time. A point worth noting is that every second month Zinhle works a night shift; if this is the case then she has to leave home at 3.30pm in order to make it to work on time, because this is during peak hour and to avoid traffic she leaves early, although work during night shift starts at 6pm for her. She explained:

“I wake up at 5 am and get ready. I travel to work by taxi I usually I am early, but my day official starts at 7am. It is usually a long day and tiring physically. I work at an assembly line where I need to check the quality of products our company receives, and some make. I do the quality assurance to make sure the product is of a good quality. It is from 7am-4.30pm if there is over time then I work till 6pm. Then I take the taxi home. Luckily, I never have to get home and cook, there are always people at home, so they usually tend to the cooking”.

It can be deduced that Kholiwe and Zinhle’s typical working days are marred with exhaustion and commuting, and they both commented on the tedious and unchallenging nature of their work. In explaining their typical working days, the common threads that ran through the accounts by the mothers were monotony in their typical working day, and exhaustion from travelling due to the issue of space. The historical design of the spaces, and consequently how that place affected women interviewed in this study, on the periphery of towns, have a significant effect on the exhaustion experienced by the mothers. And there is the difficulty of commuting to and back from work with public transport and still having to get home and assume motherly duties, which is an expectation (although a few of the mothers have support within the household, which alleviates a certain amount of pressure when they return from work or if they are working during the weekend).

4.5.3 Women as sales representatives

Working as a sales representative was an easy space to enter for the three women interviewed in the study (Gabisile, Buhle and Phumela), who all explained they got into sales through referral. Gabisile is a sales representative for the furniture store Morkels, Buhle is a sales representative for the insurance company Sanlam and Phumela sells herbal products called Forever.

Gabisile's day begins early and ends late; her typical day, like for most mothers in this study, is an intersection of her employment work and the invisible work she does at home. And for Gabisile, as for all of the women in this study, these two forms of work are interchangeable; there is no definite divide between employment work and work done at home. As Gabisile explained:

“The work I do, I sell furniture, it needs you to put in a lot of effort. I come in in the morning, I sign in and then I take my papers and my fieldwork starts. It is very little time that I spend at the office, we are often in the field looking for customers and marketing Morkels to them. I leave work at 5pm, I get home at about 6pm. When I get back, I am very tired but there is nothing I can do because I have children, so I get back and cook supper for us”.

Buhle explained her experience:

I get home mostly in time for supper and sometimes when we are working far, I get home and she is asleep already. I also work some weekends so my time with her is very short but it does not mean I love her less or that our bond is less, in fact I think because our time together is so shortened our bond is close. Because when I get back from work on days I am not working far, we sit on the floor and laugh, and talk, she tries to tell me about her day, we play games and sing songs – she is my light.

Phumela explained her experience:

I do but I am very happy that I spend the morning with him I take him to crèche and I spend the afternoon with him, I fetch him from crèche. I spend time with him in the evening, when we get home, I make him some bread and then I cook.

What is clear from these extracts is how the two forms of work are intertwined; their colliding nature mirrors the lived experiences of all the mothers in this study in terms of how they experience being mothers and being part of the workforce; the roles intersect and they are not in a vacuum.

Further, the double burden of work carried by this sample also relates to socio-economic hindrances which do not allow for women in the low-income bracket of employment to attain formal education. Because of the nature of employment they do; as well also the unseen work they perform at home as mothers, cognitive labour and chasing father involvement (as will be discussed in the following section), they cannot afford to nor have the time to further their studies and perhaps find better employment opportunities. Thus, the sample in this study is a mere representation of the many women who do low-income work as a means of survival for themselves, their children and/or their extended families.

4.6 More work: chasing money and involvement

In addition to the paid, unpaid and cognitive work done by the low-income mothers, the mothers must chase fathers for involvement and participation.

Angel, Simile and Nokubonga are mothers who have no or strained relationships with the fathers of their children. These fathers have exempted themselves from their responsibilities of fatherhood and fathering; they do not provide financial, emotional, psychological or social support for their children and all have extremely strained relationships with the mothers of the children.

Angel, Simile and Nokubonga explained that they had to follow the fathers of their children, asking them to contribute towards the raising of their children. It is a responsibility they do not seem to want to assume.

Simile said:

“I was chasing after him for money to raise the child Chasing after him became tedious, he stopped answering calls and texts, I even told him that I personally want nothing from him”

Nokubonga said:

“We get along I am no longer with them and I no longer want to have to ask them to be involved in raising their children. I cannot understand hat they do not maintain their children, it is bizarre”.

Angel in this vein also explained:

“He has been awful, absent and uncaring. It is hard to describe him as a father”.

Herein, these mothers are left with the sole responsibility of providing care for the children, financially and otherwise. These mothers have resigned from hoping that the fathers could possibly play a part in providing, not only financially but also emotionally, for their children, and be present fathers. The fathers are leaving the mothers with the responsibility to see to all facets of well-being for the child, on top of the paid work they do as labour force participants and the unpaid work they do at home, which is invisible and unvalued, as well as the cognitive labour required to run a household, such as organising childcare arrangements (during the week and weekend), organising transportation for the child to the childcare arrangement, shopping, preparing meals, as well as other tasks. These cases depict that, indeed, cognitive labour is gendered as women in this study perform most, if not all, the cognitive labour.

4.7 The politics of space: the commute and exhaustion

As discussed in chapter 2, due to the historical geographic structure of the KwaZulu-Natal province, people who live on the periphery of cities or towns are usually black working-class people. The idea of distance, time, space, commuting and exhaustion are normalised in this setting because of the historical design of the province. Many black people living in the periphery have had to accept this culture of long amounts of time spent commuting to get to work and to get home. So, the theme of being exhausted from work and commuting was a theme that resurfaced throughout the interviews, although for some women it was more pronounced than for others.

In explaining their typical working days, the common thread that ran through the accounts by the mothers were that monotony in their typical working day, exhaustion from travelling due to the issue of space, and the historical design of the spaces and consequently how that placed women interviewed in this study on the periphery of towns, have a significant effect on the exhaustion experienced by the mothers. And there is the difficulty of commuting to and back from work with public transport and still having to get home and assume motherly duties, which are an expectation (although a few of the mothers have support within the household which alleviates a certain amount of pressure when they return from work or if they are working during the weekend).

Busi lives in Umlazi and works in Umhlanga Rocks; she takes two taxis to get to work. The distance she travels to work and back home is roughly 65 minutes. This is a distance Busi says

is long and tiring, and this is the only reason that, according to Busi, it is a relief that she works only two days a week:

“It is far going from Umlazi to Umhlanga truly, but it helps that I only do the commute twice a week”.

This means that she does not need to commute this distance every day of the week. The nature of Busi’s work is very taxing physically; something that Busi does not quite lay much stress on.

“Ok so I work at Umhlanga Rocks, a very elite area North of Durban. I work as a cleaner at an IT Company called Consumer Relief. My neighbour’s child who lives across the street found the job for me. So, I get to work on Wednesdays and Fridays and clean/mop the floors, wash the coffee/tea cups and clean the bathroom area as thoroughly as possible. I then dust the machines, printers, computers, monitors and stuff and then I give the tables a wipe down”.

Busi and Lale were able to provide me with a look into what they do with their time during their long commutes. Insight into this time was clearly strongly related to their children and to planning for their unpaid work interchangeable with their responsibilities for their paid work. For instance, Busi explained:

“I think of my children and all the hopes I have for them. I think of how hard it is to be a single parent and how their father does minimum work and comes every second month to be a celebrity. I think of what I will cook for supper when I am done at work, what I need to buy that we need on my way back from work. I do not think of a lot when I make my change of one taxi to another. All I think of is getting to work on time and getting home to my children. My children are always on my thoughts, the tiredness and difficulties I face are all made worth it because of them, I work so we can live as a family”.

In the same vein, Lale said:

I think about my daughter whom I miss a lot during the day. I miss her being naughty and wanting to eat ice cream for breakfast [Laughs]. Yes, she is incredibly special. So yeah, I think about her. I think about what I will prepare for supper, and work which I need to do at home if I have like minutes to do for a meeting at work.

The issue of a long-distance commute between work and home is not only an issue in the urban setting but also in the rural setting because of the overall apartheid structural design of space in KwaZulu-Natal and South Africa more broadly. For instance, Buhle is working as a sales

representative (staying at rural Empangeni, KwaNdaya), which means she travels within Empangeni, the town she works in, and around KwaZulu-Natal. She said:

“Sometimes we travel far, we go to Escort, Emnambithi, Ladysmith, and Pietermaritzburg. It is our job to ensure that we do our best to recruit as many people as we can to the company”

This means that she sometimes leaves home at the crack of dawn, for instance as early as 4am, and comes home late in the evening, as late as 9pm. It depends on how fast she and her team perform in terms of finding clients (the target is 20 people per sales representative) and only when they feel they have maximised the opportunity of marketing in a different town can they then commute back home.

This means that she delegates childcare responsibilities, such as waking her child up for school, getting her ready, making her lunch and supper, and preparing her for bed, with her cousins. This is a positive aspect of living with family relatives, because they are more than willing to take on these responsibilities on account of the fact that they are family, and, in terms of Zulu mores, any person who is a parent is that role not only to their biological child/ren but the role is socially extended broadly to other children in their proximity.

For a mother like Buhle a typical working day is marked by traveling, to the market and selling Sanlam products. She said:

“I work at Sanlam, I am a sales representative. My job is to recruit people and get them to buy any of our insurance products. We do not always work in the same place, we travel from place to place, the transport to travel is provided by the company”.

This travelling undoubtedly has an impact on her mothering as she is not always present, but during weeks when she is working afar and is sleeping not at home but closer to designated locations, she explained that her cousin steps in and cares for her child, ensuring that she is at school and well looked after. Insurance companies function because of the work done by recruiters to get people to the products, making monthly payments for these products. This was well captured by Buhle when she said:

“I have to just approach people and attempt to sell them the idea, it is not always easy because people can be extremely rude, some will let you go on for long explaining the products to them and only give a ‘No’. It is extremely exhausting, it is tiring, I am on my feet for like the whole day, I only sit when I eat lunch at 12,

sometimes I take it at 1. If we are working far then we head back at 3pm, the staff combi drops us off at the rank in Esikhawini which is 20 min away from my home, I then take a taxi to here. The work is a lot, sometimes you feel good, especially when you have signed up a lot of people, you feel like you are going somewhere”.

The work is full of pressure and is very demanding because, in addition to the traveling and sometimes being placed away from her home and child, her pay is based on turn outs. For example, her pay depends on how many people she signs up and what kind of products she signs them up for. She explained:

“It is our job to ensure that we do our best to recruit as many people as we can to the company. Mostly though we target teachers, we go to schools during their lunch break we speak to them individually or we will do a presentation for them and if they are sold on the idea, they sign up with us. We are never seated at the office, we are always working in the field. The time we get to be at the office is in the last week of the month, on Mondays and Wednesday we make submissions to the Sanlam office in Durban, the people we have been able to sign up”.

The work takes a remarkable toll on her physically. In her own words, Buhle explained:

“The work is tiring, chasing after potential clients is exhausting and is all just to make Sanlam more successful than it already is. The pay is also not good, I am looking for a job that can earn me more money. I earn R4500 and if there is a lot of people who I can sign up, I get a bonus of R2000 which happens maybe every three months or in good times two months”.

Herein, the matter of physical exhaustion endured by these working mothers ran throughout the interviews, and all the mothers to a small or large extent commented on being physically exhausted, either because of the physically demanding nature of the work they do or as result of having to commute long distances between their homes and work.

This theme was strongly supported by Simile, whose typical working day is marred by exhaustion. As a single parent, her domestic work, childcare, childrearing and paid work rest solely on her. Simile must divide herself and her time amongst these. It rests on her to ensure that her child is well looked after and cared for. She must ensure that their home is a clean environment, that there is food, and that rent is paid. Simile is a hairstylist; thus, the responsibility of looking for clients and retaining those clients rests on her. There is a mounting load on a mother such as Simile; for her, being a mother and being a worker, is marked by

exhaustion and pressure. Both roles require much from her, and this is well captured when she discusses how she experiences working and mothering:

“I will not lie, it is difficult the exhaustion, it is a lot. Sometimes I ask my neighbour the one who is my friend. She works at Spar Esikhawini during the week, on weekends she is done by 12pm, so I ask her at times to include my washing when she does hers, I give her money like R50 or buy her something nice like junk for the weekend, ja buy her what I can afford. But she never minds helping me out at all. I help her out with things as well if I can, we went to primary school together she is also from Port Danford, so we go way back. With things like cleaning it is not too bad because we live in a small house, I give the house a proper clean, like mop the floor and wash the bedding on a day I know for a fact that I can afford to not go to work, I will be home and just clean, but that is like once/twice a month. Keeping the place clean is not a problem at all. Doing the cooking is also not an issue, I like cooking, it is just the fact that I am tired that makes it all a little hard, I am always on my feet at work, the last thing I want to do when I am home is being on my feet over a hot stove but I have to cook a wholesome meal for my child”.

It is key to note that Simile wakes up every morning to go to the salon, just in case there is a client; she explained that sometimes she goes to work and no client comes, but she understands that it is just part of the business of hair:

“Angikwakwazi ukungayi, sizodlani? Kodwa ibhizinisi lekhandla linjalo” [I cannot afford not to go, but what will we eat? That is how the business of hair is].

Erasmus’s (1997) discusses the polarities of hair and the extent to which black women’s identities are entangled in their hair. She further asserts that polarities are sexualised, political and gendered. Black women’s identities are consistently and continuously shaped by their hair. In support of this, hairstyling is one of the most flooded sectors of work amongst young black women who do not necessarily have the qualifications to work in the formal sector. The ability to do hair is a necessary skill-set in the black community in particular. Hair is a very essential aspect of black women.

Thus, there is an array of styling that hairstylists need to be familiar with. And considering how flooded the sector is, it is highly competitive, so retaining customers is also a key aspect of the job. This entails building relationships with customers, being friendly with them and being an ear for them during the time you are doing their hair (a form of ‘therapy’; many people confide in their hairstylists). This level of relationship building is usually a deciding factor for most to

keep going back to specific hairstylists. And this form of ‘therapy’ is quite exhausting for the hairstylists but is an important feature of retaining clients. As Simile said:

“Hair appointments vary, it may take me 30min, it may take 45min or 4/5 hours or more. It depends on what the person is doing you know, but I am mostly at the salon awaiting customers. However, I do have a clientele KwaNdaya, as you have noticed I am sure a lot of black women have taken a liking to doing dreadlocks, now dreads need to be retwisted and styled at least once a month or two, so I make a money from those appointments, and those are constant customers I know I have for a fact, there is about 6 of them here in my area. Most of my customers communicate with me on my phone and tell me when and where they need me to do their hair at their home. The thing about doing hair is that it comes with having to listen to them [clients] and advise, which makes me tired”.

A typical working day for a hairstylist is very exhausting, mentally, physically and emotionally, especially on days where the hairstylist may have a lot of appointments, which often take 2 hours, 4 hours or 6 hours depending on the style the clients has chosen to do. In addition to the actual work of executing hairstyles in the precise manner customers want them, the hairstylist needs to engage with her clients.

Due to the demanding nature of the work, especially for someone like Nokubonga who does not have a salon but does door to door visits for appointments (clients only come to her house if there is no child care arrangement), support from her family on a typical working day is extremely important. Nokubonga’s mother is a domestic worker who works three days a week so, between Nokubonga and her mother, they arrange that there is always one of them available to provide care for Nokubonga’s one-year old child during the day. Nokubonga, like most working mothers, assumes a variety of roles, including mother to her children, student, hairstylist and carer to her diabetic mother. Nokubonga said:

“I have no issue doing all the household tasks, especially because my mother is a diabetic. I have to allow her to take it easy and take good care of her. So, bearing the duty of caring, cleaning, studying and working is just part of my life”.

What the case of Nokubonga depicts is how the responsibility of care often falls on mothers and other women, thus colliding with increasing labour force participation amongst women due to the dwindling of the male-breadwinner model and the declining marriage rate (meaning minimal or no support at all from fathers, as in Nokubonga’s case where the fathers of her children have absolved themselves from their responsibilities as fathers). As presented by

Erasmus in 1997, women experience challenges and, in their childcare organising, these challenges continue to exist.

It is clear to see that as the number of women joining the work force increases, so too does the dilemma of the responsibility faced by women as homemakers, workers and mothers (i.e. the need to do a double shift and balance paid and unpaid work). There is a need to bridge the gap of poor care by providing high quality childcare arrangements; in this way mothers may feel more comfortable and supported in their roles and able to lead balanced lives.

4.8 Conclusion

The main message in this chapter is that balancing work and family is difficult. Mothers working non-standard jobs, service jobs or jobs with long commutes may need help finding this balance. The low-income employed mothers in this study have graciously accepted all their roles (as mothers, carers, workers) as part of their lives and as what is expected of them as mothers. This is supported by South African literature which argues that African working-class households are sites of a crisis of social reproduction in contemporary South Africa and that African working-class women are predominant shock absorbers of the crisis (Fakier & Cock, 2009).

The golden thread of this thesis is how the type of childcare low-income employed mothers can provide their child/ren is an outcome of the state, family and market, and of what they can afford and what they have access to. The findings are consistent with the literature which argues that women spend more time than men doing unpaid care work and housework, with multiple and overlapping activities, and that women are doing this whilst navigating paid work or productive work (Hochschild, 1989; Schor, 1991; Kenny, 2004; Kenny, 2007; Benya, 2016). The findings show that women in this study typically spend disproportionately more time on unpaid care work than men. Due to gendered social norms that view unpaid care as a female prerogative, women across different regions, socio-economic classes and cultures spend an important part of their day on meeting the expectations of their domestic and reproductive roles (Kenny, 2004; Kenny, 2007; Benya, 2016). Findings demonstrated that the productive work was often marked by long hours, long commutes and physical exhaustion, except for low seasonal labour such as in the farming sector. Considering this, it is important to revert to the literature, which emphasises such a finding and argues that apart from lack of childcare support in the family institution, employed mothers also lack support from government for childcare.

The feminisation of the labour force has not been followed by adequate changes in care policies that allow women, who historically accumulate all the care responsibility, to reconcile work and family life (Fakier, 2010). In the South African context of inadequate social provisioning by the state and the retraction of social benefits associated with employment, social reproduction is disembedded from economic production and placed in the household (Fakier, 2010).

Chapter 5: Obaba nabasekhaya [Fathers and paternal kin]

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to examine the role of fathers in their children's lives, as well as the role of paternal kin. This has implications for children raised by low income employed mothers.

The examination of these roles allows the unpacking as to why mothers carry the majority of the responsibility and duty of childcare, whilst undertaking low-income and often precarious work. The roots of the large percentage of women who are single parenting are firmly entrenched in the system of migrant labour (Ramphela, 2002), although there are different configurations of male involvement. Further, the chapter will present understandings of what the father's role should be, e.g. that fathering is generally thought of primarily in terms of financial support because of longstanding gender roles (Marsiglio & Pleck, 2004; Christiansen & Palkovitz, 2007). It is important to consider the role of male parents and the impact of their involvement (or lack thereof) on women and children.

This study also goes further to understand debates on fatherhood, as it looks at other ways of explaining fatherhood and at the critique of absence (assessing other forms of absence beyond financial absence), thus steering away from the traditional perspective of fatherhood (fathers as providers – the 'male breadwinner model') (Madhavan, Townsend & Garey, 2008; Madhavan, Mee & Collison, 2014).

Understanding how men were supported by paternal kin in their roles as fathers, and the securing of fatherhood through kin, especially in cases where a child is born outside of marriage by observing the practice *inhlawulo* (damages), (Madhavan & Roy, 2012; Hosegood & Madhavan, 2012) is important. The chapter will unpack the cultural contexts of fatherhood (specifically in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa), in order to understand the role played by paternal kin in childcare, given the cultural significance of parental kin in a child's life in the cultural context of South Africa (Engle & Breaux, 1993). Especially in the context of KwaZulu-Natal, where Zulu custom supports the strong role of paternal kin in a child's life, paternal kin is *kubo* (the home) of a child, because *kubo* is where the child essentially belongs (according to Zulu culture). However, what the place of paternal kin in a child's life means in a country with the lowest marriage rates in Africa (Richter & Panday, 2006; Makusha & Richter, 2016) and the highest rate of absent fathers after Namibia (Posel & Devey, 2006), needs to be interrogated. Further, the nuclear family is not the normative family structure in South Africa,

as 45% of children live with one parent (mostly living with mothers, 93%), 34% live with both parents (not meaning that these arrangements are necessarily nuclear) and 21% live with no parents (often a grandparent figure) (Children's Institute, 2018).

The chapter will present findings on the position and role of fathers, and paternal kin, in their children's lives and how this works with women making decisions about childcare. Because South Africa has one of the highest rates of absent fathers in the world (Mavungu, 2013), it is important to consider the actual lived experiences of women and what kinds of gaps in policy this might highlight. It is important to continue emphasising that, in most cases, the majority or the entire burden of childcare is borne by women (even in the presence of a male parent). The research participants in this study were all depictions of this.

This chapter magnifies that indeed, much has changed for black women, for instance, household formation (the increase of female headed households and multigenerational households), change in living arrangements, and increase in employment of women (labour force participants). The role of paternal kin has changed as it is no longer as actively involved in a child's life as it traditionally and historically has been. But the position of fathers has remained the same. It is still defined in terms of financial provision, often exempting fathers from caregiving responsibilities.

5.2 Literature review: conceptualising fatherhood

The ways in which lives are lived, and men and women as mothers and fathers care for their children, emanate from deeply embedded 'durables', and from practices using biological assumptions, particularly those assumptions that society holds as the place women should assume as mothers (McNay, 2002). It cannot be ignored that there have been shifts in discourses, and policies may reflect these shifts and change. However, the research findings in this thesis highlight the entrenched and gendered practices in the division of domestic labour and paid work between the 'logic of cash and care' (Hobson, 2002). The imbalance of care responsibilities will be reflected in this chapter. Does being able to provide financially for a child suffice? What about the care work involved in rearing a child, that goes beyond financial provision? All this work often falls on women in addition to the paid work they do; they are working the 'second shift' even in the presence of a father (whatever that presence means, i.e. present [resident, occasional] or absent).

Fatherhood is a role that is understood and exercised in different ways. One does not need to be the biological father to accept the fatherhood role and act as a father towards one or more children. There is thus a need to consider social fathers. Social fathers include a range of men who live with and/or care for children who may not be their offspring.

At the start of the 1990s, research on fathers and fatherhood underwent significant changes in focus and content. Initially it underwent changes in terms of its theoretical development. It had become increasingly clearly tied to the growing field of critical men's studies and gender studies, which had its roots in the 1980s' discussion on masculinity and gender, that took place in various countries such as Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the UK, Australia and the USA (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Since then, this line of research has considerably expanded and there has been a significant growth in the theoretical development of masculinity studies (O'Brien, 2005; O'Brien & Shemilt, 2003). The concept and discussion of hegemonic masculinity, for example, have been central in academic debate on masculinity and fatherhood (Connell, 1995). This focus calls for the need to understand the present and absent father debate, which is an emerging theme in this chapter.

5.3 Present father and absent father debate

Different concepts are utilised to describe the position, roles, functions and responsibilities of a father in the family. Mavungu (2013:68) purports that "little is known about how men, particularly African men, relate to their roles as fathers and how they make sense of the phenomenon of absent fatherhood". Absent fathers refer to those who do not interact with their children regularly and thus do not play an important role in their development (Krohn & Bogan, 2001). In *Disrupted relationships: adult daughters and father absence*, East and O'Brian (2007) adopted the definition of father absence as "a father being absent from the family home because of parental relationship breakdown". In this inquiry, the concept of absent father refers to the physical and emotional absence of a biological father during a child's life (childhood and/or adolescence) due to parental relationship break down.

The systematic review of fatherhood in South Africa by Richter, Chikovore & Makusha (2010) revealed several alarming statistics about fathering. According to Richter, Chikovore & Makusha (2010), South Africa has the lowest marriage rate and the second highest rate of father absence in Africa; furthermore, studies suggest that most South African children do not experience a positive relationship with their fathers due to the lack of support and care (Richter,

Chikovore & Makusha, 2010; Makusha & Richter, 2016). However, South African men are starting to reassess the value and their understanding of fatherhood in contemporary times, and South African fathers are becoming more involved in their children's lives than in previous times (Morrell & Richter, 2006). For instance, Madhavan et al. (2014) tracked father involvement in children's lives and found that there was strong involvement of fathers in children's lives and financial provision. As fatherhood has become an increasing focus of research attention, two seemingly contradictory trends have received much attention (Freeman, 2008). The first is that it has been observed that men are becoming more intimately involved in childcare. The second is that there has been an increased concern about the international trend towards alarming increase in 'fatherless families'. These two divergent trends have prompted researchers to investigate the advantages of the presence of fathers in the lives of their children as well as the disadvantages of paternal absence. This section explores the debates arising from this research.

Internationally, it can be claimed that society is facing a crisis of fatherhood, where large numbers of children are living in fatherless homes and grow up without knowing or seeing their fathers (Baskerville, 2002; Richter, Chikovore & Makusha, 2010; Makusha & Richter, 2015). Almost a decade ago American politicians were quoted alongside President Bill Clinton claiming that "the crisis of fatherless children is the most destructive trend of our generation" (Baskerville, 2002:695). While it is important to point out the negative consequences of absent fatherhood, an exclusive focus on such negative consequences may have the unintended effect of promoting a misleading idealisation and uncritical promotion of a father's presence in a child's upbringing. Such a focus can result in the stigmatisation of women-headed and single mother households and can lead to unintended negative effects on children and families (Flood, 2003; Lindegger, 2006).

Research on paternal absence is often centred on divorced families, where pre-divorce factors are not taken into consideration (Flood, 2003). The relationship between paternal absence and social problems becomes unreliable when not considering extraneous variables within divorced families and single mother households, including socio-economic status, quality of parenting and family relationships (Phares, 1996). These variables are sometimes more likely to create social problems than the absence of the father. Flood (2003) argues that until there is empirical evidence to support the simplistic claims between paternal absence and its endless list of negative consequences, one should not assume that a present father is preferable to an absent father.

This study depicts that women who have children are faced with a tremendous task to navigate both parental responsibilities and work life responsibilities due to absent fatherhood. This study also hopes to contribute to existing knowledge by broadening the conceptualisation of absent fathers by arguing that absent fatherhood does not necessarily describe visibility of a father but describes the actual parental contribution of a father to a child's socio-economic upbringing. Caution should be exercised when labelling the father as 'absent' because the concept of the absent father is not one-dimensional, may hold multiple meanings and does not always hold entirely negative or destructive consequences for the father-child relationship. It is important to ensure that the absence of fathers is not portrayed as the dominant media narrative has portrayed it, namely that fathers are absent and nowhere to be seen. Father absence, as will be reflected in this chapter, does not mean that fathers have no contact with their children but that this contact varies and is reliant on mitigating factors, which will be unpacked later in the chapter.

5.4 Breadwinners: fatherhood characterised by financial provision

This section aims to provide the historical roots of the breadwinner model which characterises fatherhood. It shows that this is not a new phenomenon and provides context for the model which has unfortunately become the essence of fatherhood (albeit not negating other aspects). Pleck (1984) provides a rich historical account of the breadwinner model that has come to define fatherhood (Madhavan, Townsend & Garey, 2008; Madhavan, Mee & Collison, 2014), and the model can be traced to centralized industrialization, but there has since been a significant change in the dominant conceptualisation of fatherhood or the role of the father.

Fatherhood has come to be defined by a father's responsibility as the breadwinner, essentially meaning that the core function or role of a father is his ability to financially provide for his child/ren. This conceptualisation overlooks all the key areas a father could be a contributor to in his child/ren's life, for instance moral teaching, love, care and affection, which do not require money. Such a conceptualisation of fatherhood essentially relegates the nurturing responsibilities of children to the mother while a father only attends to the somewhat cosmetic aspects of rearing a child. This study contends that such a conceptualisation becomes problematic in the modern day where women have more zeal to participate in the economy and may experience challenges undertaking this parental responsibly alone. Further, the issue of unemployment provides a crack in this model of males/fathers as breadwinners (Madhavan, Richter and Norris, 2014). Pleck explains that "[t]his almost uni-dimensional conceptualization

of the father endured from the mid-nineteenth century through the Great Depression” (Pleck, 1984).

An analysis of the then-popular literature and of letters written between fathers and children during that period confirms the dominant conception of fathers as breadwinners. This historical account is not to suggest that other aspects of a father’s role were not important, but that the most crucial aspect was the ability to financially provide as per the dominant conception of fathers as breadwinners, and this conception has continued to dominate the discourse of fatherhood. As explained by Lamb (2000:26), “With industrialization, breadwinning became the most important and defining characteristic of fatherhood—the criterion by which ‘good fathers’ were appraised”. This study argues that one consequence of this conceptualisation of fathers as breadwinners exclusively is that fathers may become automatically abdicated from parenting, given that mothers may now be empowered to act in that breadwinner role in light of the economic opportunities that are available to them in the contemporary world of work. The breadwinner mentality narrowly defines fathers and as such, fathers narrowly define their roles. This may mean that when fathers are not able to act as breadwinners (due to unemployment and a changing economic landscape), they might be reluctant to take up other parental roles outside of finances because these roles have not been historically ascribed to fathers. This thereby ultimately leaves employed mothers with both financial and nurturing responsibilities, which is a toll for employed women.

In addition, the implications of this characterisation of fatherhood is evident in the alarming high rates of father absenteeism in South Africa, where 60% of children do not live with their fathers, although the reasons for this vary, as do the forms of contact. The absence of fathers was explained by Ratele (2016):

“The absence of men in their children’s lives, which is nested in the failure to live up to the demands of fatherhood in a neoliberal society, is clearly entangled with the struggle for many men to find a viable sense of adult manhood in an economy whose only use for them is as cheap or surplus labour”.

Other factors at play in this problem include gender norms about childcare and the different roles attached to fathers and mothers. These norms often make men, even if physically present, contribute minimally to unpaid care and household work (Khan, 2017). A large volume of research, including from the Centre of Social Development, has shown that among both men

and women, fathers are widely considered as primarily being responsible for supporting the family financially.

Such attitudes frequently lead to men exempting themselves from non-financial care responsibilities. But in a context of widespread unemployment, their inability to earn an income and fulfil the 'provider' role often leads men to abandon their children. Gender norms relegate the nurturing responsibilities to the mother by default and as such, women always must consider balancing their role as childrearers with being active participants in the economy, because of the ambiguity that exists within the definitions of fatherhood.

Morrell, Dunkle, Ibragimov and Jewkes (2016) found that there were high levels of physical absence among South African fathers. While nearly half of all adult men are fathers, only a third of the country's preschool children live in the same homes as their fathers (Posel, 2001). The data suggest that 55% of rural black African children (aged 15 years and younger) did not live with their fathers (Posel & Devey 2006). This is discussed in the context that the migrant labour system associated with colonialism and apartheid was to a large extent responsible, though the pattern has persisted long past the formal ending of those systems (Morrell, 2007). There is a need for men to choose to be involved fully in the care of their children despite economic difficulty. Herein, fatherhood roles need to be encompassing more than financial provision; financial provision is seen as the pinnacle of fatherhood negating care work such as changing nappies, bathing children, helping children with schoolwork, doing laundry, cooking and other care work. This work is often seen as the primary responsibility of the mother, and by premising fatherhood on financial provision, the cycle of childcare being only the work of women is perpetuated, and men continue to exempt themselves from fatherhood responsibility, if they cannot provide financially for the child/ren (Morell, 2007).

This study argues that this shift in the roles within the household is important because there has been a historic movement among women entering the workforce. It is not feasible for low-income employed mothers to perform their roles as a part of the workforce and as mothers, because it imposes an enormous amount of stress and pressure (due to strenuous working and personal circumstances). This study argues that such a shift requires the reconceptualisation of parenting roles into one where responsibilities are shared to alleviate the load of working women, as well as to support their strides into a historically male dominated economy.

Financial support is seen as the means to good fatherhood by some fathers, which may not be enough due to the social-economic transformation of many households. These are good

providers financially but bad partners and fathers (in terms of the nurturing and care provision which is a strong tenet of parenting and relationship building with a child). The pragmatic part of raising a child is delegated to the mother. If a father being present and involved in a child's life is a key defining feature of fatherhood; this section serves to discuss a cohort of fathers who are not physically present for their children, have limited contact with their children but send remittances to support their children. And for these fathers, this is what fathering is, being able to provide financial support. The following section will delve into the meaning and fundamentals of paternal kin.

5.5 Conceptualising paternal kinship: a case of South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal

It is important to note that highlighting the importance of paternal kin does not mean negating maternal kin. Maternal (*omalume*) and paternal (*kubo kwayo*) kin in a child's life have important and meaningful roles in a child's life. The maternal family is especially important under the circumstances where a child is born outside of marriage, because the child is deemed as a part of this side of the family and will carry the maternal surname (unless certain cultural procedures are followed). And almost all the time, maternal kin is active and present in the life of a child. However, culturally, children essentially 'belong' with their paternal kin. This point serves to highlight the crucial roles, which this study interrogates, of a father and the paternal kin in a child's life.

Of course, if a child is born within marriage there is no question as to where they 'belong'. However, there may be contestation if a child is born outside of marriage. Hence, the practice of *inhlawulo*. "The practice of paying damages allows paternal kin to acknowledge that the child belongs to the patrilineage – giving the child an ancestral line of care – and creating the potential for a father and his family to provide care and support" (Mkhwanazi et al., 2018:71). The existence of this practice is founded on the cultural understanding of the importance of the father and paternal family in a child's life. This study, however, argues that in a way, this traditional practice serves to facilitate absent fatherhood because it attenuates the role of fatherhood into an 'event' instead of a lifelong daily commitment into all the affairs concerning the child. This study argues further that this gesture complicates the life of an employed mother because it has no substantial value in assisting her to balance her work and raising the child. Mkhwanazi et al. (2018:72) further explain this cultural context and argue that in South Africa most children live with their mothers and fathers or paternal kin, which does not mean fathers

do not provide care in other ways. There has been a clear shift in terms of culture and how culture is practiced and understood (a divergence with traditional norms of what happens when a child is born outside the parameters of marriage in the Zulu culture). As explained by Sooryamoorthy (2016), families in South Africa transition due social change. However, this merely speaks to a society that continues to uphold cultural practices in a changing society. Nevertheless, this study argues that this change does not change the important role fathers and paternal kin hold in a child's life. Neither does it speak to the changing context of the working woman who is faced with an enormity of economic opportunities but may otherwise be heavily inconvenienced by the arduous responsibilities of raising children concurrently. The following section, which presents the findings of this chapter, provides a look into the intertwined role and place of fathers and paternal kin in a child's life, and all the intricacies of this.

Findings

Before going into the details of absent and present fathers and the place of paternal kin, and of their involvement or un-involvement, it is important to understand which fathers and paternal kin are present or absent (degrees of involvement or un-involvement will be discussed in detail in the discussion to ensue). The table below (Table 3) provides a clear mapping of the women's marital status and gives an indication of father and paternal kin involvement or un-involvement. It is key to note that father involvement, as will be discussed in the chapter, has been broken down into varying degrees of involvement, using the categories of financial provision (regular, ad hoc, never); *inhlawulo* (completed, requested and not paid, not requested, not applicable); contact (daily, weekly, monthly, bi-monthly, none); caregiving (minimal, moderate, maximum); contact (minimal, moderate, maximum) and decision making (engaged, moderately engaged, not engaged).

Table 3: Varying forms of father presence and absence

Participant	Marital Status	Father and Kin Involvement	Financial provision	Inhlawulo	Contact	Care giving	Decision-making
Busi	Single	Involved	Regular	Not requested	Monthly	Minimal	Moderately engaged
Lale	Single	Involved	Regular	Not completed	Monthly	Moderate	Engaged
Nokubonga	Single	Un-involved	None	Not requested	None	None	Not engaged
Zinhle	Married	Involved	Regular	Not applicable	Daily	Extensive	Engaged
Anele	Single	Youngest child – Involved Eldest child – Un-involved, due to death of the father.	Regular	Not requested	Younger children child – Monthly/bi-monthly Eldest child – Not applicable	Younger children – Minimal Eldest child – Not applicable (dead father)	Moderately engaged
Angel	Single	Un-involved	Ad hoc	Not requested	Previously not existing, but now ad hoc	None	Not engaged
Bongi	Single	Involved	Regular	Completed	None	None	Not engaged
Kholiwe	Single	Involved	Regular	Not requested	Minimal	Minimal	Moderately engaged
Sindy	Single	Involved	Regular	Completed	Monthly	Minimal	Engaged
Thembi	Single (engaged)	Involved	Regular	Not applicable	Daily	Moderate	Engaged
Zamile	Married	Younger children – Involved Eldest child – Un-involved, due to death of the father.	Regular	Not applicable	Younger children – Monthly/bi-monthly Eldest child – Not applicable	Younger children – Minimal Eldest child – Not applicable (dead father)	Engaged
Unathi	Single	Involved	Regular	Not requested	Monthly	Moderate	Engaged

Participant	Marital Status	Father and Kin Involvement	Financial provision	<i>Inhlawulo</i>	Contact	Care giving	Decision-making
Thandi	Separated	Un-involved	None	Not applicable	None	None	Not engaged
Nikiwe	Married	Involved	Regular	Not applicable	Daily	Moderate	Engaged
Senzile	Single	Involved	Ad hoc	Not requested	Ad hoc	Minimal	Moderately Engaged
Buhle	Single	Involved	Regular	Completed	Monthly/bi-monthly	Minimal	Engaged
Gabisile	Married	Involved	Regular	Not applicable	Weekly	Moderate	Engaged
Lungile	Single	Un-involved, due to death of the father.	None	Not requested	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Phumela	Single	Involved	Regular	Completed	Monthly	Moderate	Not engaged
Simile	Single	Un-involved	None	Requested and not paid	None	None	Not engaged

5.6 Absent fathers and paternal kin

The concept 'absent father' refers to a father's emotional disengagement from his child's life regardless of whether he is physically present or distant. Morrell (2006:18) notes two problems associated with the thinking that father presence is beneficial by default. The first problem is that "it is difficult to show that physical absence of the biological father is as serious for the child as is often argued" (Morrell, 2006:18), as father presence can also be negative in some cases. The second problem stems from the fact that "men have used the argument that children need their (biological) father to pursue anti-feminist campaigns designed to return women to their dependence on men or to reduce their autonomy" (ibid).

Scholars of family dynamics in South Africa have noted that the discourse on the phenomenon of absent fathers in South Africa has focussed on co-residence and has thus failed to recognise the extent of father-child connections and paternal support that transcend co-residence (Madhavan, Townsend & Garey, 2008). It is important to note the difficulty of formulating an operational definition of the concept 'absent father', but for the purposes of this study the term refers to fathers that do not live with their children, do not maintain communication and do not pay maintenance, and did not observe the cultural practice of paying *inhlawulo*, which exists in the Zulu community when a child is conceived and born outside of marriage.

Simile and Nokubonga are mothers who have no or strained relationships with the fathers of their children. These fathers have exempted themselves from their responsibilities of fatherhood and fathering; they do not provide financial, emotional, psychological or social support for their children and all have extremely strained relationships with the mothers of the children.

It is key to note that the practice of *inhlawulo* varies from family to family. Families may require remedies to be performed in a manner appealing to them; the performance of remedies is subjective, relative to the specificities required by families of the 'damaged' and/or impregnated female. Whilst some of the participants had *inhlawulo* paid for their pregnancies, some did not and this was a strong point of contestation, hurt, and turmoil. What was observed in this study is that the payment of *inhlawulo* was not a cultural norm practised in all cases, and such cases were a deviation from what has been a traditional practice and are often accompanied by father absenteeism.

Further illustration of the difficulties experienced by a woman where the man who has impregnated the woman does not pay damages is well captured by Simile's experience. She said:

"I was chasing after him for money to raise the child, oh, first I chased after him to pay inhlawulo because my eldest brother who has taken the place of the leadership of the family after my dad passing in 2008, wanted inhlawulo paid. He found it disrespectful for my boyfriend at the time to not want to respect my father's household".

The father of the child in this case has exempted himself from the responsibilities of being a father; in fact, he has never met the child. Perhaps this speaks to the ties and relations which a custom like *inhlawulo* tries to usher in to ensure assumption of responsibility by the father of the child and the paternal kin. It allows for the meeting of the two families, and responsibilities from both families are stipulated and assumed.

The non-payment of *inhlawulo* and subsequently father absence can also be learnt from Nokubonga, and from her mother's teachings about being a 'good girl' and carrying herself well, for example, not having three children with different men at a young age (her first child was still born; she has two living children). I had the opportunity to meet and speak to Nokubonga's mother; she asked not to be recorded, but her sentiments were that she had failed in rearing her daughter well, and hence the three children Nokubonga had outside of marriage, from three different fathers, fathers all had not paid *inhlawulo*. She shared that Nokubonga's pregnancies have caused the biggest strain on her own marriage. This is because in the Zulu culture, rearing of the girl child is seen as the mother's responsibility; thus, any failures or regresses by the child are seen as the failures of the mother in rearing her well. The pregnancies were an affirmation that she had failed to get her daughter to behave and carry herself well, honouring the family and not shaming the family.

They have resigned from hoping that the fathers could possibly play a part in providing for their children, not only financially but also emotionally, and be present fathers. However, it is important not to ignore that two of these fathers did make a re-emergence when they could financially afford to provide for their children. Unfortunately, many fathers define fatherhood by the monetary ability to provide for their children. These cases also introduce an additional burden, and additional work. In the previous chapter (chapter 4), the paid and unpaid work done by women was presented. Here, we see that mothers do more unpaid work beyond

reproductive work, that is the work of chasing for money or father involvement in a child's life.

5.7 Re-emergence of the father: socio-economic factors contributing to father absenteeism

Angel and Nokubonga are mothers who are aware of how socio-economic factors, such as unemployment, can affect a father, and many fathers often exempt themselves from the lives of their children because they cannot afford to pay a sum of money towards childcare. Angel explained:

“We broke up when I was 4 months pregnant. We were always fighting; he thought I was actually cheating on him with the preacher who was harassing me. But he was the one cheating.... He has started sending money for both children, around R1600. He had lost his job, like when I was pregnant he was not employed and was not sending anything but he is now. We really do not get along. I now just take him as a person I need to be cordial to, I do not have any feelings for him anymore and he is the reason I feel this way about him. There is nothing between us, nothing at all”.

The strain and break down of the relationship stemmed from infidelities on the part of the father of her children, and perhaps from the fact that he had lost his job; he re-emerged when the child was a few months old, when he had found a new job, and was able to buy some necessities for the child and started sending a financial contribution towards the care of both children.

What is interesting about the re-emergence of this father, is that it was after he had found a new job, which brings up the questions whether most fathers in such contexts believe that their main role in the lives of children is financial support, and whether the inability to provide for a child financially means that perhaps the father struggles to place himself in a child's life when he cannot financially provide for a child. This case also triggers thoughts as to the role of paternal kin in a child's life. Traditionally the child's 'belonging' has always been understood to be with their paternal kin. Hence, the encouragement to pay *inhlawulo* damages (so that paternal kin can have rights to access the child) and *ukuthenga* (to buy) so that the child can hold their father's surname and truly be a member of their paternal kin. This is a tradition which has generally dwindled; now cases where the father and paternal kin of the child are not active in the child's life are quite common. *Ukuthenga* seeks to connect two families and build and maintain relationships. Therefore, this study argues that undergoing this process opens up the opportunity to call upon paternal kin to support the mother. This might not be practical in

situations where paternal kin might not help, but not going through the process eliminates the opportunity for them to participate in child care.

In a such a predicament, Nokubonga has three different fathers for her children. She explained understanding that one of the fathers had expressed to her that he would like to be more involved in the child's life but was financially unable to provide for the child because he is unemployed:

“I know that financial constraints are there but I cannot deal with it anymore. I know her father [points at her daughter] does not work but his father [points at her son] does work. When I speak to him he just says he will pay the maintenance and then I ask when? He does not provide an answer. I fail to understand it myself because the child needs to dress, eat and go to school but he is seriously not bothered”.

As Nokubonga explained, the father of her other child is employed but simply will not contribute towards maintenance of the child. It is clear to see here a father absolving himself of the role of fathering, although he can afford to contribute financially towards care of the child. Such absolution was critiqued in the literature as a narrow view of fatherhood because the needs of the child from their father transcend finances and require other nurturing aspects by the male figure, which incidentally a mother cannot provide. This study makes the presence that finances alone are not enough and that women, who are faced with such scenarios where the father provides financially only, are inconvenienced in their other endeavours to participate in the economy without worrying about their maternal responsibilities. It is important to notice in both cases how father involvement has been reduced to financial provision, and although fathers providing financial support is pertinent, it is not the only component of being a father.

In the same way, Simile has had to accept that although the father is alive and working, she is raising the child by herself:

“ngiwumama ongayedwa, lokho yinto ekade ngayamukela. Ayiho into afuna ukuyiphakamisela isandla, ngokwemali nomanje uthando” [I am a single mother and that is something I accepted a long time ago. There is nothing he wants to lift a finger for, not by money or love].

The assumption of the role of being a single mother is something Simile had to accept compulsorily because, although she understands that fatherhood is not solely about the ability to contribute financially, and that it comprises love and affection amongst other aspects of a

father-child relationship, fatherhood is a role the father of her child and subsequently the paternal kin have chosen to absolve themselves from.

The cases of Simile and Nokubonga show how the un-involvement of fathers and paternal kin plays out. The breakdown in these relationships happened when the children were infants and there has been no re-emergence from the father or the paternal kin.

Another point to ponder, regarding the cases of Simile and Nokubonga, is whether the involvement of paternal kin correlates with the involvement of the father in the child's life. The evidence from these cases indicates that it does. The absence of the father warrants the absence of the paternal kin. There seems to be a breakdown of the traditional thinking that the paternal kin of the child is where the child essentially 'belongs' (culturally) through patrilineal ties.

It becomes clear to see that socio-economic circumstances such as unemployment may affect the ability of the fathers to contribute towards maintenance of their child/ren. However, the prevailing in this study is that childcare is not restricted to finances. This is an important point that fathers, such as those in this category, tend to miss. The point is that fatherhood presence and support should not be limited and defined by the ability to provide financial support. Even without financial ability to provide support, a father could play an active and significant role in the child's life in other ways until he is able to provide financial support and should not automatically cancel himself from the role because of his inability to provide financial support.

Fathers can be supportive to the needs of their children, they alleviate traditional gender roles and in so doing, they allow women to participate effectively in the market or world of work. A father, who undertakes much of the parental roles historically relegated to the mother, frees up the mother to dedicate more of her time to exploring a life outside the household, which in contemporary South Africa offers women more economic opportunities. For instance, fathers could spend time with the child/ren and provide emotional and social support for their child/ren. This in effect means a woman can experiment and take risks in the world of work just like men and learn and compete effectively without the inconvenience of a full-time parenting responsibility.

The limitation to this assertion can be seen in the findings that show that socio-economic circumstances, such as unemployment, may affect the ability of the fathers to contribute towards maintenance of the child. However, childcare is not restricted to finances. A father could play an active role in the child's life in other ways until he is employed, which is

something these fathers are neglecting to do. This neglect essentially exacerbates the situation of working women because they do not have the option to abdicate from parental responsibilities in the same fashion as fathers. In addition to their caring roles, women must pursue opportunities that will help leverage the socio-economic circumstances of the household while the father is unemployed. Such an undertaking by the mother is compromised by the expectation of balance that is expected of her with regards to rearing children and dedicating time to work.

Although some of the fathers can afford to contribute towards their children financially but simply choose not to, some cannot contribute due to their socio-economic positions. And in this, what is key to take away is that it is important to widen the understanding of fatherhood. There is a need to go beyond the sole importance of a father's role being financial provision. Fathers need to be encouraged to be physically present and socially and emotionally involved in the lives of their children. The mothers interviewed also seem to be facing the responsibility of care heavily and individually, since the fathers seemed to be getting exemption from the responsibility. Privileged irresponsibility appears to stain most households. Privileged irresponsibility, as discussed by Tronto (1993:120), is "the unbalanced nature of caring roles and duties in our society". Basically, "[t]hose who are relatively privileged are granted by that privilege simply to ignore certain forms of hardships that they do not face". What arises from this study is that the needs of the mothers are ignored (by the state and by the ways in which kinship has changed) when it comes to the actual hands-on caregiving work.

Tronto argued that men can and do care. However, "the image persists that what it means to be a man is not to care, or, at least, not to care well" (Tronto, 2013:68). This captures the dynamics of care within the households of the mothers because although the fathers are present and do care, the dominant responsibilities fall on the mothers who also must participate as labour force participants and this adds to their unequal duty to care.

5.8 Fatherhood characterised by financial provision

As discussed in the literature review, a dominant conceptualisation of fatherhood is a father's ability to be a breadwinner, and to provide financially for his child/ren. Busi is a mother financially supported by the father of her child. However, he is not physically present daily for the two children who stay with Busi; he stays with one of the three children they have together. He only visits once a month, sometimes every second month (depending on finances):

“He comes here once a month or every second month. This is mainly just to see the kids and spends time with them because he does not see them often. But, he sees the other child [participant’s second child] often who stays with the paternal family much more often”.

Busi is a mother who defines good fathering by financial support, so although she perceives the father of her children as a good father, she does feel that he lacks slightly, based on the money he is able to send to her. She said:

“I would say he tries to be a good father, I just wish he sent more money but we have spoken and he says that he can’t afford anymore. It’s just that if you are the parent living with the child you always end up paying way much more”.

She feels that as the parent who lives with the two children, a lot of the financial responsibilities end up taking a lot from her.

According to Busi, the paternal kin of the children are not supportive and participative in her childrearing. However, she did mention that her child stays with her father, also lives in the same house with some members of the paternal kin (all lending a hand with rearing the child). However, her overview was that the paternal kin was inactive:

“I will not even mention his family [paternal kin]. They are so unsupportive. An attitude I think they deduct from the fact that they live with my other son so have no obligation to the other children or even calling just to check if they are well”.

This study deduces from these findings that physical co-residence does not necessarily equate to paternal involvement. Thus, the presence of the father on the same property may not translate to the father taking charge of childrearing responsibilities. For instance, Nikiwe’s husband is physically present and contributes to the household and supporting the children financially, but he is not necessarily emotionally present in terms of providing care, nurturing and providing paternal influence. The bulk of work with the household is performed by Nikiwe; for example, her husband will not do things like bath the children or help them with homework. Herein, it is clear to see that for many fathers, perhaps the role of fathering has socially been reduced to financial support and this is how they make sense of fathering, and that being a father means providing financial support. The emerging dispute in this context is that when fathers fail to realise that parenthood transcends financial support, women remain in the shadows, as child rearers in the household, never free to participate in the economy and exert their full potential. Nurturing roles such as emotional support for the children needs full commitment and as noted

in the findings, fathers are unwilling to participate in that role. This essentially means that mothers who have children must abandon the hope of pursuing any other life outside of parenthood.

Herein, sexuality can be seen to profoundly shape women (and men's) childcare choices. Sexuality can be said to be integrated in their decisions, choices and childcare options. In some studies, conducted with younger cohort of men and women, sexuality was either regulated or problematic in engendering care (Bhana & Pattman, 2011; Swartz, Colvin & Harrison, 2018). Willan et al. (2020) explored reproductive decision making among young women in South African informal settlements, the authors considered how agency and social norm theory informed their decision-making processes. Concurring with this argument, Bhana and Pattman (2011) assert that young people in precarious positions in the township context, due to few opportunities to engage in discussions about love and gender (Bhana & Pattman, 2011:970). Thus, it is important to understand the way sex and sexual partnerships play in childcare dynamics. As reflected in this chapter involved fathers are mainly those who are still involved with the mothers' and/or married/engaged. They also have the financial ability to provide in their children's lives.

The following cases serve to support the idea of fatherhood being defined by financial provision and how sexuality features in the broadening or limiting options for care. Zamilé's husband, for instance, lives in Dundee, which is three hours drive away from Macambini (the rural settlement she stays in with her children). This means that Zamilé is in a long-distance marriage, and her husband can only discharge his fathering on the weekends he is at her home or when she and the children go to visit him. Zamilé's husband does send a monthly amount of money towards supporting the children; thus, a large portion of fatherhood for him is defined by the money he sends her. She explained that her husband sends her a monthly contribution:

“He sends between R600-R1000 for me to use as I deem accordingly”.

Zamilé explained that she is highly appreciative of the contribution he makes but unfortunately, the parent who lives with the child is the one who ends up spending more money.

A mother who is not married but is very well supported by her partner and the father of her child is Lale, who receives solid emotional and financial support. Lale explained:

“Our relationship, uhm, we understand the kind of homes we are from. We understand our responsibilities to raising our child. Like with the nanny we go half/half and because he has a better job than me he sometimes pays the amount in full without me having to put in my half. He also puts in a portion which is solely for whatever the child needs and of course that is my discretion because I am the one who lives with the child and knows what the child needs. We are fine, but sometimes I hit lows, like I was telling him I feel like my life is at a stand-still. And I was telling him that you know maybe he will find better people, but he just says that is crazy and he is not going anywhere and will support me. The thing he is in Pietermaritzburg [45 minutes drive away] so it is kind of a long distance relationship which is hard sometimes. Sometimes I think he is so far and it would be better if he was close. But we make sure when he has time that we go to see him or he comes down”.

What can be understood from Lale’s discussion on the inner workings is that Lale and her partner have a good relationship which they both hope will eventually lead to marriage. Like Zamile, Lale is in a long-distance relationship and trying to keep the relationships afloat, regardless of the distance. And like Zamile, Lale receives quite a comfortable amount of money (from her partner and father of her child) as a contribution towards the child’s well-being:

“So per month he sends around R2500 to R3000”.

Herein are fathers who are not physically present in the home and are missing milestones in the lives of the children. However, the fathers do provide monetary contributions towards the children, and, in this context, once more fatherhood is narrowed to financial contributions towards the child. This supports earlier presentations that were made in the literature about fatherhood being reliant on the financial stability of the father. This finding gives credence to the body of knowledge with regards to the nuances of conceptualising fatherhood.

The cases above have shed light on the fact that for these fathers, fatherhood is understood through financial provision, and not necessarily through involvement or engagement in other ways. Fatherhood in this context is reduced, by the mothers, fathers and wider network, to financial provision and support. In this, if fatherhood engagement or involvement is to be understood solely as the father’s ability to provide financially, then these fathers are actively involved. This does not negate that there are mitigating factors as to why some fathers are not physically present or live with their children; such reasons include not being able to be physically present because they work afar as is the reason in the cases of Zamile and Lale. This

study stresses that the absence of fathers described herein perpetuates gender disparities and needs to be attended to.

Economic participation opportunities for women are compromised by the weight that absent fatherhood exert on them. Financial assistance, which in some of the findings here are seasonal, unequally distributes parental responsibilities and this study argues that the generation of women living in this context are not able to work in paid work. Much more, women are also prevented from sustaining their families when a father absents himself due to ignorance surrounding parental roles in the family unit. This study argues that this in effect exerts immediate pressure on some women who would then be forced to balance childrearing and paid work. In other instances, this kind of pressure will force women to undertake any work including low paying jobs because more parental responsibility resting exclusively on the part of the mother produces the desperation to provide for the family in any way possible. And this merely speaks to the structure of the space in KwaZulu-Natal, as migration means that people migrate to cities in search for better work opportunities and earning capacity.

This structure was designed by the apartheid government. Apartheid damaged the structure of family life: without the ability to own land and live close to their low-paying jobs, black men were subjected to the migrant labour system that took them away from families for months or years at a time (Mhlungu, 2018). This system still appears to be at play, albeit in a different fashion. The fathers in these cases have not migrated from other provinces, but are most certainly a long way from home, hence their inability to be physically present in the same home as their children. The children live with their mothers, who are based in rural settlements, whilst their fathers live and work in towns afar, for work purposes. The geographical disruption of families is still the norm for many black South Africans.

The following discussion offers an insight into this disruption and how families navigate existing distance and time, that is, how fathers decide to travel back to rural settlements to see their partners and children once a month or bi-monthly, or arrange for their partners and children to be the ones to visit the fathers, and make the most of this time spent together. The discussion also provides an insight to the active involvement of paternal kin in the lives of the children. A key learning from the following discussion is how the geographical disruption of families has enormously contributed to the reduction of fatherhood in all but financial support. However, this is inevitable given that, due to the distance between fathers and their partners

and children, sending remittances or financial support is a solemn way to prove dedication, affection, support and love.

For example, Buhle is well supported financially by the father of her child. He sends a monthly amount to contribute towards the maintenance of their child and is also willing to be financially supportive. As a sales representative, Buhle some months does not meet her target, which means that she does not get any commission. This affects what she is able to do in and around her home, and for her child. The father of her child is able to support her financially during months like these, as Buhle explained:

“He works well, he works at Toyota, I am not sure what exactly he does but he’s in the plant with the cars, I know he wears protective gear when going to work. He is paid well, I do not know how much he makes but I know its way more than me. He sends R2000 for the child a month, sometimes it’s more, and especially if I just tell him I am not doing financially well in that months, he will come through”.

Buhle also shared how her partner and father of their child, is an active father:

“We meet up maybe at Gateway and he buys her clothes and toys. He will allow me to pick out an outfit, we enjoy the weekend at the end of the month.

The father in this case does not reside in the same home as Buhle and the child; he works and lives in Durban. This means that he is not physically present in the home, but visits Buhle and their child every second weekend or they visit him. Again, financial presence is an important aspect of fathering for a father who is not able to be consistently present. It is a manner of depicting care and, of course, support towards the mother and child. Also, paternal kin in Buhle’s case is very encouraging and emotionally involved in being a part of the child’s life. Buhle explained:

“I know his mother and brothers are always asking when we are getting married, they say that every time I go there KwaMashu C Section”

Herein, support has to transcend financial aid and even support with parental responsibilities.

Sindy is strongly financially supported by her partner and father of her child. Sindy said:

“He supports me so much with the child like financially I do not struggle”.

Although the plan between herself the partner was to work towards marriage, Sindy expressed having doubts, but she did explain that he is essentially the reason why she kept the baby:

“I am not sure we are going to last. You can never trust a man, they can pretend for a long time, so you never know his inside. Although we did not agree when I wanted to abort the child, but we ended up resolving it, I kept the child”.

The paternal kin of the child, is very actively involved in the child’s life, calling to inquire about the child’s well-being and insisting on having Cindy and the child over when they are available:

“My boyfriend only has his grandmother and siblings around. We get along. They really like me. The child and I visit like in Easter we went and a weekend with the public holiday in June, but I do not like for him to go when I am not there. It is not clean enough. They live Esikhawini, I guess it is because the lady is old and doesn’t clean properly. But for the short time my child visits I make sure I am there to make sure he is well taken care of. They provide support in terms of caring”.

These findings expose some of the nuances of fatherhood elaborated on in the literature. These findings essentially describe the nuclear family, which here is the informal distribution of nurturing responsibilities to paternal kin in the form of the grandmother, uncles and aunts. It is debatable whether the paternal kin would still be able to fill the void left by the father given the intermittent relationship that exists, especially due to the distance described.

This kind of family design also would not sustainably be able to alleviate parental responsibilities from the mothers; this alleviation is required for the mothers to find a job and work without feeling irresponsible or neglecting the well-being of the child. What is quite clear to deduct from such circumstances is that when a parent is parenting from afar, it is very easy for parenting to become monetised and a scarce commodity when the provision of material needs supersedes other aspects of the parent-child relationship (Seepamore, 2016), although the parents in the cases of this study put in effort to ensure that they see their children as often as they can afford to. Boccagni (2012) refers to “monetisation” of the relationship between migrant parents and their children and caregivers. Parenting becomes constructed in economic terms, as the gap created by migration is filled with material items, gifts and benefits. In order to compensate for physical absence, material items tend to feature centrally in the discourse of parenting from afar.

Adding to these dynamics are the cases of Phumela and Kholiwe. Phumela explained:

“We have good relationship, he comes home at the end of the month, he lives not too far from here so when he is visiting home he comes over and leaves us grocery

and he also sends money. I do not want to lie he really supports him. He may not be here to provide physical care for him and see to his well-being but he makes an effort. He sends around R1000 a month and when he comes at the end of the month he always leaves money like R500. He is a good father, he takes us out we go eat as a family, he is a good person”.

Phumela is another mother who does not have the father of her child and partner physically present on a daily basis, but she acknowledges that he sends remittances which for her is an indication of care and support, making up for the fact that he is not physically present, to see to the day to day care of their child. Furthermore, Phumela explained the close knit dynamic between herself, her child and the paternal kin of her child, and how they engage in activities to build family cohesion. Depicting that they are active members in her and their child’s lives, Phumela said:

“We usually visit when his father’s home for the weekend we go to church together as a family and then when we are walking back from church we pass by his house we have lunch and then in the afternoon he walks us back home. We have a good relationship, I hope to marry him. I also would not mind being part of his family”.

For Kholiwe, the journey to being in a good space between her and the fathers of her children was not a smooth sailing one. Kholiwe explained:

“He was not a part of my child’s life until she was like 5 years. I don’t know what made him assume responsibility but he did. He has been supporting my daughter since. He has been a part of her life and fathers well.

“The children visit their paternal families. We all get along well. Their fathers are very helpful with financial contribution for the child. Every month the father for the eldest send R1000, but when she left for DUT in 2014, he stopped sending the money to me and to her directly. The father of young child sends roughly around R1000 every month”.

Herein, it is clear to see that the road to childrearing with the father of her first child, was not an easy one but they eventually found a way around it. With the father of her second child, Kholiwe explained how he has been consistent in terms of being active in the child’s life. However, they simply did not work as a couple. Both the fathers live afar, in Durban, for work purposes, but are readily available if she ever needs to speak to them and they are both consistent with sending their monthly financial contribution for the children, and each child has a good existing relationship with their respective paternal kin.

The section depicts how fatherhood has been largely characterised by the ability to provide financial support. Although the fathers in this section do not reside with their children, they do try to be present and provide time and emotional support for their children, and they build relations between the children and their respective paternal kin. However, the core of the role played by the fathers in the children's lives is the financial support they provide. This directly relates to findings in the article "So we are ATM fathers" by Mavungu (2013), where fathers' primary role in children's lives was being a provider; whether employed or unemployed, the fathers were tasked to provide. Perhaps this would speak to the previous section about re-emergence of the father when a father is able to provide financial support. Fatherhood has largely been defined and reduced to financial provision, to the extent that it could be that fathers battle placing themselves without the financial ability to provide for their children, regardless of how big or small the financial contribution is. This directly speaks to the following section about an outlier case, in which the father has absolved himself and the paternal kin from any involvement or interaction with the child, but consistently sends money every single month.

5.9 Outlier: fatherhood reduced solely to financial support

Whilst the idea of paternal involvement being a common thread that runs through the cases discussed in the section above, in the case of Bongi, paternal involvement is restricted to financial maintenance and nothing else. The father of Bongi's child has been quite clear that he is not interested in having any form of relationship with her or their child. He sends money to contribute towards the needs of the child and only that. Here, paternal involvement is displayed by payment of remittances. Bongi explained the breakdown of her relationship with the father of her child and how his discrepancies led to them no longer being a couple:

"You know, when you are used to seeing and spending time with someone every weekend and now I never see him. It is this and that. Ever since I had a child our relationship has not been the same. There is nothing more important than having self-respect and respecting yourself enough to know when to walk away and not chase after a man, especially, in a time where AIDS is such a problem".

The problems in Bongi's relationship with the father of her child are clearly that he was not being committed, Bongi's feelings of dismissal and being ignored, and concerns of contracting a sexually transmitted disease such as HIV/AIDS. Bongi decided to end the relationship. Bongi lives in Sundumbili, a township in Mandeni, and Mandeni has one of the highest HIV/AIDS rates in KwaZulu-Natal. Thus her fears are legitimate.

However, regardless of the end of their relationship, the father has continued to send her remittances towards supporting the child. Bongi said:

“He supports me very much financially. He does everything for the child. He pays for the nanny, buys her clothes, like all the needs of the child are taken care of by him”.

He seldom or never visits the child though, but such a father could possibly identify himself as a present father because of his financial contribution. And as discussed above, there is certainly a correlation with the physical involvement of the father and the paternal kin’s involvement.

Although payment of *inhlawulo* was made for her child, Bongi experiences the same lack of involvement from the paternal kin of her child:

“His family does not bother at all. The last time they came to our home was when they came to pay inhlawulo [damages], so the last time they saw my child is when she was 8 months. Now that my relationship is strained with her father I do not see the need to visit them. There is nothing on between me and him. They do not even ask for the child during school holidays. So, it is just her father who supports us”.

A trend identified in this study is that if the father is involved beyond financially in a child’s life, the paternal kin is most likely to be as well. In realising the importance of present fathers, has been the association between the presence of fathers and the observation of cultural customs, such as the payment of damages, *inhlawulo*.

5.10 Observing customs: *inhlawulo* and fatherhood

As part of understanding the context of the custom of *inhlawulo*, it is important to understand that the weight this custom held in the communities where this study was conducted is not the same as in all communities where this custom exists. For instance, in Mokhotlong, Lesotho, women did not acknowledge the paternity of the fathers of their children; and similarly, in Nyanga East, South Africa, the custom was disregarded to allow for father presence regardless of the non-payment of *inhlawulo* (Mkhwanazi & Block, 2016; Mkhwanazi et al., 2018). This speaks to how some communities have adapted to social change in society to allow for discontinued father and paternal kinship ties, although children are born outside of marriage, and this perhaps speaks to an impediment a cultural custom such as *inhlawulo* can be to father and paternal kin, and to a shortfall in customs continuing to exist in changing societies. The non-payment of *inhlawulo* often becomes a source of contestation within Zulu families (as will

be discussed in the case of Simile and Nokubonga in this section). This has caused strain between the families of the father and the mother. It is seen as disrespectful, a disregard of the offence committed, and a neglect of culture. Unless reasons are explained to the family of the impregnated woman why payment is not made, it will often be taken as disrespectful and means that the father of the child and his family (paternal kin) do not have rights to the child. This often leads to the breakdown in the relationship between the father and paternal kin, and the maternal kin of the child/ren. This point of contestation speaks to a societal shift and a shift in the context of time and society, within which a cultural custom may continue to exist.

When a Zulu woman falls pregnant out of marriage, there are firm traditional procedures to adhere to and *inhlawulo* usually comes into play. Even though humans modernise quickly, this is one of the many practices which many Zulu families uphold or would like to have upheld by the man who has impregnated the woman. *Inhlawulo* traditionally involved payment in the form of beasts, which represented the injury caused to the head of household (father of the woman) and to the broader household the woman is from.

The procedure of damages has immensely changed with time and space (and families perform the procedure in respective ways). Thus although traditionally it was always the impregnated woman accompanied by older women from her family who went to the household of the man who had impregnated to report the injury, in current times it is now the family of the man who goes to the home of the impregnated woman to report the injury they have caused, to take ownership and to make payment (monetary or in beast form) as compensation for the injury or offence. Should the father-to-be want his child to take on his surname, he is expected to pay for this, i.e. *ukuthenga umntwana* (to buy the child). It is important to note that preferences and customs vary across families and cultures.

A commonality shared by the women in this category is that they have no relations with the fathers of their children. The strain and breakdown of the relationships stemmed from infidelities on the part of the fathers of the children, and unemployment was also a factor. *Inhlawulo* (damages) so that paternal kin can have rights to access the child, and *ukuthenga* (to buy) so that the child can hold their father's surname and truly be a member of their paternal kin, have not been performed in all three cases. And this is telling of the trend that the custom of *inhlawulo* has generally dwindled, and cases where the father and paternal kin of the child are not active in the child's life are quite common.

Another point, made solemnly clear in studying these cases, is the fact that father presence means paternal kin presence for the children, and where there is father absence there is paternal kin absence. It is clear to see that the lack of involvement of paternal kin correlates with the involvement of the father in the child's life.

Nokubonga is aware of the cultural practices that are supposed to be observed in the case of one having a child outside of marriage and knows that practices such as *inhlawulo* (damages) are fundamental. The father of the child must pay *inhlawulo* to acknowledge paternity, and this payment allows him rights to be an actively involved father. It is also a gesture of apology to the head of the household for not doing things following cultural tradition. For instance, getting married and then having children follows cultural tradition. To do otherwise is to bring shame and disgrace to the head of the pregnant woman's household (in this case, Nokubonga's father). Nokubonga said:

"I just feel like his paternal kin is not following protocol of how things are done. They never came to pay inhlawulo or introduce themselves to my father and apologise to him".

Nokubonga, like Angel and Simile, is culturally inclined, hence all three wanted damages to be paid for their children but damages were not paid. Acknowledging culture, Nokubonga and her family did not approach the paternal kin of her son to get them to observe paying *inhlawulo*. Non-payment of *inhlawulo* is disconcerting for Nokubonga, but she understands that, culturally, it is the paternal kin that is supposed to take the initiative. She explained:

"They have a home in the rural areas and here in Umlazi. Here in Umlazi it is just his siblings and cousins so I have nothing to say to him. They have a home in the rural areas too where my son's grandparents are but I have never been able to approach them and discuss my issues with their son because in IsiZulu you do not just address elders. Especially as a young female, it would have to be my dad who approaches them but my dad has no interest and is over the whole matter".

The narrative above shows the distinct gendered nature of parenthood in the Zulu culture, which inevitably places more parental responsibilities on women. Zulu women as mothers face cultural and societal expectations disproportionate to their male counterparts (fathers), who absolve themselves from fatherhood responsibility. This study argues that women in this context are limited in their freedom to outgrow the household and be productive citizens outside of maternal commitments. This is where the concept of privileged irresponsibility once

more comes into play, as found by Fakier (2010) in a study she conducted in rural KwaZulu-Natal in Emnambithi, a Zulu mother participant in Fakier's study said: "*Zulu men are just like that; they think they are kings*". This is the kind of thinking which can be attributed to how Zulu men have exempted themselves from the duty of childcare. The Zulu woman or mother takes responsibility for her children's lives and for and takes almost sole responsibility for domestic work.

This study argues that women who work are therefore left with the task to try to balance their working and family roles. Such a situation exposes mothers to emotional and physical strain because they lack partnership in their parenting responsibilities and, out in the world of work, they also must bear the pre-existing hardships there and navigate a largely male dominated arena. After work, mothers must go back home tired and resume the work of attending to childrearing responsibilities, with no support from the father or paternal kin. In the immediate term, this compromises the mother's psychological well-being, which often remains undiagnosed because the pressure of single parenthood does not allow them personal time to attend to this and because they do not have the resources (as will be explored in detail in Chapter 7).

The absence of fathers and paternal kin, such as in these cases, prompts important questions, like, what implications does the absence of the father and paternal kin have on the child culturally? Specifically, what are the implications in a Zulu cultural context, where the child is deemed to 'belong' (based on blood ties) to their father's family – the paternal kin. As mentioned, paternal kin are culturally considered to be where the child 'belongs'. The home of the biological father then becomes of much importance because it signifies this 'belonging'. Indeed, in past times children who were not biologically acknowledged by fathers (in Zulu culture) were deemed fatherless and mocked for being fatherless. The chapter will draw on a classical historical example, how King Shaka Zulu was humiliated for being fatherless and not having a sense of place with his paternal kin.

The behavioural patterns of Zulu families were traditionally premised on kinship bonds ramifying through almost every aspect of culture to bring together kin through practices such as kin members taking an active role in childcare, and assuming the role of parenting to children in the family (Ndabandaba, 1987:89). The cases presented above depict that this is a premise which has dwindled, based on how family structures have changed and been reconfigured in Zulu families, mainly due to fathers and paternal kin not assuming any responsibility towards

children and socio-economic factors. Socio-economic circumstances could be the main reason fathers and paternal kin battle placing themselves in their ability to perform roles traditionally expected of them. What is clear from these cases that, in some instances, fathers and paternal kin members generally have relaxed away from their traditional roles and duties to children. This study, however, seeks to add new knowledge on how the absence of fathers and paternal kin affects working women. The gendered nature of parental responsibilities in such a cultural context disempowers women. While culture and its propagation explain the issue of absent fathers, there lacks direction on the place of women going forward with regards to empowering them to emerge as full participants in the economy.

5.11 Absent fathers and paternal kin: death of the father

There are three cases which draw attention to circumstances where there has been the death of the father, and the implications as to whether the paternal kin has remained present and actively involved in the child's life or if the death of the father has subsequently ended the relationship between paternal kin and the child. These cases support the latter.

Under consideration in these cases involving the death of fathers is how the deaths have affected the relevant participants in this study. Lungile had to assume single parenthood when her partner and father of her child passed away, and she was receiving absolutely no form of support from the paternal kin of the child. Lungile explained:

“Unfortunately, he was the only child and his parents had both passed away so there are no kin I have contact with. When he passed, I continued taking my child to visit his home because his parents were still alive; my child was 8 months at the time. And then, two years later his parents passed away within 6 months from each other and that was the end of it. I do not think that his relatives cared much for the child so I am not in contact with any of the child's paternal kin”.

Similarly, Anele had to assume single parenthood of her eldest child, whose father passed away when her eldest child was still young (5 years old). When this occurred, she instantly had to come to terms with becoming a single parent. She explained:

“So, with him I have to play two roles, emotionally and financially. As a father and mother”.

And, being a father and mother to her eldest child, she understands him well enough to explain:

“He harbours a lot of issues towards the fact that he’s father passed on. But, I have had to find a way to let him know that his father did not plan to get sick and pass away. It happened because death happens”.

In addition to having to assist her child in coming to terms with his biological father’s death and the difficulties that came with the death, especially as a Zulu boy, knowing your father and paternal kin are a large part of your identity, Anele also had to assist her child to make peace with his paternal kin exempting themselves from responsibilities which rest with the paternal kin.

The biological kin of her eldest son has not assumed paternal kin responsibility since the death of the father of her eldest child. Anele said:

“He does not really know them, they stopped caring when his father died”.

Proving that families can be constructed in different ways, Zamile explained that her husband (step-father of her eldest son) and his family stepped up and accepted her son into their family, as one of their own:

“He is very good and kind to my eldest boy although he is his not the biological father. He treats him like his own son this makes me happy because my boy does not know what it is like to have a father but with his step-father and new paternal family, he has that experience, financially they contribute, they are great”.

This case displays how paternal kin involvement in a child’s life should or can be beyond a financial contribution.

In all the cases above, the children never had *imbeleko*, an important ceremony which introduces the child to their ancestors and solidifies the child’s place of belonging in their paternal family. What can be learnt from these cases is that mortality exacerbates the low-income situations of these mothers, and the cost of death can be seen here. Furthermore, the cases presented above, of mothers who have lost the fathers of their eldest children, make it evident that the fathers serve as providers and as the link between the children and their paternal kin because when the fathers in these three cases passed away, there was no further relation between the paternal kin and the children.

5.12 Present fathers and paternal kin

It is important not to assume the worst of all the men in this study. There are men in this study who are actively involved in terms of providing care physically, emotionally, socially and financially. As classically described by Fortes (1969:242), kinship is a bond which “creates inescapable moral claims and obligations”. However, these obligations have been made precarious for various reasons, such as domestic fluidity, the dispersion of kin and “stretched households” (Spiegel, 1996), which are dynamics of movement related to the search for employment (Madhavan, Mee & Collison, 2014:405). It can be understood the precariousness of the kinship obligations affect involvement and participation.

It is interesting to note that *inhlawulo* was paid for the pregnancies of the women in the following section. Bhana and Nkani (2014) contextualised damages in KwaZulu-Natal and they found that when a young woman finds out that she is pregnant, she is instructed by her elders to name the father of her child. In Zulu culture, it is expected that when a young man finds out that he has impregnated a girl, *inhawulo* must be paid to the young woman’s parents out of respect and as a sign that he is willing to take responsibility for his child (Nkani, 2012). An affirmative answer to the question of whether he ‘knows’ her obligates him to pay the amount set out by her family in damages (Nkani, 2012). For instance, Sindy explained that her relationship with her partner is quite good, that he is a good father and that he was a crucial player in her deciding to have and keep her child.

Although, her understanding of a good father seems to be reduced to financial support, Sindy’s relationship with the father of her child is indicative of the fact that, contrary to the stereotype that fathers in urban townships are ‘dead beat dads’, some are actively involved, financially and otherwise, as Sindy shared:

“He supports me so much with the child like financially I do not struggle”.

Anele similarly has a good relationship with the father of her children: he is involved in their children’s lives (although no longer romantically involved with her).

“Luckily, the father of my children and I get along well. He is very supportive. I open up my chest to him with a lot of things so he understands when I go through hardships. We are not together anymore but we have a good parenting relationship. His mother, the grandmother of my two children is also extremely supportive which helps”.

He visits Anele and their daughter once or twice a month, he sees his child who stays with his mother in rural Empangeni once every two months. He provides for the children financially, which Anele is very happy about. Anele also has a good relationship with his mother, whom she said treats her like her own child. She explained:

“I do not know where to begin, you see next week I am going home to Mtuba because I am going to help his family prepare for his wedding. I was asked by his mother to come support them. His mother treats me like her own child which is so new for me. It makes me so happy to know she feels this way about me. You know, not even my own mother treats me as well as she treats me. So, because I have a good relationship with his mother, him and I have a good relationship. We have always had to have it together for the sake of his mother – you know what I mean? Sometimes we all go there, even with my eldest child who is not his own child, but they treat us so well. They don’t exclude him at all. He supports me in raising the children and so does his mother who is raising my second child. I send some money to support her and show appreciation that she raises him. He works in Durban so he is coming on Tuesday to see us and then we will all travel together to Mtuba for the wedding. I am very happy for him, I asked myself the other day why he is not marrying me, but we had so many differences. He cheated a lot and I could not deal with that so we went our separate paths. I do not want to talk about”.

This is interesting in comparison to Simile and Nokubonga (discussed in a previous section) who have strained relationships with the fathers of their children and subsequently the paternal kin of their children, and this could possibly mean that if the father is actively involved in the child’s life, the paternal kin is most likely to be actively involved too.

Also well-supported, Zinhle is married and lives with her husband and paternal kin of her two children. Zinhle works for a factory and every alternate month works night shifts. During this time her husband and mostly her children’s paternal kin play an active role in looking after her two children. Zinhle explained that her work is very taxing on her physically and psychologically, based on the monotonous nature of the work she does at the assembly line, but she finds comfort in the fact that she is very well supported by her husband. She said:

“Our relationship is very solid and I could not ask for anything better. Nothing beats knowing you will not face hard times by yourself without any support. Our relationship has been premised on open communication and umh transparency”.

Support is clearly a very important aspect of the relationship for Zinhle and aids her role as a working mother who comes home from work extremely late (when working night shifts) and leaves home for work extremely early (when working day shifts). This augments other claims

that have been posited before, about the importance of the supportive role of fathers in the work life of low income working women.

This study therefore argues that it would be very difficult for mothers who are well supported by fathers and paternal kin to balance their two roles if they did not have this support available to them from fathers and paternal kin. Through the accounts presented by the mothers where fathers and paternal kin are present, we see fathers and especially paternal kin assuming responsibility and caring for children as their own based on the values of what is expected of paternal kin. The following section aims to interrogate whether a well-oiled system of care as discussed in the case of Zinhle could possibly be attributed to her being married, as her experiences were similar to the experiences of mothers who were engaged or married. Such cases depict what it looks like to have present and active kin, and draw attention to a possible link between marital status and father and paternal kin presence.

5.13 Link between marital status and father and kin presence

Thembi is engaged; Nikiwe, Zinhle and Gabisile are all married women. All these participants expressed that the paternal kin of their children and in-laws step up in various ways to provide childcare and be present for the children on the basis of patrilineal belonging. Although marital rates are in decline in KwaZulu-Natal and broadly in South Africa, perhaps this speaks to the reasons why children within marriage are encouraged, and in the event of a child being conceived and born outside of marriage, the remedy of *inhlawulo* is encouraged to be paid. Both marriage and the payment of *inhlawulo* allow for a meeting of the paternal and maternal kin of a child and for roles and responsibilities to be discussed, delegated and assumed.

Thembi expressed that she received support from her fiancé and in-laws, who play an active role in childrearing of her social child. Thembi explained the support she received from her in-laws when it comes to childrearing took her by surprise because she initially was not warmly received by her in-laws. Thus, she thought that childrearing would be a lonesome experience (albeit with support from her fiancé). This thinking was prompted by the fact that she is a coloured woman and her fiancé is a black Zulu man. Thembi explained:

“There are ups and downs, but because we are still together that attests to the fact that I still love him. Mutual respect is important, like he has the power to ruin my day when we are not getting along. So, we keep good communication and he assists me with raising the child, like he will take the child shopping and they go play soccer. He will make the child lunch sometimes. He helps with the garden, we work

very well together. We had to overcome a lot together, I am coloured, and his family did not want him with me at first, they just simply did not understand why he would not marry a black girl. But we fought for our love and for us to be together, I think it made us strong. My family also had its issues with him being black, you know coloured people think they are better than black people so it was that kind of thinking that caused issues”.

In this, the main source of practical care for her child is the paternal family, the paternal kin of her child. The main person who provides care for the child is his paternal grandmother who he stays with during the day when his parents are at work. It is clear to see here that essentially all members of the paternal kin in the household contribute towards providing care for the child. In this household, the practice of childcare is clearly a family affair, where all the adult members of the household contribute in one form or another to caring for the child. Thembi explained:

“His grandmother looks after him during the day. The grandmother is my fiancé’s mother and she lives with us; so, during the day they stay together whilst we are at work. We also live with two of my fiancé’s younger siblings [paternal aunts] so that really helps because everyone in a way lends their hand to looking after him and seeing that he is okay”.

Gabisile is another mother who has a good relationship with her husband and paternal kin, specifically concerning childrearing. In explaining the parenting relationship between herself and her husband she said:

“We have a great relationship, although he lives far because he works for the Department of Education in Pietermaritzburg. He comes home on Fridays is home on Saturday and Sunday and leaves very early on Monday morning so that he can be on time for work. When he comes home, he greets them and the first thing he asks to see, is her school books. So, he can see where she is going and where he can help, he was even that way when our eldest daughter was still around and I think that is what allowed her to work hard, that support she got from her father. She matriculated last year with 7 distinctions. It was the greatest achievement”.

Gabisile’s account also introduces the traditional Zulu norms that there are areas of childrearing where the father is expected to step in with his ‘sternness’. Gabisile said:

“When it comes to advising the children that is my field, he usually steps in with advice where I tell him that, this one is giving me trouble here, please step in and advise. And then he does, but most of it is done by me a mother, I pass on to him what I find heavy”.

This was interesting because Gabisile is the parent who spends the majority of the time with the children but she still felt the need to “*ukunika usokhaya indawo yakhe*” [giving the head of the household his place].

This precisely speaks to the adhering of cultural norms which are clearly still in place in some households in KwaZulu-Natal.

Gabisile also holds her position as *umakoti omdala* [the eldest bride], and being *umakoti omdala* means that Gabisile must work actively at keep family relations alive by *ukubumba umuzi* [building the household], for instance by ensuring that the family members gather, break bread together and are cordial with each other (which Gabisile attributes to the fact that although they are living on the same plot of land, the three houses on the plot are self-contained and do not share any utility costs). Gabisile explained:

“We live on the same plot of land with my parents-in-law, they are very involved in the lives of the children and they come over during weekends as their son is home, I cook, we eat, it is great. We are a very big family and we all care for each other. But I think what has kept our relationship so well is the fact that we run our households different, like we don’t share costs for food, for electricity, each house does its own thing”.

Similar to Gabisile, Nikiwe is very cognisant of cultural norms that a Zulu woman is meant to adhere to. In explaining her relationship with her husband, she said that marrying when she fell pregnant by him (already having a child with someone else) brought her “*isithunzi*” [dignity]. Nikiwe explained this:

“It is very good, we are in a good relationship. It is good and healthy. He does not have a lot of money, so he went home and he paid what he could afford and we went to court to sign. But we plan to do the big wedding at a later stage. We got married in 2014. I was pregnant when we got married. He did not pay for inhlawulo, he just went to ask for my hand in marriage at home and paid the lobolo he could afford. My dad was very glad that he decided to marry me because the thinking usually is that who will agree to marry me when I have a child with someone else, honestly, I also had that worry. Both my parents are still alive, so I was worried as to how they would have viewed me if I did not get married to the man who impregnated me. Yes, we live in different times but it just depends on how you were raised, some things stick, like for instance, as an unmarried woman I was not supposed to be engaging with my husband sexually before marriage. That is culturally and religiously unacceptable, so when he said he was going to marry me, he elevated a huge load

off my shoulders and made a respectable woman of me, to my parents importantly and in the community”.

Nikiwe explained that her in-laws are very present in the life of her youngest child, and, explaining that they assume their role as paternal kin, she said:

“They are very caring and they love my child so much. He visits them when his older cousins are at home from high school, they are at a boarding school in Ngwelezane. The two cousins who stay with the grandparents are too young to be able to look after a one year old. So, because I have to work, I prefer when his older cousins are at home so they can look after him. They can do the hands-on work of bathing him and feeding him because his paternal grandparents are old, they need care themselves”.

Nikiwe chose not to discuss the relationship of her eldest child with his paternal kin. In contrast, Zamile explained having lost contact with the paternal kin of her eldest child (she is a newlywed mother of three children, a 12-year-old boy whose father passed away, and one-year old twins with her husband). Zamile said:

“With the eldest boy, I lost contact with a while back with his paternal kin. Shortly after the passing of his father, I grew tired of getting them to want to take responsibility or any form of initiative”.

Herein it is clear to see kin exempting themselves from the responsibility that paternal kin is supposed to take in a child’s life, based on bloodlines and ties.

Supporting this experience is Lungile, and she explained this about the relationship she had with her partner and father of her child:

“We had a good relationship, when I was unemployed, he was the one who supported me he sent money every month. He was an admin clerk at the car dealership Esikhawini. He was very good and kind to me, he made sure that money was not an issue for me just because I was not working, he loved his child, and unfortunately he is not alive anymore. I am a single mother. This means, that I am the only care giver for my child”.

However, the relation between marriage and paternal kin and father involvement is not exclusive to married women. Yes, the trend in this study reflects a strong presence of paternal kin and fathers in cases where there is a marriage but other cases in the study counter this: where paternal kin and father presence exists although the child is born outside of marriage.

5.14 Conclusion

The idea that a child is raised by a community, and that it takes a village to raise a child, has been contradicted in some cases in this study, where fathers and subsequently paternal kin are absent in children's lives. Communal childcare has been a strong backbone in black communities and has often been reinforced by traditional leaders. For instance, in a paraphrasing of the late Chief Menana of Mana in Mandeni addressing the people of Mana on nation building and community, we hear the community being encouraged with, "*Umphakathi wonkana kumele uphonse itshe esivivaneni ekukhuliseni kwabantwana ngoba abantwana bayisizwe sakusasa.*" [The whole community needs to throw a rock to the pile of rocks to raise a child, as children are the nation for tomorrow.] Chief Menana was holding the community responsible for the raising of a child. However, this practice is reflected in the study as not as focal as it once was. This is not to dismiss what has been captured in the chapter showing some fathers and paternal kin are present and active.

The chapter has grappled with how fatherhood and paternal kin involvement was commonly reduced to the money. For example, an outlier case in the chapter is a father who only sends money and never sees his child. In some cases where fathers were not able to provide financial support for children, the fathers have exempted themselves from fatherhood responsibility and subsequently paternal kin also exempted themselves. Furthermore, there appears to be a direct link between the observation of the cultural practice of *inhlawulo* and father and paternal kin presence and the non-observation of *inhlawulo* and father and paternal kin absence. The payment of *inhlawulo* in this study equates to father and paternal kin presence, and non-payment equates to father and paternal kin absence. But even in cases where there is presence, all the fathers in this study, except for the case of Nikiwe and Zinhle, do not live with their children and see their children on a regular or an ad hoc basis. Nikiwe and Zinhle are the only mothers who live on a full-time basis with their partners and fathers of their children. Even then, all the unpaid work (childcare included) is carried by Nikiwe and Zinhle. It is clear to see that permanent father presence in these homes would not equate to a sharing the load of unpaid work, meaning employed women continue to carry this double burden of care.

Hunter (2010) explained how "equality, social and geographical divisions continued to sharpen after democracy", and these divisions perpetuate how women as mothers must work within divisions which disadvantage them. Employed mothers must physically ensure that children get out of home care; they must worry about leaving work on time to fetch children and worry

about their work performance and childcare arrangements. Women face enormous strain as the provision of care takes place under immense inequalities between mothers and fathers, and gender hierarchy keeps women facing this strain. This chapter has attempted to interrogate where the men are. Are fathers and paternal kin present? What is their part in childcare provision? Are employed mothers supported by them? The study has looked at kinship care, particularly assessing the role of fathers (biological or social), and at where paternal kin positions itself. The chapter has tackled the concept of lineage and belonging, and whether these concepts surface when it comes to the responsibility of care for children. Do fathers and kinship step up to care or do they give themselves a pass from care?

The most pertinent finding in concluding this chapter is that, regardless of father and paternal kin presence or absence, low-income employed women (in this study) continue to carry the disproportionate burden of childcare.

As discussed by Razavi (2007) women spend a disproportionate time on unpaid care work compared to men, and this is rooted in gendered social norms which perceive care as something that should be the norm for women. In an altruistic society (where caregiving responsibilities are evenly shared and well supported), childcare is shared between parents, or arrangements are made about how to split the labour of childrearing. However, during interviews with the women in this study, it emerged that most of them were single parenting and, although the majority of the women were still involved with the fathers of their children, the father's involvement in the children's lives was characterised by financial support. Most fathers were absent in some form, whether in terms of emotional, physical or financial support, or a combination of all of these.

In this chapter, the experience of childcare as lived by the mothers is largely characterised by the lack of others (fathers, paternal kin and kin generally). Due to the reconfigurations of kinship, the traditional communal sharing of childcare has, for the most part, fragmented, leaving mothers at the centre of childcare, and ensuring that mothers make it work, both as mothers and employed workers. This chapter highlights that although a lot of circumstances have changed, placing black working women in different circumstances than before, the changes in household formation, living arrangements, kin involvement in childcare and the participation of women in the labour force mean that women are still in the same predicaments as before, and are carrying the weight of childcare.

Chapter 6: Imakethe, uhulumeni noMndeni [The market, state and kin]

6.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to ascertain the needs and resources needed by the low-income working mothers to make it work (to balance employment and mothering), and it engages with childcare arrangement strategies used by the mothers.

The argument in this chapter is that low-income working mothers make childcare choices based on a variety of factors such as shortage of money, changing nature of kin support, and on barriers in the community such as limited availability of social and community services. This chapter also argues that poverty and lack of state support exacerbate the challenging circumstances that already exist among low income women who work. In chapter 4, the difficulties faced by the mothers in balancing paid and unpaid work were outlined. Chapter 5 outlined the absence of practical support by fathers and paternal kin, which adds a layer to the lack of support experienced by the mothers. The bulk of the work and duty to care falls on low-income working mothers. As a result of this, mothers have to navigate childcare within the state, market, kin and the community, and must ensure that their children are in care during the time they are at work because, as explained by Hatch and Posel (2018), “rather than a gender division of labour in the provision of care particularly to African children, both primary care and the financial support of children are most often provided by women”.

Seminal literature on welfare regimes, such as by Esping-Anderson (1990), explored a welfare regime as an institutional matrix of market, state and family forms, which generates welfare outcomes. According to Esping-Andersen (1990), the welfare (state) regime approach is purposed to denote the fact that, in the relation between state and economy, a complex of legal and organisational features are systematically interwoven (Esping-Andersen, 1990:2), which is an aspect the study aims to hinge on. Although Esping-Andersen made some attempts to be inclusive of caring, traditional work focused on welfare regimes has been gender blind, completely overlooking and marginalising the stance of women and women’s work (Hassim, 2005). The feminist critics of welfare regime typologies argued that public provision was gendered, either by treating women as dependents of males (in conservative welfare regimes) or protecting women indirectly against the risks facing their (breadwinning) husbands (Lewis, 1992). The feminist literature subsequently replaced the male-breadwinner/female-carer model with a dual earner/female carer model, where there were enormous pressures on women to manage paid and unpaid work (Orloff 2009). The South African case highlights the limitations

of existing feminist critiques of welfare regimes, which tend to focus on male-female relations in nuclear households. Razavi (2007) introduced the care diamond to allow for an explanation of the relationship between the state, market, family and community. The care diamond reflects the gender-biased and unrealistic expectations of women as participants in the labour force and as providers of family care. However, despite some relevant shortcomings, Esping-Andersen's analytical framework can still be a good starting point for roughly explaining or diagnosing existing social policy designs in developing countries.

In understanding welfare provision in South Africa, Seekings and Moore (2013) and Button, Moore and Seekings (2018) propose that the welfare state is more complicated than welfare provision outlined in Esping-Andersen's framework. There are many divergent contexts and consequences of the increasing commodification of care in South Africa, for instance, the increasing emergence of multigenerational households and the increase of female headed households. This study proposes that increasing commodification of care is further complicated by declining marriage rates and changing household types, with an increase in female headed and multigenerational households where women are caregivers and providers (Budlender & Lund, 2011; Mhongo & Budlender, 2013; Hall & Mokomane, 2018). Low-income employed women living in low-income communities often must find and make do with livelihood activities at the cost of providing the ideal childcare they would like to provide for their young children, in order to support themselves and their families.

A key finding in this chapter is that childcare strategies for some mothers are not optional but the only way to manage. In this context, the idea that childcare as an option or choice is problematic because the mothers are merely trying to make things work with what is available and affordable to them. This can be deduced from the fact that some of the mothers (especially in the urban setting) expressed discontentedness with the childcare provision for their children but understood that the arrangement was the most affordable, convenient or accessible to make possible their roles both as mothers and labour force participants.

Although much has changed (the current welfare system is significantly different from that during and before apartheid), including the expansion of the welfare state, women are still paying for care. In the market, the kind of childcare available to a child is based on affordability and access (excluding low income mothers from accessing the ideal care they would like for their children); the childcare provision offered by the state is not necessarily the best quality and is not always free. Further, childcare is taking place in the context of changing kinship ties

(Mathis, 2011; Spiegel, 2018; Button, Moore and Seekings, 2018; Moore, 2019). Further, kin are not always available to provide childcare and if available, kin is not necessarily free (essentially making them the market).

6.2 Welfare provision: literature review

A welfare regime is an institutional matrix of market, state and family forms, which generates welfare outcomes. Esping-Andersen assessed welfare states according to their mix of public-private expenditures of social assistance and social insurance models. When all the information was compared, states were sorted into either liberal (heavy use of private, market-driven benefits), conservative (paternalistic outflow via employment history), or social-democratic (universal rights to privilege) types; it is Esping-Andersen's recognition of this mixture which makes his work so useful for the study. The recognition of how a welfare state is a mix between state, family and market is useful for the study as it interrogates the caring strategies between state, kin and market that low-income earning mothers make use of to provide care for their children during the time they are at work.

The continuous narrative that women carry a double or even triple burden of work as they cope with housework will continue. Further, it is still the status quo that women work longer hours than men, for instance, in certain areas of the world, particularly in Asian countries where there are sweat shops which are very exploitative towards women (Sorj, 2001). The pressure on gender relations of the changing status of women, and of rapid economic restructuring combined with growing impoverishment at the household level for many, is crucial to the success or failure of development policies. For the purposes of this study, it is key to understand welfare provision in the South African setting.

6.3 Welfare provision in South Africa

In understanding welfare provision in South Africa, Seekings and Moore (2013) delved back to the history of South Africa's welfare state, pointing out the historical shift from apartheid to a post-apartheid regime. The key learning as offered by the authors is that the state is central to the provision of care in South Africa. However, the family or kin, and recently the market, are important components of South Africa's contemporary care regime.

In the South African context, due to the structure of the apartheid segregation regime, 'deserving' citizens were racially defined. For instance, prior to 1994 during apartheid the black

populace was excluded from the welfare system and denied social and political citizenship, albeit first partially and then completely (Seekings and Moore, 2013:3). As discussed by Mamdani (1996) citizenship created division and created a hierarchy between those who were considered by the state as ‘citizens’ and ‘subjects’, i.e. whites and blacks.

One of the by-products of the apartheid regime was the implemented racial migrant labour system, which essentially provided laws which restricted black people from working and residing in certain areas which were reserved only for white people. This meant the fragmentation of many families; parents who worked had to leave their children, often in rural areas, in the care and guardianship of grandparents and/or other relatives and provide financial assistance to those caregivers of their children. An inclusive system was only achieved in 1994.

The discussion about welfare is pivotal in this study because the study argues that it is important to consider that, in the new dispensation of South Africa (Button, Moore & Seekings, 2018), the welfare state is accompanied by market provisions. The market for the purposes of this thesis is understood as crèches and child-minders (nannies); the state provides early childhood development centres and child support grants. The welfare state was more prominent in the past and, now in decline, also consisted of kin who formed a crucial part of the argument made in the context of fathers and paternal kin in Chapter 5. However, the phenomenon of children living with extended family members continues to prevail in South African statistics, which reflect that one in three of South Africa’s children live with their biological fathers, and 5.5 million children do not live with either biological parent (Seekings & Moore, 2013:7). Herein, one could deduct that extended family could be a key presence for childcare in the absence of a parent or both parents.

The key narrative that was built in this study is that there has been a significant feminisation of the labour force (as discussed in Chapter 4), and what this has meant in terms of changing the dynamics of childcare, and the dwindling of the male-breadwinner model. This has shifted the perceived ideas about women and employment significantly; the idea that it is “a man’s job to earn money, a woman’s is to look after the home and family is no more” (Crompton, 2006:43). However, this study argues that such a shift exists within a spectrum that hinders women in smoothly participating in the economy, as deliberated on in Chapter 5. This study views issues such as absent fatherhood and socio-cultural conditioning as some of the engines that perpetuate the challenges unique to women in the world of work. The slew of these issues therefore perpetuates gender inequalities. Many women have joined the labour force in the past

30 – 40 years; women are no longer available to be the primary child caregivers, meaning that the business of child care can no longer be a one-person affair (the duty of the women); women need to navigate the childcare institutional arrangements between kin, the market and state to ensure child care provision for their children whilst they are at work.

This study argues that, given the non-traditional commitments that women have to make to participate effectively in the workforce, there has been a subsequent problem with the issue of childcare, which is a responsibility that has been historically delegated to women through socio-cultural conditioning. Women in the workplace therefore have had to seek alternative ways of parenting. One of their challenges, already presented in the previous chapter, is that women in this study demographic cannot rely on fathers to step in, in terms of physical childcare provision beyond financial provision, when it comes to childcare. Fathers tend to view their parental role as financial, parenting in the modern day era includes supporting the children's entire needs as well as the mother's freedom to participate effectively in the world of work without worrying about absconding from maternal responsibilities. Democracy meant a deracialisation of South Africa's welfare system, and this has steered the South African welfare regime to a more social democratic framework. The state does a substantial job in providing support within its means, which is not always enough for caregivers. This means the reliance on kin continues to exist but there has been a change to the levels and extent, as well as the cost (in some cases), that kin is willing to support. There has also been a strong reliance on the market. Herein, it becomes important to understand the childcare institutions in South Africa.

6.4 The state (pre-1994)

Historically, legislation affecting care for young children (usually in the bracket of 0-5 years old) who have not entered formal education is rooted in the racial divisions of the past of apartheid South Africa.

To paint a picture as to how this racial division was solidified through legislation, this section will draw on legislations which were implemented to disadvantage children of colour. For instance, through the National Education Policy Act No. 39 of 1967, pre-primary education for white children become the responsibility of the provincial administrations (Atmore, 1989:36). The National Education Policy Amendment Act No. 73 of 1969 allowed the provinces to establish their own nursery schools where they deemed them to be necessary (Atmore, 1989:36). The National Education Policy Amendment Act No. 92 of 1974 gave recognition to

pre-primary education in its definition of a school as “any educational institution at which education including pre-primary education, is provided ... and which is maintained, managed and controlled or subsidised by the Department or a Provincial Administration” (Atmore, 1989:36). Here, education was clearly being defined in terms of the instruction, teaching and training provided to white people.

The South Africa Act of 1909 placed control of all matters affecting black persons, except Education, in the hands of the Minister of Native Affairs. The control and financing of African education was vested in the provincial councils, which made no provision for pre-primary education (Atmore, 1989:36). The Bantu Education Act of 1953 in the same vein did not make provision for preschool education. The Bantu Education Act No.47 of 1953 was replaced by the Education and Training Act No.90 of 1979, which merely extended the scope and content of education; the policy made stipulations as to how education would be managed, controlled and subsidised (Atmore, 1989:39), and this did not prioritise the education system for people of colour. Herein, the unequal distribution of early childhood facilities amongst the ‘classified’ racial groups in South Africa.

This inequality is well captured in the de Lange Commission of 1981 which reported that between 1976 and 1979, 58% of black South African children failed at least once between Sub A (grade 1) and Standard 2 (grade 4) (Southey, 1993). The commission attributed this to early deprivation, and this pointed to the need for adequate provision of facilities, which mothers have access to, for the education and care of their children. The racialisation of the education system and consequent inequality in the education system is what was inherited by the incoming government of South Africa (the African National Congress) in 1994.

6.5 The state (post-1994)

The state of Early Childhood Development (ECD) in South Africa has most definitely progressed since 1994 with significant initiatives directly affecting the lives of young children. There have been considerable improvements in ECDs in South Africa since the fall of apartheid. The number of children in Grade R has trebled and the quality has improved slightly. Government expenditure on Grade R has increased three-fold since 2008/2009. The number of ECDs registered with the national Department of Social Development increased to 19 500 and there are currently approximately 836 000 children in registered ECDs, of which 488 000 (58%) received the ECD subsidy (Dlamini, 2012:1).

As early childhood development policy priority in 2001, the South African Department of Education released Education White Paper 5, which established a national system of provision, called Grade R, for children aged 5–6years (ECDs cater for children between 0-6) (Atmore, 2013:154). This was to be progressively rolled out with full provision by the year 2010. This target has partially been achieved, with enrolment by February 2012 standing at 767 865 children representing 63% of the eligible age cohort. Based on the Department of Education (2001) statistics, 526 340 additional children entered Grade R in the first 11 years after the release of the 2001 White Paper on Education. Realising that the target of full provision would not be reached by 2010, the government first revised the target date to 2014 and more recently to 2019 (Atmore, 2013: 155).

The livelihoods of children in South Africa still need to be improved, due to the critical importance of early childhood development in combating poverty and inequality, and ECDs must be an immediate priority for the South African government. Unfortunately, under resourcing remains an urgent problem in the ECD programme as “South Africa spends only 1-2% of its total education budget on early learning programmes – not enough to power better educational outcomes” (National Treasury, 2018). Consequently, ECDs face problems regarding infrastructure, nutrition, programme options, early childhood development teacher development, institutional capacity and funding (Atmore, 2013:155).

Therefore, many caregivers make use of the market (crèches mainly) and, as a strategy for care provision, they enrol their children in crèches. However, the conditions of the crèches and the services provided at the crèches are not significantly different from those of the ECDs (for the locations available to the women in question). Furthermore, the market does not provide better alternatives for women in poor locations. Herein, the women are stuck between a rock and hard place, as they are faced with poor services for the care of their children and they make use of these services, regardless of poor quality, as they need to leave their children in a care arrangement. The crux of this study is that low-income working mothers are thus making their choices on childcare based on a variety of hindering factors, which include shortage of money, the changing nature of kin support and barriers in the community, namely the limited availability of social and community services. Poverty and lack of state support make many of the universal difficulties with childcare particularly onerous for already impoverished and disadvantaged women. As discussed earlier, these are problems often facing women and not men, due to the dynamics of gender in a welfare state, where women are often the main figures taking responsibility for their children.

The social welfare system in South Africa also provides financial assistance to the poor; it is very extensive and provides social assistance to over 17 million people (Ngozo & Mtantato, 2018). The social support grant is varied and includes pensions for the elderly, disability grants, war-veteran grants, grant-in-aid, foster care and child support grants (White Paper for Social Welfare, 1997).

The Child Support Grant is an example of a comprehensive social grant programme for poor children. The Child Support Grant was introduced in 1998 to replace an earlier State Maintenance Grant, following a recommendation by the Lund Committee (established in 1996). The grant was intended to protect the poorest children in their most vulnerable younger years. This has since been broadened somewhat with the extension of the grant to all children under the age of 18 years, in 2007, a means test is applied (Budlender, 2007; Budlender & Lund, 2011). The extension has been progressively implemented by the state and so the state provides minimal financial support through the grant system, and it provides limited personal care for children aged 0-4 years; the limited nature of the care is a problem for most caregivers.

There is a need to enhance the existing policies the state has directed towards childcare. Existing childcare policy assists to a certain extent by providing some support to low-income mothers, but enhancement of these policies is needed; the current policies such as the ECDs can be compared to a leaky bucket that has been patched. Eventually, the bucket will need to be replaced with a new one. A new way of envisioning family, responsibilities, work and childcare is needed (Campbell, 2006:171). Low-income working mothers are faced with limited choices and use a variety of strategies to counter the barriers that hinder them in providing childcare.

This study argues that mothers who are actively participating in the economy can be exhausted physically, mentally and emotionally, since they have to multi-task with their maternal responsibilities. There lacks support in the household from fathers and next of kin (the nuclear family unit). The assistance provided by the government does not provide enough money for care provision, although it has made a degree of improvement in some families. The child grant is meagre and does not provide enough money for families to get by; similarly, the minimum wage earned by low-income earning mothers is scant (Neysmith et al., 2012). Poor women are uniquely predisposed to the treacherous experience of how difficult it is to make ends meet on a low-income wage, while attempting to maintain a household, pay for childcare arrangements

and provide their child/ren with care and nurturing. As argued by Campbell (2006:171), to be successful, childcare policy needs to consider the role and value of women's work.

6.6 Market

This study argues that the use of markets and market mechanisms to deliver care is one of the most significant and contentious ways in which welfare states have been transformed (Gilbert, 2002). According to Esping-Anderson (1990) there are three essential sources of the welfare (liberal, corporatist and social democratic) differentiated based on how care is distributed among the welfare providers.

In a social democratic state (the Nordic context), care is traditionally a state responsibility. Decommodification is understood as a process where public welfare provision and 'safety nets' are improved to make people less vulnerable to market insecurities and alleviate their poverty. The ensuring of care, that is adequate and affordable for all, is a universalist model of the welfare state, and here, the state is a mechanism to alleviate market failures in the field of care (Vaittinen, Hoppania & Kariso, 2018:382).

The process of marketisation always takes place in historically contingent contexts, where the existing care regimes shape the limits of the possibility for marketisation and consequently for commodification. Regardless of the context, the processes of marketisation and commodification of care are never naturally occurring processes, and, as explained by Vaittinen, Hoppania and Kariso (2018), they seldom occur due to mysterious 'laws of the market' or 'global forces'. They come to be because of specific political decisions regarding the economies of care (Vaittinen, Hoppania & Kariso, 2018:382), which, as already discussed earlier in the chapter, can be looked at through Razavi's (2007) care diamond which provides a lens to look at care through the part of the state, market, family and community.

This study draws attention to the increase in the numbers of women who have now joined the workforce. A significant number of these women are mothers, and this has seen an increased demand for extra-familial childcare (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2001). However, the outsourcing of reproductive labour has not occurred evenly, leading many to raise concerns over who in society carries responsibility for increasing the double burden experienced by women in care and work (Hochschild & Machung, 2003).

It therefore becomes important to look at the daily implications of childcare provisioning for how families manage their work-life balance. The strength in the existing research is that it considers the disincentives for women re-entering the labour market, when childcare options are either too scarce and/or expensive (Van Ham & Mulder, 2005). Another strength in the contemporary body of knowledge is that it considers the complex space-time patterns of mothers who try to manage their work (Gallagher, 2018:708) and care commitments, particularly where commuting between work and home is a factor (Jarvis, 2000; Schwanen, 2008).

The increased demand for childcare was initially met by informal childminders working in the homes of many countries (for example UK and Ireland) (Gregson & Lowe, 1994; Gallagher, 2013), there has been a change in the sociospatial contexts within which much care is now delivered (Boyer, Reimer & Irvine, 2012). Although home-based care remains an important part of the childcare market, there has been a more shift towards formalized childcare, primarily in the form of centre-based care, a move which has been fuelled to a large extent by policy changes in the field around the role of early education for the long-term development of the child (Lister, 2003). Gallagher (2018:717) considered the ways in which demands for pre-school childcare are being met in neoliberal contexts, looking at countries which have long adopted a mixed economy of care, which involves family, private (for-profit and not-for-profit) and state supported services (Mahon & Michel, 2002).

One of the by-products of the apartheid regime was the implemented racial migrant labour system, which essentially provided laws which restricted black people from working and residing in certain areas which were reserved only for white people. It is important to note that in the new dispensation of South Africa the welfare state is accompanied by market provisions; the market for the purposes of this thesis will be understood to be domestic workers (child-minders (nannies)) and preschools/crèches. In the discussion chapter, the thesis will further engage with childcare policy in South Africa and reflect on what lessons can be learnt from other countries.

6.7 Domestic workers: ignored paid childcare

In South Africa, domestic employment constituted a market in care, but it was a market that was profoundly structured by the apartheid state until 1994. The state restricted the kinds of work that African or coloured women could do and regulated where and with whom they could

live (through the implementation of the Group Areas Act of 1950) (Fish, 2006; King, 2007; Ally, 2008, Seekings & Moore, 2013; Button, Moore & Seekings, 2018).

The oppression and exploitation of domestic workers continues (Ginsburg, 2000; Bothma & Campher, 2003; Donald & Mahlatji, 2006; Fish, 2006; Ally 2008, 2011). Much has changed in terms of both the regulatory context for domestic workers (with the government setting minimum wages, regulating employment conditions and extending the coverage of unemployment insurance, for example) and conditions (with the decline of live-in and full-time domestic work and the increased availability of childcare facilities). But, for some domestic workers, conditions have not changed in practice. The conditions faced by some domestic workers in the workplace, seem to correlate with Cock's work in 1980. Domestic workers still face exploitation in the workplace, their remuneration is not monitored and many dread challenging their employers for fear of losing their jobs. In this sense, as explained by Seekings and Moore (2013) "paid childcare continues to be informal and unregulated". Power is no longer only race-based, but also class-based with the rise of the black middle class (Dilata, 2010). Even in low-income settings, those who can afford to hire and pay domestic workers, under pay and essentially exploit them, albeit this is exploitation in the Marxian sense. Herein is the need as explained by Magwaza (2003) for domestic workers to make use of avenues available to them, to ensure their work remains decent.

6.8 Kinship and childcare

Hardships limit a family's choices about how to respond to childcare demands. Care is deeply gendered and can be demanding and stressful. It often falls to women who must cope with many responsibilities and competing demands in resources-poor settings. Services and investments in women's physical and mental health are important, both for the carers and for the children they care for. Caregiver support services need to start early in the antenatal period and be sustained for the duration of the childhood of the child, and these need to include good referral systems.

This study argues that there should be a universal view that men have an important role to contribute when it comes to caring for children. The burden for childcare should not only rest on women, but on all members of the family who are able to help; they need to help and to encourage the fathers to step up and raise children. That way, there can be a point of departure

to supporting women's endeavours in the economic landscape through freeing more time for them from the household responsibilities.

This study situates the phenomenon of kinship and childcare in this endeavour and it is important to apprehend how kinship is configured in South Africa generally, and specifically in KwaZulu-Natal where the study is set. The institution of the family is reconceptualised into a multidimensional phenomenon. In addition to this, the setup of the family lies in the context of the products of apartheid, wherein the processes of urbanisation, racially inspired segregation and imposed restrictions on the family and household formation patterns. This context essentially forms the background of the way in which kinship and childcare has been configured in South Africa. This section is aimed at outlining dynamics which have contributed to the way kinship has been configured and the implications this has had for low-income employed mothers raising young children, and their strategies for childcare.

Whilst these bonds were less easily escapable previously, there has been a shifting responsibility in the provision of care for children. It is often women who carry the responsibility of caring for children (Cock, 1981; Lund, 2005). In African kinship, children are valued by the whole family (Engle & Breaux, 1993), and children are frequently sent to live with close relatives for varying lengths of time to get to know wider family and to consolidate ties (Anderson, 2004). However, this phenomenon has seen a mutation in recent times as kin is no longer a main source of childcare support. Children are now seldom sent to live with kin for the consolidation of kinship ties, and remain in the care of the primary caregivers, often mothers. Most of the time, these mothers are faced with the enormous responsibility of maintenance for children and providing childcare as well as making childcare arrangements and paying for these. This is a responsibility which mainly falls on mothers and for employed mothers is a dual burden which kin (specifically paternal kin) and, in some instances, fathers appear to have opted out of. The option of relying on neighbours for childcare is also not much of an option for low-income employed mothers for a variety of reasons, a main one being that neighbours probably also struggle to find care strategies too.

The idea that a child is raised by a community has been a strong backbone in black communities. However, the disruption of family has had implications for the kin, community and childrearing. It has mutated kin relations and kin responsibility and the role kin usually holds in childrearing. The residues of this mutation have filtered through the current fragments of the family in South Africa today. The forms in which apartheid propelled the arrangement

of families during this era put severe strain on most families and stripped both parents of the various roles played by parents. The bond formation between parents and children was significantly weak. Parents were not under one roof providing care for their children, the fathers were often in the city working as migrant labourers and, despite the influx regulation during apartheid, many mothers went to the city to join their husbands to secure a better income.

This saw entire generations of young black people growing up without the constant love, attention, support and guidance which all children crave and need to reach their full potential (Ramphela & Richter, 2006:74). This breakdown has filtered through to current times, and most black families are fragmented for a variety of reasons, for instance some fathers/husbands did not ever return from the mines, leaving the family behind in the rural area without clarity as to whether the husband/father is still alive or not. Some husbands/fathers met women working in the city and cohabited with them, meaning that the husband/father had two families, one in town and another in the rural area (Posel and Rudwick, 2013:170). This has had extreme consequences for children and the arrangement of the family. For instance, large numbers of South African children live apart from their parents for longer or shorter periods (Maharaj, Kaufmar & Richter, 1998).

Based on estimates from 2002, a quarter of South African children live apart from both their parents. The concepts of 'domestic fluidity' (Murray, 1981) and 'stretched' households have been used to describe this dispersion of kin as families try to balance migrant work, rural livelihoods, children's education, and responsibilities for care across extended families (van der Waal, 1996). Only an approximated one third of the 12.7 million South African households conform to the 'nuclear norm' of children and parents, and one fifth of households have three generations or more in one household (Budlender & Lund, 2011:926).

Herein, the concept of maternal grandmothers caring for their grandchildren, and mothers caring for their children in the absence of fathers, is not unfamiliar. Thus, when family life is so 'un-nuclear' and complex, it is necessary to understand whether low-income employed mothers can rely on fathers and kin members (and more especially paternal kin) to provide support with childrearing. Gendered forms of care remain in South Africa; in these, men often take little responsibility for financial or/and other forms of support. The roles played by fathers are centrally restricted by unemployment and the inability to provide economically for their children (Morrell, 2006:12).

Privileged irresponsibility was explained by Tronto as the misallocation of caring responsibilities which makes caring unjust (Tronto, 2013). In South Africa, there appears to be a significant gap between the care provided by mothers and that by fathers, yet both parties are traversing between parenting and working or unemployment. This is precisely the privileged irresponsibility Tronto discussed. This is what allows fathers and other kin to be in a position of privilege to ignore the needs of the mothers who do the hands-on care work and those of children; this was depicted in chapter 5, and the section about absent fathers and paternal kin speaks directly to privileged irresponsibility.

Privileged irresponsibility has allowed fathers to justify why they should not be doing care work or be accountable for care work. (Zembylas, Bozalek & Shafer, 2014:6). As Ramphela (2002:158) explained, “Desertion by fathers is often prompted by their inability to bear the burden of being primary providers. The burden of failure becomes intolerable for those who lack the capacity to generate enough income as uneducated and unskilled labourers”. The absence of African fathers and their choices to exempt themselves of care provision, be it emotional and/or financial, are rooted in the residue of apartheid which reduced black men to labour and fragmented the family unit through the migrant labour system. Privileged irresponsibility allows fathers and other kin to use existing gender roles and gender hierarchy to take for granted the care work women do, though these care responsibilities are unevenly balanced in society, and ignore hardships faced by women in their mothering roles. Therefore, low-income employed mothers have been compelled to occupy this role as financial providers, emotional supporters and encouragers, due to the dwindling assumption of responsibility by fathers and paternal kin generally.

6.9 Reconfiguring kinship in KwaZulu-Natal

The behavioural patterns of Zulu families were traditionally premised on kinship bonds ramifying through almost every aspect of culture to bring together kin through practices such as kin members taking an active role in childcare, and almost assuming the role of parenting to children in the family (Ndabandaba, 1987:89). This is a premise which has dwindled based on how family structures have changed and been reconfigured in Zulu families, mainly due to the fragmentation of the family, as has been discussed, and socio-economic reasons. Consequently, kinship reconfiguration and the role of the child grant has been able to make towards childcare, which fathers and general kin have been unable to provide, indicate that many fathers and kin

in these circumstances battle placing themselves in their ability to perform roles traditionally expected.

Findings

The following findings aim to understand how low-income working mothers strategize to survive and provide care for their children. The findings will unpack how low-income working mothers navigate child care strategies, balancing work and childcare with limited resources. The findings interrogate the role of the market, state and kin in childcare, and how childcare provision does not neatly divide into the childcare institutional arrangements of the market, state and kin but is always a collaboration.

6.10 Childcare practice choices of low-income working mothers

Table 4 below summarises the childcare arrangements used by low-income mothers interviewed in the study, in terms of the categories of the state, market and kin. Table 4 shows that mothers draw on a mixture of institutional arrangements to ensure care for their children during the time they are at work.

Table 4:

Participant	Childcare Arrangement	Financial Costs of Childcare Arrangement	Non-financial costs of Childcare Arrangements
Busi	Market and Kin	Monthly R200 crèche fee and returns favours (after hours or weekend care provision) to neighbour by minding her children.	Busi's 10 year old child is responsible for walking herself and younger 4 year old brother to crèche and then school.
Lale	Market and Kin	Monthly pay of R1500 to her nanny as well as food and board for her nanny	Lale's maternal aunts assist with childcare when the nanny is on leave
Nokubonga	Kin	Contributes to household utilities monthly (approximately R600)	Childcare for Nokubonga's youngest child is divided between herself and her mother (who is willing to help with childcare when Nokubonga is working)
Zinhle	Market and Kin	Monthly R450 crèche fee and R420 car pool service Zinhle contributes to household utilities (lives with in laws) monthly (approximately R1000)	Zinhle's in-laws (specifically mother-in-law) are actively involved in terms of getting Zinhle's children ready for school in the morning and watching them when they are back in the afternoon (mainly because Zinhle works night shifts bi-monthly)
Anele	State and Kin	Monthly R120 crèche fee	Anele has a reciprocal relationship with her neighbour who minds her child after work hours or on weekends (she returns the favour by minding the neighbour's child when needed)
Angel	Market and Kin	Allowance R1000 and food and board to the nanny/cousin/carer who cleans, looks after her mother and new born child	Angel's sister who was unemployed also assisted with childcare, but has since found employment so the bulk of childcare is done by the nanny/cousin

Participant	Childcare Arrangement	Financial Costs of Childcare Arrangement	Non-financial costs of Childcare Arrangements
Bongi	Market	Monthly R600 fee to neighbour and R150 if service is needed on weekends or for extra hours	
Kholiwe	Market and Kin	Monthly R250 crèche fee	Kholiwe has a reciprocal relationship with her neighbour who minds her child after work hours or on weekends (she returns the favour by minding the neighbour's child when needed)
Sindy	Market and Kin	Monthly R250 crèche fee and R120 car pool service	Sindy has a reciprocal relationship with her neighbour who minds her child after work hours or on weekends (she returns the favour by minding the neighbour's child/ren when needed)
Thembi	Kin	Contributes to household utilities monthly (approximately R1500)	Thembi's in-laws (specifically mother in-law to be) is actively involved in childcare and minds the child during the day
Zamile	Market	Monthly child minding pay of R350 to her neighbour	Zamile's grandmother is willing to watch Zamile's children on an ad hoc basis (i.e. if Zamile has to go somewhere)
Unathi	Market and Kin	Monthly R200 crèche fee and R180 car pool service	Has a reciprocal relationship with her neighbour who minds her child after work hours or on weekends (she returns the favour by minding the neighbour's child when needed)
Thandi	Herself and Kin	Thandi works from home; she provides the childcare for her four year old who is not in school yet.	Thandi's mother watches her children on an ad hoc basis for no cost, if Thandi has to go somewhere or from afar which is seldom

Participant	Childcare Arrangement	Financial Costs of Childcare Arrangement	Non-financial costs of Childcare Arrangements
Nikiwe	Market	Monthly child minding pay of R200 to her neighbour and a fee of R50 for ad hoc minding of child (i.e. on weekends)	
Senzile	Kin	Child lives with her mother because she is a live-in domestic worker. Contributes to household utilities monthly (approximately R2000)	
Buhle	Market and kin	Monthly R220 crèche fee and R120 car service fee	Buhle has a reciprocal relationship with the cousins she stays with, and they watch the child on ad hoc basis (i.e. weekends); she returns the favour
Gabisile	Market	Monthly child minding pay of R300 to her neighbour	On an ad hoc basis (i.e. Weekends or after hours) the paternal aunt watches the child at no cost
Lungile	Kin	Lungile's child is watched by maternal grandparents; Contributes to household utilities monthly (approximately R500)	
Phumela	Market and Kin	Monthly R230 crèche fee (she drops off and collects child from crèche personally)	Phumela's 15 year old cousin watches her child on an ad hoc basis (i.e. weekends)
Simile	Market and Kin	Monthly R200 crèche fee (she drops off and collects child from crèche personally)	Simile has a good relationship with her neighbour/landlord who minds her child after work hours or on weekends for no cost

Typically, in South Africa, childcare, especially for smaller children, is often that of the market (crèches) and/or state childcare services (ECDs) and is integrally linked to extended networks of family and kin (Mosoetsa, 2003). What this means, as reflected by the table above, is that labour force participation by women has reduced their dependency on kin and has allowed women to navigate work and care in a way the generation before them would not have been able to. The table depicts how mothers make childcare arrangements using various combinations of the market, state and kin and the cost of these arrangements.

In the context of low-income mothers in this study, it is almost impossible to arrange childcare not in conjunction with assistance from the market, state and kin. The following section aims to understand the childcare practices made by low-income working mothers in the townships (Umlazi and Sundumbili) and rural areas (Macambini and KwaNdaya) in KwaZulu-Natal.

6.10.1 Kin

The issue of kinship is important in this study because it is closely intertwined with the discussion on childcare in a context such as KwaZulu-Natal. This study extrapolates from the set up in KwaZulu Natal that families are multidimensional. The family unit therefore cannot be viewed within the dominant framework of the Eurocentric lens and this study recognises that the characteristics of the family institution can be unique to KwaZulu-Natal or South Africa (more broadly) and this essentially means that working women involved therein are impacted uniquely. This is an important avenue for investigation because it contributes new knowledge within a plethora of literature that tends to generalise international family trends (usually of the nuclear family, not necessarily accounting for kinship), and in the South African context, the nuclear family is not the dominant form of the family unit.

This picture is borne from many factors unique to South African history, for instance, the family institution stands out from the mainstream conceptualisations of families because apartheid largely affected how families were structured (Dubbeld, 2013). As already discussed in Chapter 5, the restrictions of movement broke families, and segregationist labour policies also added to this challenge. This devastated any hope for cohesion in the family unit. In so doing, the policies of the apartheid era marginalised women from participating in the economy (Murell, 2007). This consequently conditioned men to only exert parenthood through providing financially for their rural homes, whilst working in the cities far from their families (as still is

the case in many families in South Africa). These conditions mean that discourses around childcare in a context such as KwaZulu Natal cannot happen without delving into kinship.

6.10.2 Paternal kin doing the work

Kin systems in amongst black communities in South Africa had traditionally been strong, marked by the strength and resilience of the family (Sudarska, 1981; McDaniel, 1990). In both contexts, a combination of need and cultural preference has resulted in a “socially distributed model of child rearing” (Serpell, 1993). This section aims to grapple with the role of paternal kin in child rearing; the involvement of paternal kin in childcare is not supposed to absolve fathers and mothers from the responsibility and duty to care but supports a more communal rather than individualistic approach to care (Madhavan & Roy, 2012:804).

For instance, Thembi, who is a social mother (not a biological mother), said:

“The family I am about to become a part of is very supportive in raising the child. I am not his birth mother so they have been a part of the child’s life before I came into the picture. Every adult in that house is a parent to the child.”

This reflects the general thought that it takes a village to raise a child; the duty to care does not fall on Thembi as the mother alone, but is strategized within the family, to accommodate Thembi in her role as a working mother.

At this moment it is also important to discuss how one mother, Busi, who has four children, sent her eldest children to be brought up by their respective paternal kin and she remained with her two youngest children. The eldest child lives with her paternal kin KwaMakhutha. The second child lives with his paternal kin as well, KwaSwayimane. Busi explained:

“I have four children, one is from a boyfriend I dated in high school and the other 3 are from a guy I met whilst working at a tuckshop at R section when I had just moved back Kwamakhutha. When I had my first child I did not know what I was doing with my first child. My biological mother who I was staying with at the time advised I take the child to his paternal kin so I could carry on with school”.

“It worked well because my daughter stays Kwaswayimane which is a little outside Pietermaritzburg. She stays with his family, her grandmother, aunt and uncle. So, it is very nice that he is close to her. In 2013 I fell pregnant with my last born. My boyfriend and I are still together he comes here and there. Mostly, it is once a month or every second months if he is strained financially”.

The extracts above depict a mother who due to socio-economic circumstances could not afford to live with and provide care for all her children, and sending her two eldest children to live with their respective paternal kin was a survival strategy and, fortunately for her, the paternal kin was willing to accept and look after the children. Paternal kin can be seen stepping up, accepting and caring for children because of patrilineal ties.

This circumstance is not unique to Busi. Anele also had to split her children up in order to be able to ensure childcare for all of her children. Her oldest child lives with her mother (as will be discussed in the following section) and her second child lives with their paternal kin. Busi explained:

“The one in grade R lives with his paternal grandmother and relatives and the youngest one who is in crèche at Phila lives with me”.

For these mothers, sending their children to stay with their respective kin was a means to ensure childcare for all children, acknowledging that they could not afford to provide economically for all of them. Here, paternal kin can be seen stepping in and assuming the responsibility of care for children and providing care for their ‘own’, essentially speaking to what Zulu culture puts forward, that a child ‘belongs’ *kubo* [home], and this home is with paternal kin.

It is key to consider how this level of paternal kin involvement came to be, considering that was ascertained in three of the 20 cases. A common thread which ran through these three cases as shared by the mothers (study participants) was simply the eagerness of the fathers and subsequently paternal kin to be involved in the children’s lives.

For instance, Anele and Busi explained:

“his grandmother said, well if you are working, he must come to me” (Anele)

“The father of my child understood there was no way I could raise four children in a one room shack, and said that our child should go to his home” (Busi)

And as already explained, Thembi lives with her paternal kin. When she came to join the family her social child was already living with the kin because the father of the child (Thembi’s fiancé) deemed the biological mother of the child to be an unfit parent who was neglectful of the child.

What it clear to see from these cases is that father and paternal kin interest and involvement in a child’s life ensure their involvement, in degrees higher than in the other cases.

6.10.3 Maternal kin doing the work

As mentioned in the above section, Anele has three children, one living with paternal kin, the other with her and another with her mother, i.e., the child's maternal grandmother. Anele said:

“With the one who is 17, his father passed away when he was 8 years old. He is in grade 11, I hope he passes. He wants to be a policeman. He lives with my mother”.

This section focuses on the role played by maternal kin, in presence and involvement in childcare.

Thandi explained:

“My youngest child is looked after by myself during the day, even if I have patients coming in, I can leave him in the garden where I can see him from the sofa when the door is open. I then have my consultation with the patient, if it is a case where I have to go to the patient's home, I will leave him at my mother's house, if what I am going to do will take longer than a working day like through a weekend, which seldom happens”.

Because Thandi is a traditional healer she has a flexible job that allows her to work from home (as often clients come to her) and provide care for her youngest child. However, in the event that she does have to work away from home, her mother who lives close to her is the one who will take care of all of Thandi's four children, three who are in primary school and a four year old child who needs attentive care. She said:

“I seldom work on weekends though, I choose not because I have children, I do not like for my mother to look after them because she is old”

On the contrary, a mother who explained being happy with the care arrangement she has with her mother is live-in domestic worker Sensile. She said:

“When I am work my mother looks after my youngest and my other two are at school. I would say that he is well cared for, I do not think anything would better than being looked after by your grandmother. She feeds her well, just look at how happy she is”.

Senzile is a migrant mother living and working in Stanger, a town close to Macambini. Hall (2010) explained that “more women are migrating to urban centres for work. In 1993, women made up 29% of all migrant workers from rural areas in South Africa”. Sensile's case supports this, and she explained that the job in Stanger was not her first work as a domestic worker. She

had previously worked in Durban (which is further), and she felt the strain of raising her children from afar.

Herein, it is clear to see why Sensile is so contented with childcare being provided by her mother (the child's maternal grandmother). Supporting this stance of grandparents as carers is Lungile, who explained:

“My parents look after her and I am very happy about the care they provide. She will enter school when she enters grade R”.

What can be learnt from these cases is that there is comfort in knowing that a child is being cared for by maternal family, based on familiarity and being content with the kind of care provided, to ensure the comfort and happiness of the child in the mother's absence, and there is a high level of assurance for mothers in leaving children with maternal kin. This is well captured by Nokubonga, another mother who shares the responsibility of care between herself and mother. Nokubonga said:

“I am very happy with this arrangement because nothing beats knowing that my children are being cared for by my mother, their grandmother. My little one is in great hands really. My child who is grade R can bath herself and walk to school so I only need to worry about making her snacks in the morning”.

Herein, it is important to understand the multiple configurations of kinship in South Africa, and a need to move away from the history of colonialism that set the nuclear family and its attendant gendered configurations as a moral good and normative standard (Dubbel, 2013:200). What this has meant for the configuration of kinship is that, in some instances, fathers and paternal kin members have relaxed away from duties they are traditionally supposed to provide pertaining to childcare.

The section has attempted to acknowledge the work done by paternal kin and that which is done by maternal kin in childcare (especially for older children of the participants); it is clear to see that paternal and maternal kin are involved in childcare, albeit in varying degrees.

6.11 The State and kin

This study argues that some of the strategies concerning government child welfare policies are outdated. A closer examination of the policies reveals that the welfare system is behind in its consideration of mothers who now have opportunities to participate fully in the economy. This

devastates the state of working women as, unlike in other progressive governmental welfare systems such as the Nordic countries referenced before, South African women have to worry about being absent mothers and often times organise childcare options independently, an arduous task, especially for new mothers. Women have to grapple with the fact that childcare strategies may often be incompatible with their lives, and also with the fact that kin support has changed. Even more, the governmental support available may sometimes be inadequate and this exposes women to paid work, i.e. to stress and exhaustion; this study leaps to fear that women are experiencing such challenges, especially given the fact that women are not going to disengage from paid work. This study notes that some women, in organising childcare support, have attempted to navigate the blend between provisions in the market and the support of kin, which is discussed below.

6.11.1 The State and neighbour

This section focuses on mothers who use the combination of the state and kin, and it is important to note that even the state can be classified as the market because it is not free (at least for the mothers interviewed in this study it was not). Although subsidised by the state there was still a fee paid by the mothers. This is well captured when Anele, who uses an Early Childhood Development centre in Sundumbili, explained:

“We were paying R65 but now it has been raised to R120 because they have lost a donor. So, we had a meeting with the crèche teachers, principal and other parents and decided on R120 so the children can be comfortable”.

Anele also shared being extremely satisfied with the quality of care provided at the ECD. She said:

“Oh my! My sister, really people cannot believe she goes to ECD. I am very satisfied with the care they provide. Next week I am going home for a month for a family wedding we have to prepare for, but, I have made sure that I have asked them to reserve her space. Those teachers really work hard!!”

What was interesting about this comment is that Sindy’s child attends the same ECD, and Sindy’s experience with the ECD was not explained in the same light. Sindy said:

“Sometimes I am not satisfied with the way they take care of him at crèche because sometimes I get home and he has a soaking wet Pamper which means he has not been changed. Sometimes I see him lose weight and then you can tell that he is not eating well, sometimes I am satisfied. But I have no choice because I have to work

and go to school so that we have money and when I graduate and work maybe I will be able to find even better work”.

Herein, is a mother who is not happy with the care provision at the ECD, and in this affirms Anele, quoted in the paragraph above, when she says:

“[R]eally people cannot believe she goes to an ECD”.

This means that generally people have an idea of what a child who attends an ECD must look like (this is not healthy and happy, due to the generally bad reputation of ECDs).

At this moment it becomes key to contextualise ECDs. The South African government has prioritised early childhood development since 1994, and ECDs have been recognised as one of the most powerful tools for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty in South Africa. However, ECDs have been marred with bad reports and media coverage because they fall extremely short of the early childhood development goals as earmarked in 1994. There is a clear lag between legislation and practice. According to a report provided by the Housing Development Agency in 2015 (Housing Development Agency, 2015), many children attending ECDs face health and safety threats due to the poor quality of the ECDs. The challenges include poor infrastructure, poor socio-emotional and learning environments, and poor nutrition. Due to the shortfalls of ECDs, in this study of 20 mothers only two use ECDs; one cannot make assumptions about the decisions made by mothers to not use ECDs as care arrangements, but the poor reputation of ECDs could be a clear indicator.

This speaks to the assumptions people broadly have about ECDs and the kind of care provision provided at ECDs, i.e. that the quality, diet and actual care provision is not of a high standard. This is clearly a motivating point for a mother like Sindy when she shares her socio-economic aspirations – to graduate, get a good paying job and send her child to an educational facility in “*the better*” parts of Mandeni, the formerly white area colloquially referred to as Quarters.

Both women have neighbours with whom they are close, and they can leave their children with these neighbours to run errands or go somewhere afar. Anele explained:

“If I need to go buy some groceries in town, I make sure that it is a Saturday and I leave her with my neighbour but that is not often like once or twice a month. I return the favour for her if she has to go somewhere but her child is like 10 years so does not need that much looking after”.

In a similar fashion, Sindy explained:

“She is my good friend and she works at PEP but only during the week and she is free on the weekend and if she needs to be somewhere there is always someone at her home to look after him because they are a big family and she also has a child.”

This is a reciprocal relationship, meaning that Sindy does not pay her neighbour any money for the care she provides for her child during the weekend (because Sindy works half days during weekends); this is ad hoc or occasional care provision which is a reappearing concept in these cases. Sindy does return the favour though, if her neighbour needs help in any form. Although these neighbours are providing a care service, based on the close nature of their relationships, they do not pay a fee to their neighbours; it is done as a form of a courtesy or favour (usually returned) and it is based on good neighbourly relations (it could be that the arrangement breaks down if one party does not reciprocate).

What can be learnt from these findings is that there is a need to enhance the existing policies the state has directed towards childcare. Existing childcare policy assists to a certain extent by providing some support to low-income mothers, but enhancement of these policies is needed.

6.12 The Market

The discussion about childcare options in the South African context cannot happen without deliberating on the market, its purposes and provisions. The market is essentially made up of childminders and other individuals who are outsourced to look after children in exchange for monetary reimbursement. Though working women may turn to kin for assistance with childcare, kin might not always be available to help. The gendered approach to childrearing often means that women are viewed as the ones who must look after children. The workplace has become feminised which means that the female kin is also occupied in the world of work and is no longer at the disposal of working mothers. It therefore follows that working mothers have often opted for the market options as alternatives to childcare. This speaks to the nuances about the financial abilities of low-income mothers to support childcare as will be discussed below.

A key learning from this section is how, although kin is willing to assist where they can, this is only at a small scale, because kin is occupied by employment, and the market has become a main choice for the majority of the study participants. And they have the option of using the market because, as low-income working mothers, they have financial ability, and because they

control their income but do not have the time to do the child care (personally) because they work.

6.12.1 The nanny

There are four women in the study who rely fully on the market for childcare. Bonggi's child has a day nanny, because she lives far from her family. She explained:

“[M]y child has a nanny, the nanny picks up her at 6.30 am, when I am also about to leave for work. I start work at 8.30am. The nanny treats my child very well. She has been looking after her since she was 6 months. They have a very close bond, she is like her second mother. I do not have one complaint about the nanny. I pay her R600 a month”.

Bonggi depicts a mother who does not have kin close to be able to assist her with childcare, but she has an income that allows her to make decisions such as hire a day nanny, whom she also explained, can be paid extra to look after the child on the weekend if Bonggi must be somewhere during the weekend. At R100 (weekend care charge), the pay to the nanny does not meet the nanny salary scale. Although this is a form of exploitation, it is not exploitation in the Marxian sense but rather out of desperation on both parts, that of the mother in need of a childcare service and that of the nanny, willing to accept the job and pay because she is in need of employment and income (and was looking for more formal employment during the time of the interview).

6.12.2 Paid neighbours

There was a strong emerging theme of paid neighbours. What is interesting about this section is that all the mothers who pay neighbours for childcare fall under the rural sample of KwaZulu-Natal in this study. This leads the debate to the necessity to focus on the provision of crèches or ECDs in the rural areas, and more importantly, for the services to be conveniently located and accessible. The mothers present being happy and appeased with the care provision of the neighbours, but the underlying question is whether they have childcare services at their disposal so that they can make choices, or are they just making do with what is most affordable and convenient for them, forgoing the stimulation which a crèche or ECD would provide the child, in the interests of access and convenience.

Zamile said:

“My neighbour looks after them, in the morning I walk to drop them off at her house and collect them on my way from work, my grandmother is too old to look after twins, I could not do that to her. I pay the lady R350 per month”.

Similarly, for convenience, Gabisile explained that she paid her neighbour for childcare. She said:

“My daughter is looked after by neighbour when I am at work. I am very happy with the arrangement ... I pay her R300 per month for the care she provides my child Our relationship is very good because the job she does with her is incredible, I really appreciate her, I really do”.

Nikiwe said:

“We have neighbours we are close with the Phakade’s, there is a granny there who is always home, she is only R200 I am very happy with the quality of care provided by Gogo Ntombela*, she is really good with the child”.*

Nikiwe explained how she used the option of the ECD for two months but realised it was unsustainable because the ECD was far and it put an enormous amount of responsibility on Gogo Ntombela’s granddaughter, who attends primary school in the same vicinity as the ECD.

Nikiwe said:

“He went to crèche for a short period of time like maybe for two months. I would drop him off at Gogo’s place and her granddaughter would piggy back him to the ECD... The arrangement did not work, like on days when it was raining the ECD just would not open, thinking that the children would not go to ECD. It turned out to be a big inconvenience especially for Gogo’s granddaughter who would then have to walk him back to Gogo’s home”.

This case speaks to the fact that a significant number of children are prevented from accessing the ECDs due to the facilities being too far, more particularly, in the rural areas. Cull (2005) reported that 250 000 children in KwaZulu-Natal spend 2 hours each day walking to and back from school. It is unlikely that children in the age group of 0-4 years would be able to manage walking long distances to get to an ECD, especially if they have working caregivers who, based on logistics, would not be there to commute this distance with the child (whilst still having to get to work). There are a few ECDs in the rural areas, where there is a need for childcare service provision and employment (Budlender & Lund, 2011:944). The state seems to be overlooking an important role ECDs could play in making state provision towards childcare, and by training

unemployed people in rural areas to work in ECDs, thus making a move towards dually eradicating unemployment and making available a needed childcare service.

6.12.3 The market and kin

It was shown in two sections that family as a care institution can be relied upon, especially in low-income settings, where relying wholly on the market is a stretch financially as it often means paying a carer/nanny over time or paying for care in a crèche setting. Although there is a significant reliance on paid care as a main source of care for children, as family or kin are no longer readily available to provide full time care, mothers do use family members (when they are available) to assist with childcare. The following cases of Lale, Zinhle, Buhle and Phumela depict mothers who use the market as their dominant source of childcare and have helpful kin, able to assist where they can.

6.12.4 The market and helpful kin

Due to the reconfiguration of kinship in South Africa (as discussed in an earlier section), the idea of kin as uninvolved is not a strange phenomenon. This section focuses on kin which is helpful and plays a key role in assisting mothers in childcare. Lale relies on a paid live in nanny and domestic worker to provide care for her child. She explained:

“When I am at work she is cared for by our live in nanny and helper... We pay her R1500 per month but she lives here with us and does not have to for food, electricity, water nothing. Her duty is just to keep the house clean and look after my child”.

Here, Lale is explaining the duties of the nanny and domestic worker she has hired to provide care and keep her home clean. However, it is difficult to not notice the low amount of pay to the nanny and does not meet the labour regulations pertaining to minimum wage for domestic workers. In explaining further childcare arrangements when the nanny is on leave, one can understand how kin comes to help in childcare. Lale said:

“She is always around and only goes home on the last weekend of each month. When she needs to go home for an emergency, I have an aunt who usually comes over and looks after her during the day. During the holidays, I have another aunt who is a teacher who I know I can leave her with”.

This depicts related kin stepping in to provide childcare when there is a necessity. Similarly, care provision for Zinhle is a combination between the crèche and paternal kin (whom she stays with). Because Zinhle works night shifts every second month, paternal kin (her in-laws) play a

very strong role in the intricate details of childcare. This is because, if she is working a night shift, she does not see her children in the morning before they leave for school and crèche, because she is sleeping and resting in preparation for the night shift at work. Zinhle explained the active nature of her in-laws and the role of the market in her childcare arrangement and cost involved. She said:

“Abakubo bakho bandla, angifuni ukuqamba amanga [Her paternal kin is very present shame, I do not want to lie]. The crèche is R450 per month, the transport that picks her up and takes her there is R420. So, it is basically a R1000 per month for her and that is excluding lunch at least snacks Umh, I would say I am okay with the educational services received by my children. Of course, you always want the best for your child but this is the best my husband and I can give them”.

Buhle’s case reflects how kin comes together to provide care. She said:

“I live with three cousins, all of them are in their twenties like me and we are all mothers ... I work at Sanlam, I am a sales representative. My job is to recruit people and get them to buy any of our insurance products. As I told you I travel a lot for work so my older cousins play a very active role in taking care of him in my absence. It is like he has three mothers.”

As already discussed, this scenario supports the African proverb that says “it takes a whole village to raise a child”. In the South African context specifically, this relates to the principle of *ubuntu* that supports community, unity, and recognising and validating the other. This further highlights and speaks to the core of what is expected from family and any other kin members present in a child’s life. This is reflected by Buhle’s cousins, who step in to fill her shoes when she is not there, so that the child does not feel the space of her absence. As reflected in research, “care takes place within various family forms where the caretaker is usually a close female relative” (Rabe, 2016:12). And this essentially speaks to a tenet of Zulu mothering, namely the idea that if you are a mother you are not only a mother to your biological children; but broadly to society, any child the age of your child or younger – is your child.

However, this is not the only source of childcare Buhle has; her child is in crèche during the day. Buhle explained:

“She goes crèche in the township, Esikhawini. She goes there so do her other cousins my cousin’s children, there are two of them who go there and then of course it is my daughter ... The transport is R120 for each child. The crèche my daughter goes to is R220 per month, she is two years – so that is the cost for her”.

Buhle finds the childcare provided at the crèche acceptable, but re-emerging once more are socio-economic aspirations, to do better economically to afford a better childcare service for her child to attend. She says:

“The crèche is okay, there are a lot of children there, the teachers do their best to provide good services. What I worry about is the quality of care but then I know where I am and how much it is I pay for the care. It is not like it is somewhere in the suburbs, in these crèches, they do not turn a child down they just accept so that causes the crèche to have a lot of children there you know. So, the care the teachers provide is good and there is a lot of them there to provide the care, however, my issue is with the fact that there is just too many of them”.

Echoing Buhle is Phumela when she says:

“He goes to crèche, the care is okay. It is nothing amazing but I would not say that it is bad too, it is just okay, the crèche does its best to provide good care for the children so that makes me happy”.

There is a clear want for better childcare services, to give children the best opportunities. The idea of socio-economic aspirations is not new. Huttman (1991) wrote about the dreams and aspirations of different segments of the black community, to engage with those for whom the dream has been realized and those for whom it has not, in order to realise and place emphasis on the obstacles faced by black families, which continue to impede the realisation of dreams. As Billingsley (1968) explained, almost any black parent wishes for their child to attain a decent and operative education. And this sentiment was supported by Huttman (1991) that: “Black welfare mothers, too, put a good education at the top of their list of aspirations”. However, the obtainment of these aspirations is highly interlinked with the structural difficulties’ black women in South Africa generally face, based on the intersecting disadvantages that stem from class, race and gender.

6.12.5 The market and helpful neighbours

Family, friends and neighbours’ childcare is also known as informal care, relative care, kith and kin care, home-based care, legally unlicensed care, and license-exempt care (Susman-Stillman & Banghart, 2011:3). It is usually defined as any regular, non-parental childcare arrangement other than a centre, or licensed or regulated family child care home. Unregulated childcare providers include relatives, friends, neighbours, nannies and other adults caring for children in their homes. These childcare providers can be paid or unpaid (Early Learning Challenge Technical Assistance, 2017:1). For mothers who draw on the market in this study,

it is not only kin (in the form of blood relatives) which can be helpful to low-income mothers; neighbours are reflected as being a useful addition to the childcare arrangement of the market, to assist mothers who work long hours.

The following example depicts a mother who uses the market as a dominant childcare arrangement and is supported by a neighbour on weekends because she works on weekends. Simile said:

“The crèche is R200. I am not happy with the care provided by the crèche, I am a working mother, I cannot be looking after her during the day when I am in town trying to make ends meet you know what I mean, so in a way I feel like I do not even have a right to judge their care, I feel like they do us a favour, have you ever heard of a crèche cost being at R200? No. It does not happen and I do not know what I would do if it was not for the crèche, where would I leave her? Sometimes at 5pm I am still at the salon, the crèche closes at 7pm. So, it is a great help, we do not have the privilege of suburban crèches, this is not the suburb, I am not mistaken about that, unfortunately it is just a disadvantage of being black and poor”.

It can be deduced that Simile finds the care provision at the crèche questionable but makes do with the service because she understands that she is not the only mother in the rural settlement who needs an affordable and convenient place to leave her children.

Regardless, of the concerns Simile may have (like other participants who are in a predicament, as discussed in the previous section), she decided to accept the good and the bad of the service because she wants to be a present mother. The whole reason why she is faced with having to deal with poor childcare services is because she refuses to send her child to live in with her mother (in Macambini rural settlement), because in her words, she:

“want[s] to be there, I want to see it all, she must know me. Abantwana asibatholeli ogogo. Abantwana abethu, ngakhoke yenza umsebenzi njengomama” [We do not have children for grandmothers. The children are ours, therefore do your job as a mother].

Simile also has help from her neighbour, and she explained:

“My neighbour who helps me with the weight of care. During Saturdays she stays with her so I can work”.

Another mother who uses the combination of the market and neighbour as a childcare arrangement is Kholiwe, who has a very strong relationship with her neighbour who plays quite

a crucial role in her combination of the market and kin, especially because she works at a factory and comes home late. Kholiwe said:

“I come out so late, he is collected from crèche by my neighbours’ child and he stays there till I get home at 6.45 pm. In the morning I although I leave very early at 5.40 pm, I leave with him and drop him off at my neighbour and again it is my neighbours’ daughter who drops him off at crèche later in the morning at 8am when she is on her way to school. My neighbour and I are like sisters, so I treat her child like mine and she treats my children like hers too. We are together”.

When Kholiwe refers to her neighbour (a stay at home mother with two children), as a sister, one can get the picture of how close they must be and how integral the neighbour is in making Kholiwe’s role as an employed mother work. Further, in this quote, Kholiwe directs attention to a theme which has surfaced in this study, about the role played by children in care provision.

6.13 The implications of having children as carers

Besides giving an outlook as to how mothers combine the market and kin as a childcare arrangement, the combination of the market and kin also draws attention to the responsibilities some children have, and it draws attention to the implications of having children as carers. According to Chaudry (2004:12), children with low-income mothers often end up in any form of childcare their mother can piece together, not necessarily because it is the best option. It is often low-quality and/or unstable. Such mothers often must use multiple care arrangements concurrently, and these may include placing care responsibilities on young children, for their younger siblings. This section will present three cases (Kholiwe, Nikiwe and Nokubonga) of childcare responsibilities which are placed on children, in order to ensure a feasible strategy.

As discussed by Kholiwe in the section above, it is not only Kholiwe’s neighbour’s child who in this study has responsibilities in childcare. Nikiwe explained how the irregularity of the ECD deterred her from using the service and so she opted to use her neighbour as a full-time baby sitter (paid).

Busi introduces us to the amount of responsibility carried by her 10 year old daughter. Her daughter assists her with tasks which one would expect to be performed by an adult. Busi said:

“she helps with the cleaning, making food for her brother, fetching her brother from crèche”.

This form of childcare practice for Busi, getting an older sibling to look after a younger sibling, raises a question as to why children carry a heavy responsibility to care for their siblings. This is not a strange concept in the realities of many black working-class families; parents not being physically present especially in the afternoon is common, which means that a huge responsibility to care is placed on young children. This can also be seen with another participant Nokubonga who delegates care responsibilities to her younger child (five years of age). She said:

“My child who is grade R can bath herself and walk to school, so I only need to worry about making her snacks in the morning”.

Whilst one could say that this is a case of a child caring for herself not another child, what it reflects are duties and responsibilities which some children do and have at a very young age. Five years (the age which Nokubonga’s eldest child is) is a young age to be walking to school alone, especially considering the crime rate in Umlazi Township as well as the congestion of cars on the roads – which makes car accidents common. It is often children from low-income homes who land up with vast responsibilities when it comes to childcare within the home.

Low-income mothers often do not have cars, because their pay does not allow them to buy cars, which means that they have to rely on public transport. They commute long distances and spend the bulk of their time after work commuting. In KwaZulu-Natal specifically, this can be attributed to the design of townships and the placing of black people. It placed black people on the periphery of cities, essentially meaning that black people who work in the city, for instance in the case, Durban, have to travel 40 minutes using public transport (taxi). A trip which is 25 minutes using a private car is extended to 40 minutes because of traffic and the fact that taxis and buses (public transport) make stops in different sections in the township to drop off passengers.

Thus, working parent caregivers in such scenarios must delegate care, even into the hands of younger offspring. Busi for instance leaves work for home at 4pm, but only arrives home at 7pm. This is because she finishes work at a peak hour (heavy traffic) and she also has to take a taxi from work to the Inanda taxi rank, and from there Busi connects, taking a taxi to Umlazi N section, which, after making stops at M, L and K sections, finally makes a stop at her stop in N section. This provides a broader context as to why it is that certain children in this study have a larger set of responsibilities.

What these three cases reflect is the social economic standing of low-income households. And what happens when parents do not have resources at their disposal to assist them in working and parenting. Low-income parents, and in this specific context mothers, often must rely on their young children to assist with childcare for their younger siblings.

6.14 The state and the child support grant

All the mothers were recipients of the child support grant except for Lale, who had not applied for the grant at the time of the interview and Gabisile, who did not qualify for the grant because her husband was a teacher, putting her in a higher bracket (due to their joint income). However, Gabisile was a sales representative, and shared that her experience as a low-income earner was one of struggling because, although her husband was a higher earner, he lived in Pietermaritzburg (2 hours drive away), meaning he had to rent accommodation close by and could not commute every day. This means that they were essentially running two households, namely the accommodation for hire and their rural household, which included the duty to care for her in-laws who live on the same plot of land. Financially, Gabisile shared that they were financially stretched thin and that her low-income as a sales representative was not enough for the running of the two households.

The child support grant formed a very small part of the lived realities of the participants, thus, as explained by Neysmith et al. (2012), the grant does not provide enough money for families to get by, and similarly, the minimum wage earned by low-income earning mothers is scant. The low-income working mothers in this study understand and experience how difficult it is to make ends meet on a low-income wage while attempting to maintain a household, pay for childcare arrangements and provide their children with care and nurturing. As argued by Campbell (2006:171), to be successful childcare policy needs to consider the role and value of women's work. This is not to advocate for the paradigmatic 'dependent' who has been stereotyped as a poor mother who collects a child support grant from a program marred with negative connotations, with the most common image being of a 'welfare mother' or 'welfare queen', who is typified as a young unmarried black woman of uncontrolled sexuality.

Findings from this study reflected that the child support grant is not spent trivially by the low-income working mothers but rather supports them; it is mainly used to cover transport costs for their children. It was also used to subsidise small areas of childcare. The way the grant is spent is contrary to popular belief which reduces the reason why poor women have children for the

purpose of receiving the grant. A move away from the notion of the ‘welfare mother’, as lazy, disorderly and dependent on the state, is needed. None of the women in this sample accord with the media stereotype of mothers who are child support grant recipients; the study was able to understand the intricate realities of low-income working mothers and childcare in urban and rural South Africa.

The women interviewed in the study explained how the money is useful. Zinhle said:

“It has been so useful. I mainly use it towards childcare utilities. I will contribute it towards paying for the car service which takes my kids to school and brings them back if not that then I use it for lunch things, like bread, cheese, polony, jam and peanut butter. It is a useful extra source but because it is not that much you can only use it for so much you know what I mean? But nonetheless it’s helpful”

And supporting this, Busi explained:

“I use it for food/lunch which amounts to R200 and then fruits which go between R10-R30 at the market. I have a good understanding that the money is not for me but for the child so I use the money for the child’s best interest”.

The money is used for or contributed towards food or lunch snacks for the children. There is a clear and conscious decision by the mothers to utilise the money towards the needs of the children. This dispels the myths that beneficiaries who receive the child support grant misuse the money for personal and seemingly frivolous expenses, such as nails, hair and clothes. Angel explained:

“You know people act like the grant money is so much, it is not, but it is very useful. And I use it for things that are directly related to the child. Do not be fooled by people saying poor mothers use it for hair and nails, no sane mother would do that. No decent mother who is a good mother would do such a thing”.

The findings are important because they depict inconsistencies with popular narratives which belittle and depict the way caregiver beneficiaries of the grant use the money as inappropriate and not towards the needs of the child. This cohort of women all explained using the money (as little as it is) towards the well-being and development of the child, and the grant was not a major part of their expenses (although useful), as these mothers were employed.

6.15 Conclusion

In focusing on the three institutions of care, namely the family, state and market, what can be concluded is that these do not form neat categories; the dominant pattern is that low-income mothers use a combination of these institutions to balance care work and their employment. As discussed in the chapter, there is involvement of paternal and maternal kin to provide childcare; women also draw on the market (crèche) and pay neighbours as a source of childcare provision (although there are some neighbours who are not paid monetarily but rather reciprocally).

It is important to note how the poor services have not deterred mothers from mothering, and perhaps opting to send their children to be looked after by other kin. Low-income mothers are aware of the meagre childcare services received by their children and that better childcare services are available at more affluent areas of their respective municipalities, which is the kind of childcare facilities they aspire to be able to provide for their children, for the purposes of quality, development and stimulation. Furthermore, the mothers expressed the want for their children to not be at facilities which are overcrowded but to be at facilities that have fewer children, to ensure that the student to crèche facilitator ratio is reasonable, ensuring that each child receives enough attention from the crèche facilitator. Regardless of the discontent with childcare services, a consensus amongst these mothers was that they wanted to be hands-on mothers; although they have the option of having kin provide care, this would mean that their children would not live with them and they would not be doing day-to-day mothering.

Also, there is an issue with childcare provision being reliable. In the case of mothers who had their child in crèche or an ECD, although the service was usually reliable, the quality of the care provision was problematic and opening days were not consistent (for instance, if it was raining). The conditions of the crèches and the services provided at the crèches were not significantly different from those of the ECDs (depending on location). Furthermore, the market does not provide better alternatives for women in poor locations. Herein, the women are stuck between a rock and hard place, they are faced with poor services for the care of their children, which they make use of regardless as they need to leave their children in a care arrangement.

The findings from this chapter confirm the deductions made in the introduction. It was found that low-income working mothers are thus making their choices on childcare based on a variety of hindering factors including shortage of money, the changing nature of kin support, and barriers in the community, such as limited availability of social and community services. Poverty and lack of state support make many of the universal difficulties with childcare

particularly onerous for already impoverished and disadvantaged women. As asserted by Mosoetsa (2005) South Africa's welfare and labour policies depart significantly from those of the apartheid regime, however, they fail to address the root of inequality and poverty. Until this root problem is identified and tackled, low-income employed mothers will continue to find themselves in a conundrum in their navigation of mothering and paid work.

There is no reason to anticipate that fewer mothers will be employed or working anytime soon, especially those whose earnings are their family's lifeline (Chaudry, 2004). Along with the personal responsibility taken by working mothers, it is imperative that they can count on reliable care provision for their children.

This chapter provides evidence that the feminisation of work forces women into commodified forms of childcare, and a look at what happens when they leave the house and come back late from work. The chapter has grappled with who does the childcare work; the market is there as an option, but what kind of market can the women afford? State care provision has changed, and families are changing. The chapter has shown strategies used by women for childcare, as they navigate their roles as labour force participants and mothers. The kind of childcare mothers can provide is an outcome of the state, family and market, specifically what these institutions are able to provide and what the women can afford and have access to.

The chorus of this thesis is that although a lot has changed (the current welfare system is significantly different from that during and before apartheid), the expansion of the welfare state has not changed who pays for care – women pay. In the market, what you can afford speaks to the kind of childcare you are able to afford your child, and the childcare provision offered by the state is not necessarily the best quality and is not always free. Further, kin being available and willing to provide childcare is taking place in the context of changing kinship ties. Low-income employed mothers are facing new sets of challenges which are curbing what they can provide for their children.

Chapter 7: *Intsika*

Intsika: The roof structure of a rondavel house is held in position solely by one pole, called *intsika* in IsiZulu.

7.1 Introduction

The chapter's title is based on a Zulu idiom that equates a mother to *intsika*, the pole that holds the roof of a rondavel in position; reoccurring amongst the mothers is a theme that all mothers interviewed hold similar sentiments about having to be strong and having to have endurance to cope with motherhood with a low income in a low-income setting. The mothers interviewed in this thesis are all these single poles (albeit with varying forms of support). This will be significantly highlighted in a section in the chapter about understanding Zulu motherhood, where the idiom is used by a participant in describing motherhood. The exploration of motherhood and what it entails and means for mothers, and what it has been socially constructed to mean by society, was unravelled in this study.

This chapter examines why mothers do the work they do. The chapter intends to do this by assessing how mothers negotiate their social identity in the context of structures that exist. This study, much like Walker's work (1995), attempts to caution against depicting the institution of motherhood as "a patriarchal institution" and mothering as "a role imposed on women". Walker (1995: 425) acknowledges the role of dominant discourses but argues that making them the focus of the experience of mothering is problematic because two important aspects of being a mother, namely motherhood as a "social identity", and the "practice" of being a mother, are then neglected. These aspects are pertinent as they were explained by the mothers interviewed in this study. An analysis of these three interlinked terrains of motherhood (discourse, practice and social identity), according to Walker (1995: 428), will allow for a re-examination of motherhood in South Africa that will highlight "its complexity, as an institution but also as a relationship". Motherhood is, after all, an identity that is actively negotiated within a web of social interactions against a backdrop of wider cultural expectations.

The chapter examines how women negotiate identity as Zulu mothers in a low-income context of fathers and paternal kin, market, state and kin, which are all institutions that are not doing enough to support the mothers in their mothering roles. In doing so, this thesis draws on Collins (2015) work focusing on black women and motherhood within a range of discourses, including its use as a theoretical reflective lens, as a pedagogical tool, and as a construct for critical

inquiry on personal, academic and socio-political levels. Collins' seminal works, which focus on women of colour and motherhood (Collins, 2000; 2004), spark further inquiry and exploration into the intersectionality of race, gender, class, religion and motherhood, which are all pertinent to this study. Collins' notion of an intersectional "matrix of domination" is expansive. It includes categories of oppression such as age, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity and disability. Further, the matrix facilitates exploration about the intersections of "penalty and privilege" and the contexts in which those penalties and privileges rise and fall. In South Africa, due to apartheid, colonisation, poverty and increasing participation of black women in the labour force, we must understand the ways multiple forms of inequality and disadvantage compound themselves, creating obstacles often not understood.

The chapter then examines Zulu motherhood ideals, although these have been explained as problematic in their patriarchal nature (Hassim, 1993; Mathis, 2011); this chapter proposes that Zulu motherhood is not achieving these ideals in the modern context, and that growing financial responsibilities (and as a result having to enter the work force), changing household dynamics (multigenerational households and female headed households rising), and minimal or no childcare support from fathers and paternal kin, as well as being stretched thin emotionally, physically, mentally and financially, are what problematise Zulu motherhood. The institution of Zulu motherhood is not the problem, but when it is not supported it becomes a conundrum for low-income working mothers in KwaZulu-Natal.

This chapter reiterates that it is not the notion of ideal Zulu motherhood that is problematic; in fact, Zulu mothers aspire to achieve it. However, when it is not supported, it is setting up women for failure. Achieving this ideal is specifically difficult for low-income working mothers based on all the mitigating factors (explored in previous chapters) which disadvantage them.

7.2 Theorising motherhood and mothering: literature review

The study of motherhood has had an uneasy and ambivalent relationship with feminism and feminist theory, which has ranged from the feminist rejection of motherhood on the perceived basis of its inherent oppression of women, and the view that "motherhood has everything to do with a history in which women remain powerless by reproducing the world of men" (Allen, 1983:316), to more moderate accounts of that ambivalence that cautions against the "recent

positive feminist focus on motherhood” that romanticises motherhood by drawing heavily on sexist stereotypes (Hooks, 2000:135).

Mothering refers to the experiences of mothering which are female defined and focused on the empowering of women (O’Reilly, 2004:2). It speaks to the personal, individual experiences that women have in meeting the needs of their children. Both concepts are central to the study in terms of understanding the lived experiences of low-income working women as mothers. Mothering includes the act of bearing a child and caring for and nurturing the child. Further, it is the ability to be multifaceted – being able to be devoted and nurturing to your child as a mother in a self-sacrificing manner; “[g]ood mothering discourses have been centred on themes of self-sacrifice and ultimate fulfilment, devotion and child-centeredness” (Dedeoglus, 2010:13).

The difference between these concepts is that whilst one is an institution (motherhood), the other is the practice, i.e. the work that goes into being a mother (mothering) as shown in chapter 4, which engaged with all the varying forms of work done by mothers. “Motherhood refers to the context in which mothering is experienced. Although the practices, and ideals vary according to socio-historical, and cultural contexts, the main task remain the same” (Dedeoglus, 2010:2). This is precisely what Nancy Chodorow was tackling in her book *The Reproduction of Mothering* (1978). Chodorow explored why women choose to mother and concluded by rejecting the idea that mothering is innate, as an instinct or the result of social conditioning. As she argued, rejecting this idea would imply that women had a free choice in the matter of whether to mother.

Considering mothering broadly, what has been the ‘dominant’ mothering ideology was based on the privilege of married middle-class women who can afford to stay home and mother. However, it could be argued that mothering, contrary to popular belief, is not the most natural thing in the world for women (Coontz, 1992; Moore, 1996:58). There are plenty of factors at play for most women and they do not necessarily live up to the traditional ideology of mothering. The ideology of what constitutes good mothering has stemmed from substantially patriarchal ideals of what it means to be a good woman and subsequently a good mother.

The ideology has created much tension between idealised versions of motherhood and many mothers’ experiences of tedium, stress and hard experience, i.e. work that is socially undervalued and often anxiety provoking (Phoenix & Wollett, 1991:22). There is a commonality in narratives pertaining to motherhood, that is, “it is vital for the child’s social,

intellectual and emotional development that the mother adopts herself to her infant's rather than her own needs" (Richardson, 1993:58). Mothering is presented as an essential and integral dimension of women's identity (Rich, 1986; Richardson, 1993; Everingham, 1994). One can deduct that this ideology has essentially engineered to counteract the tendency of mothers to stray over the line, which subsequently serves as a justification for the massive amounts of social policing that is attendant on the identities of mothers (Nelson, 2001:137). It can thus be argued that the work of mothering has been a gendered practice situated within a powerful and normative ideology of inequality in society and personal spaces.

Such ideals include that "women are biologically destined to be care givers and nurturers"; "the mother is the ultimate teacher"; and "the measure of a mother is her child" (Carpenter & Austin, 2007:660). Such ideals have unfortunately served as the blueprint to establish what it means to be a good or adequate mother, or a negligent or depraved mother (Carpenter & Austin, 2007:660). Some authors have thus observed that mothering is divided between good mothering and bad mothering identities (Nelson, 2001:137). The limitation of this literature is that it presents the dichotomisation of these two forms of mothering, for the theorising of mothers in this light can be very alienating to some mothers and consequently skew the findings from the participants. This study moves away from the notion of the 'good' and 'bad' mother as explained by many scholars, such as Nelson (2001), Collins (2001) and Chase and Rogers (2001).

This study undertook a participatory element that allowed research participants to construct mothering personally and retrospectively. This substantiates the need for an evolutionary view of gender dynamics, as this study has attempted to depict. In this sense, researchers can gain invaluable knowledge by allowing a subjective understanding of mothering and of diverging from the socially constructed norms of mothering. This study argues that the current literature is limited by its dichotomisation into 'good' and 'bad' mothering, which inhibits a deeper meaning and understanding of phenomena.

7.3 Intersectionality and black feminist theory

Black legal scholar Crenshaw coined the term "intersectionality" in her insightful 1989 essay, *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics*. The concept of intersectionality is not an abstract notion but a description of the way multiple oppressions are

experienced. Indeed, Crenshaw uses the analogy of a traffic intersection, or crossroad, to concretize the idea of a “single-axis framework” of antidiscrimination law, whereby identities are viewed as separate and singular, as if they do not intersect (Crenshaw, 1989). In her work, Crenshaw argues that this led to a lack of protection when it came to individuals who were marginalised under the intersection of identities. Crenshaw speaks to the fact that identities are not summative; they are multiple and intersect, which is a vivid finding in this study hence the relevance to this study of using Black Feminist Theory in this chapter.

Like Crenshaw, the black feminist scholar Collins (2000) uses the concept of intersectionality to unpack how oppressions based on race, gender, sexuality and ethnicity work together to produce oppression. Collins adds the concept of “matrix of domination” (Collins, 2000:2-3), which she describes in four categories; these include the structural domain operating to organise power and oppression; the disciplinary domain managing oppression; the hegemonic domain legitimising oppression; and the interpersonal domain controlling the interactions and consciousness of individuals. In this, Collins engages with black feminism and through this gives a voice and representation to the voiceless and under-represented black women in the United States of America; she gives a voice to experiences which exist outside conventional knowledge, which speaks to the South African context of this study.

Collins (2000:9) argues that

“[w]hile a Black woman’s standpoint and its accompanying epistemology stem from Black women’s consciousness of race and gender oppression, they are not simply the result of combining Afrocentric and female values—*standpoints are rooted in real material conditions structured by social class.*”

She could not speak to the South African context better; the historical background of South Africa, and the socio-economic predicaments the system engineered for people of colour, is the catalyst for the reasons given by low-income earning mothers interviewed in this study as they shared the kinds of narratives they did, in terms of their lived experiences (these will be delved into in the findings parts of this chapter). Addressing ethnicity is crucial for this study; being a Zulu mother, in combination with occupying a specific class, gender and racial position, shapes the experiences of mothering as well as the meanings which mothers assign to these experiences.

Mothering in recent decades, cultural discourse on mothering has been criticised for its focus on pressures felt by white middle-class women on their entry into the workforce, and their struggles with balancing paid and unpaid work and meeting hegemonic expectations of extensive mothering (Williams, 2000), this is not a new phenomenon for black women. The need to do it all, namely paid and unpaid work and cognitive labour, is not new and has been a reality for black women living in the United States of America (Landry 2002; Ornelas et al. 2009). Black women, for example, have long embraced both mothering and paid work as part of normal femininity (Landry 2002). They do not focus exclusively on parenting their biological children, and family, friends, and neighbours may serve as “other mothers” to children in their communities (Collins 1991). This also speaks to the South African context where the severing of reproductive activities from productive activities is not a possibility for women of colour. Such a separation was gendered, classed and raced, and only ever available to a small minority of women.

For working class and racialised women, reproductive obligations have rarely exempted them from earning a wage. The idea that the ideal mother is available to dedicate all her time and energies to the task of being with the children is not only a white Western phenomenon (Williams, 2000), but it is also made possible through the labour black women provide as nannies and domestic workers. As Gaitskwell et al. (2007:86) writes, “In South Africa it is often said that African women are oppressed in three ways: oppressed as blacks, oppressed as women, and oppressed as workers” (Gaitskwell et al., 2007:90). Through apartheid or colonial practices and legislation, mothers could never be mothers and workers – it is necessary to pay attention to the local history about the creation and value of black motherhood (which will be discussed in the following section). When black mothers discuss parenting practices or speak about motherhood, they do so not just with years of racialised influence on their bodies and labour, but they are also capable of resistance and rejection of many of these tropes and are not victimised by these meanings; this is depicted in detail in the findings and discussion part of this chapter.

Understanding the context from which mothers’ mother or configure motherhood is extremely important. Gonsalves & Sangha (2013) argue how South Asian mothering (as in other parts of the world) is embedded in cultural practices which inform, shape and influence South Asian mothers’ perceptions and practices of mothering. A key learning from this work is the social constructions, such as gender, race, class, sexuality and ability, and how they intersect with migration and tradition both in South Asia and in the South Asian diaspora. A key point is that,

although the book focuses on South Asia, the overarching themes speak to how motherhood is quite a specific experience which is strongly impacted by the social and cultural norms of society.

Similarly, O'Reilly (2014) explores the maternal identities of 22 mothers from a wide spectrum of backgrounds. A key finding in this book is that the cultural differences speak to the global variation of how mothering is constructed and understood across different contexts in North America. However, as mentioned, this speaks to the specificity of motherhood macroscopically and not exclusively to North America. These manuscripts are seminal to understanding the intersectional conditions that culminate in motherhood as a discourse and mothering as an oppressive patriarchal structure in dominant culture. The following section is focused on discussing the discourse of motherhood and the practices of mothering in the context of this study, South Africa.

7.4 The institution of motherhood in the South African context

The experience of motherhood is not universal. Recent scholarship in motherhood studies has further challenged essentialism by beginning to differentiate between culturally specific forms of mothering and their implications. Herein, this study contributes new knowledge about motherhood in the South African context, given that the study is situated in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. It is important to understand the specificity of the study, and it is key to look at motherhood in the South African context. This part of the chapter aims to understand what the role of motherhood is in an African and/or South African society. How is it understood and what is its meaning?

Motherhood in South Africa is a highly gendered practice situated within a powerful and normative ideology of inequality (van Dooren, 2009:6). Nonetheless, motherhood has been instrumental in informing women's social identity and shaping their political involvement (Walker, 1995; Lee, 2009). The apartheid system largely dictated the ways in which motherhood was understood among white and black women under patriarchy. The apartheid system influenced the constructions of motherhood among races on the basis that the way the system treated and imposed laws on one racial group, different from another, had a significant result as to what motherhood and womanhood meant for women in the respective races. This literature has its strengths in the fact that the apartheid system is largely entrenched in the dynamics of the modern family in South Africa. The problem with the same literature (Walker,

1995; Lee, 2009), however, is that it is limited due to new conceptualisations of the African family which has found that there is a stark divergence from the Euro-centric orientation of the family unit. Zulu people, for instance, have consolidated their own models of the family unit, which do not necessarily converge on the conventional unit headed by two parents, in a nuclear family (Bray et al., 2010). The nuclear family in the South African context can even form with only one adult and without any other adult in the family supporting them. Instead of next of kin in the Zulu family unit, mothers have enlisted the help of neighbours, far apart from the traditional next of kin who is perceived as a surrogate in the close family unit.

As stated by Walker (1995:418), “particular, limited constructions of ‘motherhood’ have been appropriated within various patriarchal discourses, these discourses should not themselves be seen as definitive of women’s actual identities and experiences”. Patriarchy appears to be at the centre of structures which define and confine women. From the study being based on low-income urban and rural working mothers in KwaZulu-Natal emerges the need to understand motherhood and mothering retrospectively to the Zulu context. According to Collins (2004:214), “every culture has a worldview that it uses to order and evaluate its own experiences”.

In the context of Zulu motherhood, there has been a strong cultural expectation of what motherhood does or should mean, and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) played a very strong role in the social construction of Zulu motherhood. The IFP is a political party, established in the 1970s, which up until recent years had consolidated solid support amongst Zulu people in KwaZulu-Natal. As a very traditional and conservative party, premised on the preservation of the family unit for the successful function of society (Hassim, 1993), the IFP was founded on strong patriarchal ideals that support gender roles and patriarchy, which the party has been imparting on many Zulu mothers using strong nationalism.

The Inkatha Women’s Brigade, a branch of the IFP, imposed ideological constructions of gender through appealing to Zulu women’s experienced realities of family and motherhood (Hassim, 1993). The brigade was concerned with keeping women at the centre of unpaid care work in the household. Although it is worth noting that many women in KwaZulu-Natal in the 1970s and 1980s appreciated the IFP ‘emancipating’ all women in 1981 by changing the Natal code (Hunter, 2010:76). The IFP was able to maintain the structures of patriarchy and gender roles amongst Zulu speakers through the invention of tradition and the creation of a romanticised past. Importantly, the IFP created a false sense of consciousness that it had the

ability to bridge 'traditional' and 'modern' worlds, and here the socially constructed symbols of motherhood took on heroic proportions (Hassim, 1993). This speaks to the ways in which Zulu motherhood has been constructed and perceived. The practices and choices which Zulu women or mothers make in relation to childcare have been centred on the notions of culture and tradition, which continue to mark choices made by most Zulu women or mothers in providing care for their children. In this, women lose social power, and the perpetuation of gender role ideology in the traditional context of patriarchy lead them to accept their unequal position in the households; social reproduction of roles continue as 'women's work' or 'women's responsibility', which keep women on the periphery.

However, it is key not to paint a timid picture of Zulu mothers. Zulu mothers have not been passive but are active participatory agents who have worked around the structures of patriarchy to influence structures politically and privately in their households. For instance, in the 1980s, in the heat of political violence in KwaZulu-Natal, it was women who through protests of different kinds, challenged the way in which political spaces and their accompanying gendered power relations had been reconstructed by violence (Bonnin, 2000:39). Zulu women played an important part in their roles of mothering to incorporate comrades who were at the heart of protests and political upheavals, by feeding and caring for comrades and accosting police, by supporting comrades in court appearances and, in the worst cases, by burying the deceased (Bonnin, 2000:39). A more specific illustration of the role women played in the political unrest of the 1980s, is that women found strategies of rallying to resist invisibility and authority. This was captured in Mpumalanga Township – a township previously a strong IFP base.

Although the women (specifically mothers) could not necessarily be on the ground to protest and engage in mainstream activities for resistance against the system due to their 'roles' and what was expected of them in a township under IFP control, women manoeuvred within spaces of patriarchy to make their mark to the struggle; using their roles as mothers, they provided food and care and accosting for comrades being harassed and/or hunted by the police (Bonnin, 2000:40). Women found ways of being active agents within the patriarchal structures, and this agency was practiced by Zulu mothers keeping within the cultural expectations.

The role of women, and Zulu mothers specifically, has been hailed as very important in the Zulu community, not only in private spaces, but also publicly and politically. Zulu women, in their role and capacity as mothers, were able to spread the gospel of peace, and help prevent

KwaZulu-Natal from being reduced to ashes, and pioneer a society of women who were able to be the heart of the Zulu society to practice and promote self-help and self-reliance.

Motherhood as pivotal in African cultures and in women's lives is a theme which has been developed by African feminists like Amadiume (1997) and Oyewumi (1997) who, in their discussion on motherhood, emphasize how motherhood is a preferred and cherished self-identity of many African women. Motherhood and marriage have been uncoupled by African women. The stigma of single motherhood has continued to decline, and the capacity to bear children and assume the social identity of motherhood continues to be very highly valued by women and to inform their choices around motherhood. African culture premises motherhood as the ultimate evidence of one's womanhood. The literature on this must be challenged, however, because one must understand that the apartheid regime was instrumental in destroying family connections and family values, as well as general harmony between the genders in the African family unit. Segregation laws tested the viability of absent fathers and succeeded to some extent. It thus follows that women may not necessarily view men as an asset during their journey in motherhood.

However, evidence that womanhood is reduced to that single biological ability of motherhood is prominent. What is interesting in South Africa is that this value attached to women's fertility is pressure not just from the patriarchal expectation of what a women's body should be able to do but from African women themselves. Fertility and the ability to bear children and assume the social identity of motherhood continue to be very valued by black communities and women, and significantly inform the life choices women make.

In the South African context and for this study, it is important to understand the high value placed on fertility among many Zulu people. The notion of "you are not a woman until you have borne a child" continues to exist. This was well captured in a study by Preston-Whyte and Zondi (1989) on African teenage pregnancies in Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Teenage pregnancies in this context were found to be shameful disasters but affirmation of womanhood, so the authors put forward that "the value placed upon children is so high that marriage is in some contexts quite irrelevant to the bearing of children" (Preston-Whyte & Zondi, 1989:47). The authors stress how valuable the ability to prove that you are fertile is in African culture and that falling pregnant before being married increases your chances of marriage because you prove that you can reproduce. Some scholarship on this has argued that these beliefs expose women to manipulative tendencies by Zulu men who see this as an opportunity to use women as agents

for siring children and thereafter abdicating from any responsibility to care of them (Healy-Clancy & Hickel, 2014).

It also perpetuates the negative view among Zulu men that the highest achievement for a woman is bearing children and therefore any other attempts by women to exert themselves as active participants in the economy or structures of power in society are shunned. Sometimes women who seek to emancipate themselves are either subtly subdued or are met with violence aimed at stopping them. It is clear to gather that there appears to be a fusion in the denotation around motherhood and womanhood; in the South African context the two are one and the same. Motherhood is largely regarded as synonymous with womanhood, here the inherent and biological ability to bear a child render a mother responsible for intensive efforts in child-raising.

However, it is key to note that motherhood is not only assumed by biological mothers but by other mother figures such as 'othermothers' and 'community mothers' particularly in the black African context. Other mothering and community mothering can be explained as strategies of survival where 'othermothers' and/or 'community mothers' see to the care of a child or children (O'Reilly, 2004:11). These mothers ensure that all children regardless of whether the biological mother is present or available would receive the mothering that delivers a certain level of well-being for a child (O'Reilly, 2004:11). Collins (1994) notes that African and African American communities have also recognised that bestowing one person with full responsibility for mothering a child may not be most preferred.

In South Africa, the concept of othermothers or community mothers is not a new one, in many settings of black communities in South Africa it is known or assumed that it is not one woman/person that raises a child but rather the community comes together to raise a child. It is mostly othermothers or community mothers who avail themselves to assist with child rearing. The concept of othermothers and community mothers has been in play for over long periods of time in black communities and it continues to exist although the strength of it may be dwindling due to employment and othermothers and community mothers not being available for care due to employment commitments and paid care in the form of crèche, daycare centres or child minders becoming more prevalent and preferred.

Some scholars have found that most family units in South Africa do not follow the conventional or Euro-centric two-parent nuclear family (Bray et al., 2010). Families have instead converged on a wider diversity of models and these include mothers only, where there are no other adults

involved. The other households include an extended range of kin especially on the maternal side. The strength of this literature is that it shows that South African households are converging on a wide range of household models and are diverging from the options that were primed on the African family unit by the apartheid regime.

The literature (Bray et al., 2010) also highlights the role of children when it comes to motherhood because in some respects, first born children fill in the void of mothers and they are delegated the responsibilities of caregiving while the actual mother figure is preoccupied with their careers. This study has already discussed the caveat vis a vis fatherhood and the role of fathers in a household where a women works. Healy-Clancy and Hickel (2014) have described Zulu men as intensely patriarchal in their orientation to the family unit. They view the family as a manifestation of weakness or strength of the manliness. Most of this focus has been viewed by scholars as immaterial to the actual child rearing required by children in the household (Mosoetsa, 2011). The weakness of the current literature was perceived to be that the absence of fathers, including Zulu men, from childrearing is not necessarily due to bad relationships. I have already highlighted that men might disengage from the family unit due to their perceived inability to contribute (financially) and this study seeks to shine a light on that angle, not as a justification for absent fathers, but as a point of departure for more nuanced discussions on fatherhood, Zulu men and therefore the plight of working women entangled in these dynamics.

At core, the ethos of Africanism in childrearing is the call for the community's involvement in raising a child. As Collins (1994:58) states, "for women of colour, subjective experience of mothering/motherhood is inextricably linked to the social cultural concerns of racial ethnic communities – one does not exist without the other". Traditionally, ethnic groups have unified in the rearing of a child, so it was seen not only as the duty of the biological mother but also of social mothers or 'othermothers' and 'community' mothers, who rallied together to raise a child. Such dynamics are explored in the study for the purposes of establishing where the burden of care falls and to see the role played by these other hands which traditionally had a moral obligation to provide childcare.

South African women have experienced challenges in organising their childcare (Erasmus, 1997) and these challenges continue to exist. The study aims to understand how women navigate care arrangements for their children, provided by relatives, crèches, domestic workers and provided by the state childcare facilities, as well as the hardships South African women

face within the workforce (Nyman, 1997). As the number of women joining the work force increases, so too does the dilemma of the responsibility faced by women as homemakers, workers and mothers.

There is a need to bridge the gap of poor care by providing high quality childcare arrangements; in this way mothers may feel more comfortable and supported in their roles and more able to lead balanced lives. In attempting to understand the realities of low-income working mothers, it was important to conduct a study that would provide an accuracy and a textured insight into the realities and intricacies of childcare faced by the mothers in their households. This kind of insight also allowed for the understanding of care strategies made use of by the mothers and their lived experiences of being low-income working mothers and all it entails.

To understand motherhood in the South African context of this study, Black Feminist Theory is useful as South Africa is a country where class, race and sex have defined outcomes for women, and for the case of black women specifically, putting them at the bottom of society.

Findings

“Umama Inzalabantu” [A mother births people]

7.5 Apprehending cultural and social norms of motherhood in KwaZulu-Natal: *Ukuba umama womZulu* [Being a Zulu mother]

“I have had great people to model in my mothering, Zulu women who have embodied resilience, love and dedication to their children. My mother, maternal and paternal aunts have all been key in showing someone such as me, who had a child so young, how it is done. All these women are Zulu women so I would say that being a Zulu mother is being able to withstand the most difficult time. When you have no food and no money, you must be able to find a plan and find a way as to what you do. Whether you ask your neighbour or relatives for help; all ultimately falls on your shoulders, you are intsika and that encompasses Zulu motherhood to the core” (Anele).

Dating back to the mid-1900s, Zulu societies lived in housing dwellings called *iQhugwane*. In the mid-1900s, the rondavel housing structure came about. The rondavel is still a popular structure in rural settings. The roof structure of a rondavel house is held in position solely by one pole; this pole is called *intsika* in IsiZulu. Women who are wives and mothers have traditionally been called *izintsika zamakhaya* (plural) or *intsika yekhaya* (singular). This stems from the fact that, just as a rondavel structure would not be able to stand if not for the pole that

holds the roof structure; a household would not be able to stand if not for a woman, a mother. The functioning of a household, childrearing and other responsibilities pertaining to the household rest on her; not only is she expected to be a nucleus for her family and household, but she is to be a mother in her community too. There is a saying in IsiZulu that *umama inzala bantu* [a mother births people].

This essentially means that if you are a mother, your role as a mother is not limited to your natural children, as every person who is young enough to be a child to you, is your child. It is with this concept that mothers extend their understandings of motherhood and mothering to their communities. (Although in practice, as discussed in the section above, motherhood is a lonely experience.) This adds to the existing body of knowledge because it changes the way scholarship on motherhood conceptualises motherhood, from the Western view of a nuclear family to a Zulu or African nuclear family, where motherhood can even be delegated to neighbours. This speaks to the expectations and meanings of the discourse of Zulu motherhood and the practice of mothering within this context. Given the context of this study, it is important to paint a picture as to what being a mother in KwaZulu-Natal entails. Thus, having outlined a paramount constituent to motherhood in Zulu communities, I will then provide findings as to how women as mothers, in urban and rural KwaZulu-Natal, experience motherhood and mothering.

Nokubonga's experience of motherhood is marred by difficulty and hardship as a low-income earner.

“For me it is hard to be a mother, especially a Zulu mother. As it is a battle to make ends meet, I always wonder what I will do when my children are older? I need to make sure that the children are well and alive, have eaten and clothed, all of this rests on me with my extremely low paying work”.

Here is an example where a good mother is covering basic needs; she is not necessarily covering anything else as covering basic needs is not easily achievable despite the mother being an earner and carer. Once more, Nokubonga is aware of and upholds cultural expectations of her as a mother. An example of the basic expectations is that you teach your children how to speak to and address adults. Teaching in this case is largely in line with the saying, *“Awuvele ukhulume nabantu abadala angathi udilika esihlahleni.”* (an IsiZulu idiom, which in English translates to, “You do not just talk to adults as if you are falling off a tree.”). This is an expression which is basically intended to get children to be mindful of their language and tone

when addressing adults and when addressing not only adults but also people they encounter generally. The way you address people, your politeness or impoliteness, reflects how you have been raised and, more specifically, is a reflection of your mother's mothering ability. Pruning the child in such a manner is responsibility seen to rest not with both father and mother of the child, but solely the mother.

“My children need to be raised in a manner I know my immediate and extended family will approve of and community at large. For example, in the Zulu culture you do not speak or address elders in anyway, there is a manner to do this and you need to teach the children these dynamics otherwise it reflects on you –that you are bad mother”.

Herein, a key learning is that as a Zulu mother not only do you have to make sure the children survive through food and shelter (basic necessities) but you also have to transmit basic cultural codes or teachings about what it means to be a good Zulu daughter. Nokubonga said:

“There is a particular way in which a Zulu girl for instance is supposed to carry herself; I need to impart this to my daughter. Although I did not follow it and became a teen mother and have had three children without being married all with different men. This all speaks to your character as a Zulu woman and mother. I know I departed from my mother's teachings but I can say I intend to raise my daughter to do better than I did and hopefully she will learn from my mistakes”.

Nokubonga says she intends to do a better job at mothering, by instilling the cultural mores of what a Zulu girl is meant to be, do and not do, with her daughter. The way in which a child turns out in the Zulu culture seems to be something that rests on one parent, the mother. This is a very patriarchal and unfair approach, especially given the fact that in Nokubonga's case, her father was present, and to say the outcomes of the child rests on the mother only seems bigoted; it overlooks the impact the lack of a father's presence can have on a child as well as the outcome of a child. Given the absence of fathers, the degrees of responsibility by some mothers can be intensive. It is important to note that Nokubonga does not think she was a 'bad' or rebellious teenager, she feels she just made bad decisions and became a teenage mother. Nokubonga said:

“[T]he way my children turn out is on me and my mothering capabilities. But the community, my neighbours actually commend my mothering. Sometimes they pay visits to just encourage me to keep going and they tell me that they think I am a good mother. But then, I have always been a good person in the community I never

rebelled, you know that teenage phase? I did not have it. I was a very good child, unless you would call having children being a problematic child”.

Nokubonga understands that her actions brought her family into disrepute and she strayed from cultural expectations as *inkosazane* (the eldest daughter in her family) and her mothering has been shaped by cultural expectations (some of which she did not uphold).

When asked the questions, “What does motherhood mean to you? And what does being a Zulu mother mean to you?”, Busi’s response was one which was very general and did not have specificity in the ‘Zuluness’ of mothering. She said:

“There is nothing in particular that I can label as the one necessary part or aspect of a good mother. I think it is all important. Looking out for your children’s wellbeing, health and all those things you know. As for the Zulu bit, I understand your question, but I truly do not think that ethnicity has anything to with mothering or being a mother. Every mother wants the same for their child. For them to be their best selves and have amazing lives, I believe kids have 3 duties, to be young, get an education and have fun doing it”

However, on that evening of 1 September 2016, Busi sent a message via Whatsapp messenger of a piece of writing, a poem which she titled, “*Umama WomZulu*” (A Zulu mother). The poem describes her grasp of what a Zulu mother is and how this is lived and experienced by Zulu mothers. What was striking about this poem was Busi’s idealising of motherhood and mothering as set in a rural setting, and that the ideal Zulu mother, according to her, is a married mother. She does not live in a rural area but in a shack eMlazi and is a single mother. This can be understood in terms of how culture is idealised and shapes people’s understanding of roles and how those roles should be assumed. In this scenario, the role is being a mother. The poem is a contrast of her lived experience, although it shares her sentiments about mothering being a selfless act and paramount; the poem embodies rural nostalgia.

Umama womZulu

Kudingeka abe ngumama wabobonke abasemzini

Ngisho nosisi bakhe bsemzini, bayeka imisebenzi ababeyenza isizokwenziwa nguyena ngoba uzogana

Bonke bamushayela imithetho

Izinkuni uzitheza ehlathini kude
Izindlu zidinga yena uyazisinda azipende
Amanzi uwalanda emfuleni, athwale ekhanda

Izingane zakhe uyazinakekela ayikho ndaba ka-nanny
Izitolo zikude: uthwala ukudla ekhanda

Uyabekezela unothando, uyathanda nokusiza
Ubekezela nendlala ngoba nabayeni kabasebenzi noma abondli

Ukhumbule nesiZulu siyasho ukuthi umama inzala bantu, akayena umama wabantwana abazalayo okodwa isizwe sonke.

Ibhalwe ngu'Busi'

A Zulu Mother

She needs to be mother to everyone, her in-laws included

Her sisters' in-law, place bulk of household tasks on her

Everyone regulates her

She collects firewood from the forest afar
She replenishes the rondavaals, floors and paints the structure
She collects water from the afar river; on her head she places it

She takes good care of her children, there is no nanny talk
Shops are far, she carries groceries on her head

She is resilient, loving, she loves to help
She is resilient even of poverty, at times working in odds with unemployment of husband or simply lack of support from husband or father of her child.

Remember that even IsiZulu says; a mother births a nation, she is not only a mother the children she has given birth to but society at large.

By 'Busi'

7.6 *Ihlazo* – The shame

Kholiwe brought up a child she had outside of marriage; she says this is her biggest mistake. When she spoke about this experience, I could tell from her facial expression how deeply painful this was for her. There are existing cultural and societal expectations on young and unmarried women in the Zulu context. The presumption, culturally, has always been that if you are not married you have no business falling pregnant. You should not be having any sexual relations; culturally, “*uze uwe*” (you fall from virginity) when you are married. This traditionally was the only acceptable time to do this, because you were expected to “*ukwenza izinto zobukhosikazi*” (discharge your wifely duties). By having a child outside of marriage, Kholiwe feels she brought shame to her family, namely, her father (who was a priest and very traditional Zulu man). Based on her shortfalls, Kholiwe is strongly motivated to instil relevant cultural and religious values/principles in her children. She explained:

“Being a mother has taught me to be responsible, to be good with money and prioritising. Having a child out of marriage is a huge regret of mine, and that is what may have gone against my teaching with being a Zulu woman, because a Zulu woman respects culture and what is acceptable and unacceptable, like having a child out of marriage but I am a good mother and that is all that matters to me. I feel bad I let down my father, and my father was a priest. I let him down a lot, and I was the only girl. I try to raise my daughter to be proud of being a Zulu maiden and the role she will one day take as a mother”.

Nokubonga echoes Kholiwe, saying:

“... [T]he most difficult [thing] was to tell my father about my pregnancy because telling him meant admitting I had disgraced him as a Zulu daughter, the eldest daughter and eldest child. I still feel I failed my parents I mean what kind of example am I to my siblings who are meant to look up to me”.

At this moment it is fitting to introduce and explain Zulu laws regarding children born outside the perimeters of marriage. In the early Zulu society, virginity was regarded as the most important qualification for marriage. In traditional Zulu society a virgin was regarded as *intombi egcwele* (a full maiden/virgin) which earned her the esteem of her age group and community at large and enabled her on marriage to fetch full *ilobolo* value. The emphasis placed on virginity has led some writers to consider *ilobolo* as a means of protecting virginity

and preventing immorality in that every girl would desire to protect her virginity so that when she married her father could obtain full *ilobolo* for her. Despite the cogency of this, *ilobolo* cannot be regarded as the panacea for pre-marital sexual behaviour. The increase in seduction despite the continued popularity of *ilobolo* is evidence of this. Virginity before marriage today is waning, if not obsolete already.

7.7 *Inhlawulo* – Damages

Historical accounts state that *inhlawulo*, a much smaller amount than *ilobolo*, was given to a father by a man who had engaged in premarital sexual relations with the father's daughter. *Inhlawulo* was an apology to the father deflowering his daughter. However, as premarital childbirth became more common, *inhlawulo* came to be a payment of 'damages' when a man impregnated a woman outside the confines of marriage (as opposed to deflowering). As the larger male-male payment of *ilobolo* became detached from children (or women's reproductive capacity), this smaller male-male payment became more attached to children (Hunter, 2014:471). *Inhlawulo* usually entailed a single cow plus one or two goats. If seen through the prism of *ilobolo* and *inhlawulo*, children became less 'valued' in male-male exchanges over the first half of the twentieth century; in economic terms, they moved from the centre to the periphery of the domain of male headed houses (Dlamini, 1984:21). Damages include a cow for the impregnated woman's mother (*inkomo kanina*), a cow to cleanse the household (*inkomo yokugeza umuzi*; this cow is mainly to apologise to the head of the household – usually the father of the impregnated woman) and a cow or two goats to cleanse the girls in the family of the impregnated woman (*inkomo yokugeza amantombazane*; this is to protect and keep intact the reputation of girls who may be the impregnated woman's sisters or cousins).

It is key to note that in present day, the practice varies from family to family. Families may require remedies to be performed in a manner appeasing them; the performance of remedies is subjective, relative to the specificities required by families of the 'damaged' and/or impregnated female.

The experience of having a child outside of marriage at age 14 was traumatic for Bongi. She had to explain to her parents how she came to be pregnant outside of marriage as a teenager, because this was not how she was raised. Nevertheless, this taught Bongi much about womanhood, motherhood, mothering and the strength which is needed to accompany these. Bongi makes mention of how she has defied Zulu norms by having her first child as an

unmarried teenager and by having her second child as an unmarried woman. However, she was slightly redeemed by the father of her second child. (Her first child, whom she had as a 14-year-old, passed away; this child was not paid *inhlawulo* for.)

By paying *inhlawulo*, the father of her child showed that he respected culture and her parents, and observed a fundamental custom of remedying an improper situation. Bongzi explained:

“That is when I really learnt what it means to be a woman and a mother. Being a Zulu mother means just that being able to withstand trials. You need to be brave. Yes, I had my first child when I was a teenager and my second child without being married and many may say that defies Zulu norms about motherhood and marriage. The father of my child came to ukhlawula [pay damages], my family understood that mistakes happen. Although we are not married, I am very happy that he respected my father’s position enough to pay inhlawulo”.

Similarly, Unathi’s experience of becoming a young mother (21 years of age) was largely rectified in the eyes of her community and parents by her boyfriend and father of her child paying damages. She said:

“[Y]es, he did pay inhlawulo for the first child, not for the second. He said he just financially could not and my dad understood”.

Here, it is clear to see that the acknowledgement by Unathi’s partner of impregnating her, and thus the show of respect of culture and her father, made her father much more understanding to the situation. It would then appear that a fundamental aspect of acknowledging a mistake and stray from culture is to observe the custom of *inhlawulo*.

The road to motherhood for Sindy was not easy. It took a very long time for her to grapple with the thought of becoming a mother. She hid the pregnancy from her parents until she had delivered, and her boyfriend and along with his kin were the ones who broke the news to her family when they went to her parent’s home to pay damages (*inhlawulo*). *Inhlawulo*, as will be discussed later in this chapter, is a significant marker of respect to the female’s family and acknowledgement of cultural custom (i.e. the custom of not having a child outside of marriage). Because the father of her child and his family handled the news of her pregnancy with cultural precision by *ukubika isisu* (reporting the pregnancy) and paying the damages as outlined by her family, it pacified her parents and they were more understanding of the situation. This attributed to Sindy feeling a lighter weight in her entry to motherhood. She said:

“I was about to turn 20 when I had him, now you know our culture? I was so shocked. My parents expected more from me. I thought of doing abortion but I said no, I will be able to handle this and his father supported me so I went through with it. It was not easy and unacceptable with my parents. At home they were going to be very upset but I did not go home the whole year, like when it was holidays I would tell my mom I have work, I avoided going home. I was supposed to have my child on December 25 but it was postponed to 29 December and this is the time where everyone is home so I had to go. So, the baby daddy called my parents and went home for negotiations regarding damages and he paid inhlawulo.

“Then I went home when the damages were paid and my parents were more forgiving. I had my child at a hospital Empangeni. The baby daddy paying damages helped because my mother would have chased me away if it was otherwise. She always told me to not play with opportunity, that a child is the last thing that should be on my mind”.

Sindy understood the possible wrath she would have faced from her mother if *imigomo* (procedures) to rectify the mistake was not followed, because falling pregnant outside of marriage in the Zulu context shames the family generally. Hence *inkomo yokugeza umuzi, unina namantombazane* (the cows to cleanse the household, the mother and female kin), i.e. premarital pregnancy is seen as a direct offense to the mother of the impregnated woman because the blame usually falls on the mother, and is marked as a failure in her parenting-mothering (of course this not necessarily the case). It also brings shame to the household and is a direct offence to the head of the household.

It is clear too that the contemporary socio-cultural etiquette of the Zulu society continues to be constructed around the woman, for instance through customs such as the payment of *inhlawulo* and *ilobolo*, even though this is not widely practised. Paying *inhlawulo* is not necessarily observed by all men who impregnate. Regret of having a child outside of marriage is similarly shared by Kholiwe, and this was worsened by the father of her child not paying damages. For Kholiwe pregnancy outside of marriage was a huge mistake, especially in light of what is or was expected of her as a young Zulu woman. Kholiwe says that, by having a child outside of marriage, she brought shame to her family, namely her father, as is usually perceived in the Zulu culture when one has a child outside of marriage. Based on her shortfalls, Kholiwe is strongly motivated to instil relevant cultural and religious values/principles in her children. She explained:

“How can a person like me with an understanding of culture and religion .. having a father who is a priest, stray so much from what is culturally acceptable? I know I am not the only person to make such a mistake, but I think about it still”.

The father of her first child did not pay *inhlawulo*, but the father of her second child did and for Kholiwe, it did not resolve anything. The shame was just too great for her.

The remedy of *inhlawulo* depicts how *inhlawulo* is recognised culturally by older generations as an important feature of acknowledging the breaking of the custom of not having children outside of marriage. It is clear to see that the acknowledgement by the partner of impregnating a woman displays a respect of culture and of the pregnant woman’s father (the head of her household), who is usually the person the damage is paid to. In this, the father who has impregnated shows that following *imigomo* (procedure) to rectify the offence of premarital pregnancy remedied the situation.

The fathers of the children in the cases where *inhlawulo* has not been paid have often exempted themselves not only from paying *inhlawulo* but also from the responsibilities of being a father. And perhaps this speaks to the ties and relations which a custom like *inhlawulo* tries to usher in to ensure assumption of responsibility by the father of the child and the respective paternal kin. It allows for the meeting of the two families, and responsibilities from both families are stipulated and assumed.

This section emphasises how paying *inhlawulo* is not necessarily observed by all men and this often serves as a major point of contestation. A generational shift, which was a solemn finding in this study, is a shift between generations in their approach to culture, namely, the cultural custom of *inhlawulo*.

This generational shift thus becomes a source of contestation when the payment of *inhlawulo* is not observed. This has caused strain between the families (maternal and paternal kin of the child). This point of contestation speaks to a societal generation shift in time and society, where customs continue to exist in a society that does not necessarily adhere to them.

7.8 Zulu identity and motherhood

Ethnic Zulu identity was not foregrounded in the lived experiences of the participants. In fact, the idea of Zulu motherhood was only addressed by the participants as the researcher tried to understand the specificity of motherhood in KwaZulu-Natal. Given the fact that all the mothers

were Zulu speaking, I asked the question: What does being a Zulu mother mean to you? Through this question I was merely trying to understand what would differentiate being a mother in KwaZulu-Natal (in a township, informal settlement or rural area) as opposed to, for example, Cape Town, Western Cape, which was the city where I conducted my pilot study. I found many premises as to how women construct ideas about motherhood and mothering were for the most part similar in the two provinces but, in the KwaZulu-Natal sample of the study, the participants did conceive of cultural protrusions of Zulu based ideas pertaining to motherhood and mothering. This cultural influence is something I did not identify with the sample from my pilot study in Cape Town where all the participants were Xhosa.

It is necessary that I explain that what I identified from the interviews is awareness of Zulu culture and/or customs, not Zulu nationalism. For instance, in recounting her life, no participant referred to the Zulu history, symbolised by early Zulu kings, who are quite dominant in Zulu history, such as Shaka, Dingane and Cetshwayo (Campbell, Mare and Walker, 1995:293). These kings were men of mythical bravery and wisdom and were also capable of remarkable anger and destruction.

Rudwick (2004) conducted a study in Umlazi Township (a study site in this research) to understand how adolescents in post-apartheid South Africa make sense of the Zulu language and culture. What Rudwick (2004:164) found is that participants referred to elements such as *amadlozi* [ancestors], *inhlonipho* [respect], *ilobola* [bride price] and ceremonies where cows, goats or chickens are slaughtered as customs which constitute Zuluness. Participants in my study who explained being Zulu as being founded on the belief in ancestors and customs were Gabisile and Thembi. The strength of this empirical evidence is that it helps researchers and especially this study to demystify the concepts of motherhood and the exogenous phenomena that motherhood interacts with. The problem, however, is that factors such as urbanisation and third wave feminism have revolutionised how South African communities view cultures. Those who are educated about cultural prejudices against women may discard some practices, and therefore this study seeks to update whether the cultural practices as described in literature are still dominating discourses about motherhood in Zulu culture.

Gabisile said:

“Being a mother is a calling, being a Zulu mother is a calling. I was chosen by the fore fathers of this home to come and join and grow this family”.

Here, the belief in ancestors and their part in ushering her into motherhood in the home she got married into is significant and meaningful. I will take this moment to explain that usually when you marry into a Zulu family, you need to have a traditional wedding, *umchanguzo*. *Umchanguzo* is more important than the white wedding because this is the wedding the ancestors are said to recognise. The traditional wedding is so important that, without it, a wife cannot be buried at the home of her in-laws as is traditionally done. She would have to be buried by her maiden family. This is because during *umchanguzo* the bride will give gifts to her in-laws, including those who have passed on (ancestors). This is done because it is believed that ancestors are living and spiritually present. Another custom which is pertinent during *umchanguzo* is the smearing of *inyongo*. *Inyongo* is the gall bladder of the cow which is slaughtered the day or night before or on the day of the ceremony, and it is smeared on the bride's toes and thumbs, and, in some cases, she will be given a drop of *inyongo* on her tongue. The performance of these customs grants the bride recognition by the ancestors of the family she marries into.

Thembi was born a coloured female and was raised in a coloured family but, through marriage (Zulu customs followed) and speaking Zulu, she identifies herself as a Zulu woman. Thembi explained:

"I am not a Zulu by birth but I have lived with this family for 5 years and I would say I am one, I speak the language and I do all the Zulu womanly things expected of me as a fiancé living with my mother-in-law and sister-in-law, I was paid lobolo for, so I would say that I am a Zulu mother".

It is important to note that this does not insinuate that Zulu identity is dead, but rather indicates that fragments of Zulu identity exist in language, customs, concepts and in merely having a homestead in a rural area in KwaZulu-Natal.

A few mothers expressed that they were of the view that my question pertaining to the Zuluness of how they experience motherhood and mothering was ineffective because, for them, motherhood and mothering are beyond the parameters of ethnicity and rather speak to responsibility and the duty to care. Thandi explained this well by saying:

"I do not think being a mother is ethnic specific, I think that a Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho mother would tell you the same thing. A good mother puts caring and responsibility at the centre of mothering. But, maybe it is because I live in a township and if I lived in the rural area it would be a different case. Being a Zulu mother may be more

pronounced and what that means may be more pronounced, for me it is just what I explained to you”.

Another mother who held similar sentiments that motherhood goes beyond ethnic borders is Simile. She expressed this as:

“I am a mother and I am a father, it is a tough job. All is on me. I would describe motherhood as difficult and painful at times. I would say to you being a mother is hard. It is not okay, the only thing fulfilling about being a mother is the beautiful life you have given birth to but it is not easy. On my side, I would just say it is difficult, I would not even narrow it to being Zulu, and motherhood is just difficult, on my side at least”.

It is clear to see here that for Simile ethnicity and motherhood are in a vacuum, for her motherhood is influenced more by struggles and challenges experienced and lived.

Similar sentiments were held by Lale, as for Lale ethnicity had no context when it comes to motherhood. She said:

“Ethnicity doesn’t impact mothering. It is difficult to pin down being a mother to ethnicity. It is work that goes beyond ethnicity”.

I think it is important to note that culture provides guidelines which individuals in a society usually conform to, and adhere to (Swartz, 1998). There are aspects of motherhood and mothering which transcend culture, but it cannot be overlooked that there are aspects of life which are in fact determined by culture, especially if you live in a community which is not necessarily diverse and has expected cultural norms.

This is depicted through Sensile’s understanding of *umama* (a mother). Given that she grew up in a rural area and still lives there with family, Sensile’s understanding of *umama* is nuanced with historical Zulu understandings of what *umama* is.

For Sensile, the term *umama* speaks to marriage, and the assumption of wifely duties. Sensile’s understanding of the term *umama* was not just curtailed to being a mother, for instance, to birthing a child and caring for them. It encompasses aspects of being a wife, running a household, and having a husband and in-laws to answer to. And in this understanding of the term *umama*, she in fact speaks to the direct definition of the term in Zulu culture. Traditionally and/or historically, the term was specifically conferred to a woman who was married and a mother (*inkosikazi*). She said:

“I do not know how to answer this question, perhaps because I am not married. So, I think in terms of being Zulu being umama encompasses being a wife and mother, you know that, right? I can only speak for one aspect of that, having children. I can speak to my children, get them to understand the difference between wrong and right. I have girls so if you do not want them to stray you need to keep them close, make sure they can see you as a friend so that when they get to teenage years, they do not become difficult and hard to handle. But for now, as I am not married ‘angazi ukuthi komama kuqhubekani’ [I am not married, so I do not know what goes on there].

However, thinking that this term should only apply to women who are both wives and mothers would not consider the different ways in which motherhood is constituted in current times. Clearly, there is a definite set of ideas the participants associate with cultural expectations and motherhood.

7.9 Expectations from the community: *Uzungezwe isixuku sofakazi yonke indawo lapho ukhona* [You are surrounded by a group of witnesses everywhere you are]

Collins, contending that motherhood can never be considered without analysing the context in which it takes place, wrote, “Motherhood occurs in specific historical situations framed by interlocking structures of race, class and gender” (1994:45). Indeed, it would be virtually impossible to look at motherhood and mothering absent from the environment, setting, space and culture in which motherhood in this study occurs, in KwaZulu-Natal. The impact of society on how women understand the discourse of motherhood, and practice mothering, is significant. Here, I will consider the impact of the community on the mothers in this study. Umlazi and Sundumbili are townships; Macambini and KwaNdaya are rural areas. These areas are Zulu speaking communities, with heavy Zulu cultural norms influencing them.

Zinhle places the responsibility of how children turn out on mothers and on how well they discharge their roles as mothers, because the community is always watching and forming opinions. Thus, there is pressure to mother in such a manner that best ensures that the child is a pliable member of society. She said:

“You know I do not know whether the community speaks about me and the kind of mother I am. What I do know is that I am doing my best. There is a Zulu saying which goes: uzungezwe isixuku sofakazi yonke indawo lapho ukhona [You are surrounded by a group of witnesses everywhere you are]. Therefore, if benalo

iqiniso bangasho ukuthi ngizidela konke njengomama” [if they are honest, they will tell you that I have sacrificed my all as a mother].

Similarly, Angel’s understanding of motherhood is modelled against society’s expectations of what a mother is. For example, she is concerned about what conclusions people from her community arrive at by looking at how her children are presented. She tries to go against the idea of the mother who is well-kempt but whose children are unkempt. She emulates the selfless mother, whose prioritisation of her children trumps all.

“It means something grand, absolutely grand, especially living in a time where many young women who are mothers do not execute their role as they should. I mean you see them sometimes where I work, they look perfect, great clothes and make up, but their children do not look great at all. The children are not clean or nourished properly. They do not have time to be patient and nurture their children as they should”.

Lale described being a ‘poster child’ in her community, and how heavily affected she was by falling pregnant at 23 years of age, out of wedlock. It was a great disappointment for her and her mother because it was not a planned pregnancy. The perception of her community meant a lot to her, so she felt like she let her community down when she became pregnant. Some of the turmoil, though, came from her knowing that her life goals would have to come to a halt because she was now a mother and could not be daring with decisions pertaining to her career. She described the mounting pressure, which sunk her straight into depression to the extent that she contemplated suicide:

“[T]here was a point where I was very stressed. It was when I found out I was pregnant. I was actually considering suicide, to be honest with you. It was quiet a big deal that even my maternal family got involved, everyone was calling trying to reassure me that everything would sort itself out and that having a child is not the end of the world. On my part I was just stressed because I had just completed tertiary and then something like this happened. I had so many plans and of course having a child changes what you can do because you know have someone’s life you are accountable for”.

Lale went further to explain that,

“Even before I had a child I was always that child that was held in high regard in the community. I was one of the good girls. I did well in school, went to church, went to University and graduated. And now they know I have a baby, they know that my mother has raised my brother and I well. So I know they expect that my

child will be raised well because I come from a good background. It is my responsibility to raise my child the correct way. I know the community is expecting that”.

Herein, it is clear to see that, because of societal pressure Lale faces from her community, she was under pressure when she fell pregnant, as she knew members of the community would judge her for falling pregnant outside of marriage, especially given that she had been a good example for other girls in her age group within the community. And now that she is a mother, she faces pressure from her community to be a good mother, modelled on how she and her brother were raised.

This supports a claim made by another participant, Lungile, who spoke about the expectations placed on mothers in a Zulu community. She said:

“I think the Zulu community can be very very judgemental and for some reason everyone feels and thinks they have a right to coach you about what to be like if a mother. My mother has a lot of input on what I am supposed to do and not do as a mother”.

A participant who sheds light succinctly on what is expected of a mother in community is Thandi. She said:

“I feel like the Zulu culture puts a lot of pressure on woman, and being a Zulu mother is not different. Firstly, there is pressure on you to be a boy. Every family usually wants a boy, to be able to carry the family name. Not that it is a travesty if you are not a boy. Secondly, there is pressure on you to carry yourself well and be a model daughter, no pregnancies out of wedlock. You need to be a good and obedient daughter. You must cook and clean and do all the chores of the home without a complaint or feeling that you need assistance. Actually, I would say that the way Zulu girls are brought up is for them to be good wives. It is as if our worth is in the cows we are able to bring home when we are married off one day. We perpetuate this with our children, I see it in myself. The expectations I have on my two girls are the same ones my mother had on me. That pressure to be perfect, it is all about the eyes of the community, never about the individual but you kind of do things to please other people, to have them approve of you”.

In light of these societal expectations from Zulu communities pertaining to motherhood, I think it becomes important to understand that mothering is not a static concept where all mothers mother in a similar way. (Hence, a girl child should turn out a particular way, with a particular set of competencies.) There needs to be a call instead for dynamic social constructions around

nurturing and caring (Forcey, 1994; Arendall, 2000). Frizelle and Hayes (1999) discussed how society expects mothers to live up to various ideals; mothers themselves participate in striving for these ideals and consequently reinforce them, as explained by Thandi in the above quotation. These expectations placed on mothers by society and in their communities are a result of a complex mix which is psychological, social and historical.

It is important to understand that, regarding societal expectations in relation to motherhood and mothering, culture sets an outline, which individuals within that community inherit, on how to behave and view the world (Swartz, 1998). This is well captured by Lungile in explicating that:

“Zulu motherhood is packed with the eyes of the people, and what they deem is right or not in terms of your behaviour, often people feel they have a right to tell people who are mothers what is appropriate and not appropriate. And of course, you feel the need to live up to it because this is a community and community values and spirit is important especially in a rural setting you know what I mean?”

This does not diminish the fact that there are aspects of motherhood which transcend culture, but other aspects which are dominant in discourse and practice are strongly hinged on culture, for instance, what age to fall pregnant, or the regulations around having a child outside of marriage.

This speaks to the ways in which Zulu motherhood has been constructed and perceived. The practices and the choices which Zulu women or mothers make in relation to childcare have been centred on the notions of culture and tradition, which continue to affect choices made by most Zulu women or mothers in providing care for their children. In this, women lose social power, and the perpetuation of gender role ideology in the traditional context of patriarchy lead them to accept their unequal position in their households. Social reproduction of roles in this context continues, and ‘women’s work’ or ‘women’s responsibility’ keep women at the periphery.

7.10 *Ukuzisola kwamama* – Maternal guilt

Maternal guilt varies within different social and cultural contexts; in the context of this study it was across the board strongly connected to the mothers feeling guilty because as mothers they are not as present as they would like to be, due to balancing work and motherhood. Another source of guilt stemmed from not being able to provide financially for their children as ideally as they would like to. In looking at maternal guilt, it then became important to

understand the emotional state of well-being of the mothers; these sections explore mothers who experience maternal guilt and those who do not. Further, the sections explore mothers who are well supported emotionally and those who do not have emotional support – this is useful in correlating whether support or the lack of support impacts the emotional state of wellbeing of the mothers.

7.11 Feeling Guilty

Balancing domestic and workplace roles within the constraints of a specific cultural milieu (Arendell, 2000) often causes stress and feelings of guilt (Suls, Alliger, Learner & Wan, 1991; Schindler Zimmerman, Weiland Bowling & Moffat McBride, 2001). It has been suggested that the guilt mothers experience because of their participation in the workplace is inevitable in the society that surrounds them (Holcomb, 1998). The low-income working mother often finds herself in a realm where she balances an extremely demanding job and effective motherhood raising a child (Poduval & Poduval, 2009:63). The limitation of the literature, however, is that it is Euro-centric in the manner with which it analyses mothers who work. Scholars who conceptualise the family unit as involving two adult guardians miss the understanding that nuclear African families have morphed to include distant kin and neighbours and have enlisted them as caregivers. This is different from Western cultures that believe that, when a guardian is absent, a trained professional must stand in as a caregiver. The absence of the latter from their children would provoke feelings of guilt while the former may be secure due to the flexibility of the dynamics of African nuclear families. I would argue that women instead feel guilt they accept from cynical members of their social circles who hold bigoted views about women who work. However, the existing literature insists that mothers often find themselves having feelings of guilt and feeling like they are not giving their roles as mothers their full and undivided attention because of the dual roles they assume as workers and mothers. Some mothers work long hours, meaning that the time spent with their children is limited or non-existent. As explained by Zinhle:

“[W]hen I am working night shift I miss out on a good month out of my children’s lives. Now times that by the number of years I have been working at that company. 6 years, so I have basically missed out on about 36 months of my children’s lives. For me that is the one thing that hurts the most. I miss out on saying bye to them in the morning, assisting them with homework the little things most people take for granted. The things my job does not allow me to do because of time”.

There is a significant amount of guilt about not being a present mother due to working, that was commonly shared amongst the participants. In this extract Zinhle captures the extent of guilt she harbours, measured in the amount of time she has missed. She feels absent as a mother and not present to give the affection and care she would like to give to her children. This speaks to the context many mothers in low-income employment find themselves in, where they need to work for sustenance and livelihood, which comes at a cost for them as mothers. Unfortunately, the nature of work they do and the time which their work demands, does not allow for time with their children, as Zinhle reiterated:

“It is difficult being a working mother, especially with the night shift story, I miss out on my children’s most amazing moments because of work. I do not think it is fair but what can I do?”

Similarly, Angel captures her experience of maternal guilt:

“Every mother feels they never have enough time with their child, you never feel you have enough time. The guilt I feel I have is the guilt of having a child, even more two children because I do not have enough money to give them the life I had always dreamed of giving my children. But it does not matter now, what I do now is just do my best to give them what I can afford. Sometimes I wish I had enough time to play with my four-year-old by the time I get home I am finished I do not have time to spend time with him, check his school stuff. I am just too tired and because I know that my cousin and sister look after him I just relax a little. I do my best to hang out with them during the weekend”.

It is important to note that for Angel having a job means she can support her children financially to a certain degree, but the pay she receives also does not allow for her to give the ideal lives she would like to give to her children. So, although the job takes her away from spending time with her children it also does not pay her the kind of money she needs to give her children this ideal life (whatever this means for her). It is a tough predicament she finds herself in, along with many low-income working mothers broadly. This speaks to the social and economic climate of our country where people are engaged in precarious employment for minimum wage due to their educational and training backgrounds. But it is not all mothers who have this maternal guilt; for one participant particularly, going to work is a form of a relief or break for her. It gives her a sense of self; this can be attributed to the fact that Thembi is a social mother, as she points out,

“I think that maybe it is because I am not his real mother”.

Thembi further explained:

“I feel very bad saying this especially because I am not supposed to, but I am going to be clean honest with you, no. I don’t really get that. I miss him during the day but coming to work for me is a real breather you know, a break. And boring as it is or as busy as it sometimes gets it give me something to wake and do and for that I am glad. My work gives me a personality, I don’t know if that makes sense? But you know being a working mother is not easy, sometimes I go to work and I am not really happy, because he is up by the time I leave and we will still be like playing and bonding but then I have to go”.

Herein, Thembi has moments where she wishes she had more time to spend with her social child but is overall happy to have a job that allows her to have individuality. This illustrates that it would not be correct to generalise that all low-income employed mothers feel a sense of maternal guilt from balancing two very demanding roles – employment and mothering. Elvin-Novak and Thomsson (2001) highlighted the importance for employed mothers to achieve happiness through individual self-fulfilment. However, there were mothers who explained not feeling maternal guilt not because work provided them with an outlet to catch a break but because working was a means to ensure provision and security for their children.

A sentiment which was commonly shared amongst the women was the fact that employment was a means to an end, to be able to afford their children comfortable lives not marred by struggling and poverty. For instance, Thandi shared that she does not feel maternal guilt; instead the guilt she feels rests in that she has a minimal source of income, no form of economic support from her husband from whom she is separated. This means that she battles to make ends meet for herself and children, as she explained:

“I do not feel guilty about working though, I feel guilty that we struggle, that I am not giving them a better life, this is not how I imagined life for my children”.

Maternal guilt was generally covered by the fact that most of the mothers believe that working is the only way to provide a better life for their children. Unathi said:

“No, I do not feel maternal guilt. I must work so we can have a good life so they can have the things needed. So, no, I do not feel bad because I do this for them”.

Herein, being an employed mother, regardless of the demands of work and of working low-income work, which often does not have benefits and comprises long working days given the issue of space and the commutes which mothers need to make, is merely collateral damage to

ensure lives out of the bracket of poverty for the mothers and their children. Similarly, Sindy supported this, explaining that:

“I work hard so that my child and I can have a good life, I do not feel any guilt because everything I do is for my child. Sometimes, I worry he feels I don’t spend enough time with him. But I need to work and study so he has better”.

The toughness of being a working mother and the guilt felt due to not being constantly present was a chorus that was echoed by almost all of the mothers. Being a live-in domestic worker means that Sensile spends more time with the family she works for than her own; she spends more time and knows more about the children she looks after at her house of employment than her own. This highlights key points from the book *Mother to Mother* by Sindisiwe Magona (1998) who tackled the guilt experienced by mothers who are domestic workers, namely being present for a child that is not yours, nursing and mothering that child, who ultimately then benefits from having two mothers. Although this is a means to be a present and providing mother to your own children, ultimately it is your own children who suffer the most from this structure (of having a mother who is not present because she needs to work). Sensile captures this dimension saying:

“[I]t is hard to be a working mother, making sure you have a job, you have money and also making sure that your duty as a mother is not falling short. I have guilt especially about my four-year-old because I have not had a lot of time with him, sometimes he gets confused and calls my mother ‘ma’, I do not correct him because I realise that he is young and spends more time with my mother than me, something like that happening is only natural. I look after the children of the people I work for but I cannot look after my own, like get them ready for school and walk them to school. It makes me sad, truly working for a family and living with an Indian family is hard at times, especially when I just miss my children and mother”.

Understandably, money is of paramount importance in the work the mothers do. What trumps most things is the need to have an income, in these circumstances a low income that keeps the household afloat. The need for more money could tacitly or overtly be understood from the interviews and interactions with the mothers. As shared by Nokubonga:

“I never have enough money”,

Busi said:

“I work twice a week so I have time. What I am looking for is a full time job. I need more money. I currently barely make ends meet. So I need a job that can at least allow me to be comfortable. I do not want to live R250 to R250, I want to be comfortable Not earning R500 per week but maybe like R6000 per month”.

This mother has a clear understanding of the fact that the guaranteed way to ensure that she can afford a better life for herself and children is by earning better. However, despite all her efforts to find employment which could possibly pay her better, she has not been able to find such employment. This has meant that she continues to exist in a way of living week to week on a meagre wage.

Time is always strained for low-income employed mothers; this is due to the fact that the mothers work far from home, and they have to commute considerable distances each working day between home and work. Generally, the mothers seem to have sacrificed some of their mothering in order to be workers and provide for their children. This can be seen and understood when Nikiwe says:

“I do not get to spend much time with him but I have to work, it’s just something that has to be done. So, I do not really have a choice because every Friday I must buy food and buy him clothes sometimes as well you see. So although I am not a present mother in the conventional way, I am able to provide a quality of life”.

Time being a scarce resource was also explained by Simile:

“I am always pressed for time always on the go trying to make some money, I even have to work on the Sunday, like doing hair, that cuts time I plan to spend with my daughter. I always want for us to be together on Sundays, for us to go to church, come back home and have a nice lunch. My life is for my child, I live for her, I guess being a mother is service. It is all just about serving”.

Constantly being pressed for time has meant that mothers need to take steps to ensure that they do spend time with their children when time is available. Bonggi explained that she always ensures that the weekend is dedicated to spending time with her daughter; she uses this as time to bond with her child. She said:

“I do this for her. I work for her, so she can have a good life. So although my day is busy and is taken up by work and I am tired when I get home, I have weekends that I spend with her. We go to Mangethe to see my parents, we do a lot together”.

Herein, work is once again explained and understood as a means to an end; although work is a hinderance to her mothering, Bongi understands she needs the income to be able to provide a satisfactory life for her child.

Gabisile explained how work consumes time a mother would otherwise spend with her child; unfortunately, unlike Bongi she works on a Saturday which means that Sunday is the only full day she has to spend with her children. Gabisile is a sales representative for a furniture store, and, in retail, Saturday is a very important day as most people are not at work so they have time to do shopping and in this way it is easy for her to reach people and market to them (she gets commission on sales she makes). She said:

“[H]er teacher [points at daughter] spends more time with her than I do, the lady next door who looks after my little one spends more time with her than I do. To make things worse I work on Saturdays, so the only day they have me really is Sunday. This is an example of how work consumes your time and life, I would never put money over family but that is what I am finding myself having to do with my work, to a certain degree, have it take place over my family”.

Buhle echoed Gabisile in discussing aspects of her child’s life she misses out on because she is at work; she also works on weekends which means that she seldom sees her child. She explained:

“I am never the one who receives my daughter from school. I am at work, working for us. There are things I miss out on”.

Herein, the need to work and make an income resurfaces; the mothers do not miss chunks out of their children’s lives out of disinterest but rather from the pressing need to make money, because money is a key way to ensure the well-being of their children. For a mother like Lungile, this guilt is relieved because during the day when she is at work, her child is looked after by her pensioner parents. She said:

“I am glad that she is left with my parents, she is cared for by her grandparents so that alleviates guilt that I would feel if maybe I left her at crèche every day. But its home with her family”.

A main deduction from the mothers when it comes to maternal guilt is that, yes, they feel largely guilty that their work tends to take centre stage in their lives, meaning that their children do not necessarily receive the attention, love and care the mothers would ideally like to provide

for their children due to the demands of their work. However, they work in order to provide better lives for their children; they work in order to have the resources to meet the needs and sometimes the wants of their children. They work in order to keep their households afloat, and to be able to provide a better life for their children than they had. Every mother in the study expressed this desire; whether it was being met or not, this was the overall desire shared by the mothers. Thus, although most of the mothers explained not being able to be as devoted in their roles as mothers as they would like to be, the work is a means to an end.

Contextualising her maternal guilt, Bongi said:

“What makes me sad is when I am back from work and the nanny brings her home. She just gets tired and sleeps, which sucks because I still want to chat to her, find out about her day and pick up some things she has learnt and her development.”

From Bongi’s experience it is clear to see that she feels guilt as a mother for time she spends apart from her daughter, and feels guilt for the milestones she misses in her daughter’s life – being a working mother. But the main point is that, like the other mothers in the study, the work is merely a way to make ends meet in order to provide for her.

Bongi tries to make up for the lost time during weekends, when she is not at work, by engaging in activities that allow them to spend mother and daughter time together. In a similar fashion, weekends or more specifically Sundays (when she is free as, being a hairstylist, she sometimes has to work on Sundays when her clients are free) are sentimental for Simile because this is the day of the week she can largely guarantee that she can carve out time for her and her daughter. In explaining the guilt she feels, Simile said:

“I do my best with the time I have with her because things are extremely difficult for me being a single mother. Being both mommy and daddy to my poor child whose father chooses not to be in her life. I try, but I feel like I am never there, because of work”.

Similarly, Phumela, is a mother who feels guilty about being a working mother. When asked if she feels maternal guilt, Phumela said:

“I do but I am very happy that I spend the morning with him I take him to crèche and I spend the afternoon with him, I fetch him from crèche. I spend time with him in the evening, when we get home I make him some bread and then I cook, during that time he sits on the couch watching tv with my cousin who is first to get home from school at like 3.30. They sit together, I cook, it is a good environment, but, Fridays when my mother is home are the best. My mother is a domestic worker at a suburb in Durban, Glenwood Park. She comes home on weekends at the end of

the month, when she is over, it's the best. The home is just warm, we are all so happy."

It is clear to see that Phumela, tries to make the most of the time that she does spend with the child; she maximises the time she is preparing her child for school, and making him food, and the family time they spend together when Phumela's mother (her child's grandmother) is home for the weekend. For Phumela, having to be a working mother is a setback to her role as a mother; she sees it as something that does not allow her to mother as she would like to, and consequently it makes her feel guilty about not being a present mother. She said:

"Being a mother is not easy in that it takes priority over everything in your life, so even when you are working you are thinking about the people you have given life, so as important as work is, it almost seems like a hindrance to my role as a mother."

Senzile is another mother who expressed concerns about not being a present mother, to the extent that her youngest child (who is four years old) lives with her mother because Senzile works as a live-in domestic worker at a town which is far from her home in the rural area of Macambini. She said:

"[I]t is hard to be a working mother, making sure you have a job, you have money and also making sure that your duty as a mother is not falling short. I have guilt especially about my four-year-old because I have not had a lot of time with him, sometimes he gets confused and calls my mother 'ma', I do not correct him because I realise that he is young and spends more time with my mother than me".

Her child calling her mother 'ma' is something which Senzile has had to rationalise and make peace with, because she spends the majority of her time at the home she works at.

Another mother who has had to rationalise not being present for her child is Nikiwe; working at a factory which is in a town neighbouring the rural settlement means that Nikiwe needs to leave home at the crack of dawn, and does not have a chance to spend as much time with her child as she would like to. Once more, working in order to make ends meet, work as a means to an end, can be understood from Nikiwe's experience of maternal guilt when she says:

"I get my child and I ready to leave the home by 5.30 am, it does not make me happy that we part so early. We are away from each other for about 9-10 hours a day. But what I have been consistently trying to say to you, is that it is not a choice. I am trying to nurse the circumstances life has thrown at me. I am trying to ensure we survive, we live decently".

Mothers in low-income settings are not spoiled for choice; they have to make survival decisions to ensure the livelihoods of their families.

It is important to note that this form of maternal guilt is not experienced by all the mothers in this study. Anele, for instance, felt that her balance between working and being a mother is one which works well for her and that she has a job which enables her to sufficiently be present. She said:

“I always make time for my child so that never happens”.

This is significantly different in comparison to the maternal guilt the mothers discussed above experience. Anele also said:

“No, not that much. My job allows for me to mother and work at the same time. My employers are supportive as well, sometimes when my child is not well I can take her to work with me. I mean, being a domestic worker is a job no one wants but I am here. And I just make the most of it and live to the best of my ability. I am lucky that I have supportive employers, father of the children also plays his part so it works.”

Herein, Anele’s lived experience is a quite different from the other participants, most probably because of the kind of support she receives from her employers and the support she receives from the father of her child, financially, or when he visits them.

The main guilt Anele expressed stems from there being two children she does not live with, mainly due to lack of space in her shack and the fact that she could not afford to have all three of her children living in her shack. The strategy she has adopted is for her eldest child to live with her family in rural KwaZulu-Natal (he is 17 years old), her second child lives with his paternal kin (he is 10 years old) and her youngest child lives with her (she is 4 years old). These strategies, however, leave Anele feeling guilty and absent from the children she does not live with. Anele said:

“The only thing I can say is that I miss my children, the two who do not live with me. I feel bad about that a lot but I hope that they understand that working here and earning a small salary I cannot move to a big place and have them stay with me. I live in the shack I live in because it is what I can afford. I cannot give them all the life I want to give them and the life I believe they deserve. I hope that they can understand. I truly hope they do. So that is the guilt I have. But I am suffering, I do not have money that is enough for them all but I would rather not have new shoes and make sure they have things. I put them at the centre of everything.

Actually, that is the core of motherhood, being so selfless that you can go without so that they have. My heart is always with my children, praying for them and just wanting them to be happy and grow and be better in life”.

As guilty as Anele feels about the strategy she has had to use, for her it is all a means to an end to ensure that hopefully a day will time where she will make enough money to provide a life for her children she desires to be able to give to them, and lives in hope that her children (the two who do not live with her), can have the understanding as to why it is they do not live with her. A similar strategy was adopted by Busi to make ends meet; she has four children in total but her two eldest children live with their paternal kin. Busi explained that this is not because she does not want to live with her two eldest children, but that she simply could not afford to:

“[I]t is a way of life for me to separate my children from each other and from me. But I could not afford to have them with me in my shack, not even because of space. I cannot afford to, so I hope they understand they are better where they are. I used to feel bad, not anymore, it is for their good”.

Other mothers who expressed not having maternal guilt were Thandi and Unathi. Thandi is a traditional healer who works from home; she seldom works away from home, only when she needs to go to heal someone from their home because they are too ill to come to her, or the healing procedure needs to be performed at the patient’s home. Thandi’s guilt is instead rooted in that, as she is a low-income earner and a single mother who is the sole provider for her four children, they are always economically strained in the household. She said:

“I usually do not [have maternal guilt], I mean I sometimes miss them when I am away from them for work like when I have to sleep over at the patient’s home to perform healing practices which need to be done within the home. I do not feel guilty about working though, I feel guilty that we struggle, that I am not giving them a better life, this is not how I imagined life for my children”.

Unathi explained that she does not have maternal guilt because she works in order to be able to provide for her children. Thus, she feels no guilt for the time she misses in their lives. Similarly, to the other mothers in this study, work for Unathi is merely a means to an end, and if it means that she is not present in the lives of her children, then so be it; at least she would have been able to ensure a steady income for their home, regardless of how low it may be. She said:

“No, I do not feel maternal guilt. I must work so we can have a good life so they can have the things needed. So, no, I do not feel bad because I do this for them”.

This perspective provides a lens to understand that, based on how much of themselves they give to their children, some mothers do not necessarily feel maternal guilt because they already give so much of themselves to their children and to running their households. Further, this could be attributed to mothers who have good economic, social and emotional support.

However, as presented earlier in the section mothers some find themselves in a realm where they balance extremely demanding jobs and effective motherhood raising children (Poduval & Poduval, 2009:63). Mothers in some instances find themselves having feelings of guilt, feeling like they are not giving their roles as mothers their full and undivided attention. Some mothers work long hours (also commute long distances). All of this adds to painting the picture of maternal guilt felt by most working mothers.

7.12 Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings in this chapter have hinged on how mothers experience and construct the discourse of motherhood. Because this research was carried out in KwaZulu-Natal, the specificity of KwaZulu-Natal is important because this speaks to the impact and implications of culture broadly, and of cultural customs and expectations, on the understanding of motherhood.

The chapter then focused on how the strain of being a low-income employed mother is a catalyst for the maternal guilt which is often experienced by low-income mothers, due to balancing being mothers and labour force participants. The common thread amongst the mothers was how they are stretched thin emotionally, financially and physically, all of which affect their ability to perform motherhood to the degree they would like to be able to, albeit differently explained and expressed by the mothers.

This necessitates the consideration of intersectionality and black feminist theory, which allow us to understand how race, class and sexuality intersect to disadvantage and overlook women of colour who have to endure so much because of the social structures which disadvantage them and, in some cases and as reflected in this study, the conditions of structural violence which have placed black women at the bottom socio-economically.

As presented in the chapter, society clearly has a set of expectations as to what motherhood is and how it should take form. However, in the context of a deeply unequal society (and world), the weight of these expectations is far heavier for women in low-income settings, who are

already stretched thin economically, emotionally, socially and physically. This chapter has shown that the ideal of Zulu motherhood, and of motherhood generally, is problematic when unsupported, because it is ultimately setting up women for failure. Realising this ideal is specifically difficult for low income working mothers, based on all the struggles they face as explored in previous chapters 4, 5 and 6.

Chapter 8: Discussion and Conclusion

Mothers are nearly always the gatekeepers for the provision of care for children. As women join the labour force and kinship relations and household dynamics change, so the responsibility for childcare has become more and more difficult for many women. This is especially true for low-income employed women. This study has grappled with matters most pertinent and relevant to low-income employed mothers in providing childcare. The study has explored the childcare strategies used by low-income employed mothers to provide care for their preschool children – between the ages 0-4 – whilst they are at work. This study examined the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers to understand their childcare strategies. It has attempted to show vividly the difficulties faced by low-income employed mothers and to explore how the state might design childcare policy to improve the grim conditions of low-income employed mothers, which ultimately have ramifications for children.

Through four individual but related chapters this thesis has explored how we can make sense of the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers. Whilst there has been much quantitative research on who provides the care for children, there has not been much research into the lived experiences of those who provide care for children, who most often are women and mothers. The study used the analysis of low-income employed mothers to illuminate their choices about childcare. The importance of this research lies in understanding these choices and what informs them.

The research was rooted in understanding choices regarding childcare made by employed mothers with low-incomes, who perform their caring obligations whilst engaged in low-income employment which stretches them thin, financially, physically, mentally and emotionally. The participants in the case studies were employed, inter alia, as domestic workers, factory workers, sales representatives, hairdressers and administrators. There was also a self-employed woman working as a traditional healer.

All the case studies were conducted in the same geographical area of KwaZulu-Natal province (two urban and two rural sites). The study has engaged with the constraints within which low-income employed women make choices about caring for their children using the market, kin and state.

Chapter 2 provided the context for the study sites in this research, which were situated in KwaZulu-Natal, in two townships, Umlazi and Sundumbili, and two rural areas, Macambini

and KwaNdaya. The socio-political and economic framings of chapter 2 contextualised and located this study. This gave context to the situations which low-income employed mothers find themselves in; the context of the areas speaks to their race, class and gender. Chapter 2 also reflected on colonisation and the land question (specifically in the rural area), apartheid (which shapes the kind of work the mothers find themselves in) and the fragmentation of the family. Chapters 2 and 3 provided a look at the townships the women live in, and at how the design of townships during apartheid, for black people to reside in, put black people in conditions of structural violence which till today can be seen in factors such as socio-economic constraints, crime and violence. The background of these areas paints a picture of difficulties faced by these women, who are navigating childcare in areas marked by underservicing and unemployment.

The study was framed by two primary social and economic changes: the feminisation of the workforce and the changing character of family and kinship. Chapter 2 provided the context of geographical sites and discussing the general contexts of social and economic change then becomes necessary. As the number of women entering the workforce increases, this has meant the feminisation of the workforce; low-income employed mothers perform their roles as a part of the workforce and mothers are placed under an enormous amount of stress and pressure (due to strenuous working and personal circumstances). Low-income employed mothers must balance paid and unpaid work, and this study placed these practices within households where gender roles and gender hierarchy continue to prevail. The study engaged with how low-income employed mothers traverse being there for their children, providing for and guiding their children, whilst working.

The family in South Africa has been described as disintegrating and “in a state of crisis” (Holborn & Eddy, 2011:1). South Africa has the highest estimated proportion of men absent from their families in sub-Saharan Africa (Posel & Devey, 2006). In chapters 5 and 6, this thesis reviewed and revisited existing literature on the family in South Africa, where the main point was the disintegration of the family unit. This manuscript has addressed the presence, responsibility and roles of fathers (social or biological), and that of paternal kin, in providing childcare. The role of paternal kin had traditionally been pertinent in the life of a child (specifically in KwaZulu-Natal, the study site), and this was based on patrilineal belonging. Given the extremely high and alarming rates of father absence in South Africa, the thesis has assessed the extent of involvement of fathers and paternal kin in childcare. This thesis has built on this literature by presenting the current existing fractures in the family unit but has gone

beyond this literature by providing a plethora of reasons for this change, such as the changing households in South Africa (multigenerational households and female headed households) as depicted by the four core finding chapters, namely chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Further, motherhood as a discourse was engaged with because the study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, where there is a strong relatedness to culture, and where mothers discharge their mothering roles within the realm of cultural and societal expectations and perceptions. This means that the mothers in this study are trying to be particular kinds of mothers, having engaged with the balance between paid and unpaid work that the mothers must do (mothering practices); the thesis made sense of Zulu ideals about motherhood, and how these have shaped and informed the experiences of the mothers.

Chapter 4 was based on research conducted whilst spending time with research participants. I spent time with the research participants, asking them to walk me through their typical day. Some participants asked me to interview them at their places of work (during their lunch breaks). This afforded me the opportunity to observe their working conditions, to commute myself across the space they commute and to picture better how the mothers experience commuting such distances and working a tiresome job, all whilst having to raise a child and organise childcare during the time that the mother is at work, and the work that goes into childcare when the mother is back from work. Here, I was able to fully grasp work that low-income employed mothers perform. I interviewed some of the mothers in their homes, whilst they were washing, cooking or feeding their children; I saw the paid, unpaid and the cognitive labour done by the mothers as discussed in chapter 4. The chapter showed the meaning of being *umama osebenzayo* [a working mother]. Chapter 4 showed the dire positions that low-income employed mothers find themselves in due to low-income employment which limits them considerably in making the kind of childcare choices they would ideally like to make to ensure the 'ideal' care for their children; it showed the implications this may have on the mothers, when mothers are stretched thin emotionally, financially, physically and socio-economically.

This chapter affirmed the existing South African literature, including seminal texts on women and work by Lawson (1985) and Cock (1980), in capturing the strife faced by working women in South Africa. Despite being written over 30 years ago, the texts by Lawson and Cock still speak to the predicament of low-income employed women in South Africa, as depicted in this chapter. Chapter 4 went beyond these seminal texts by focussing on women as mothers and examining the implications of low-income work for mothers and subsequently for children.

Recent literature in South Africa explores who provides care for children (Hatch & Posel, 2018), showing that the care and financial responsibility falls on women, but it does this from a quantitative perspective. My study makes an original contribution in that it captures the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers and interrogates what childcare means to women who need to navigate stringent work conditions in their roles as mothers. The chapter also went further, showing that working mothers perform kinds of work that have been neglected in the existing literature: the work involved in chasing money and involvement (of fathers and paternal kin) and the work of chasing fathers for financial support for childcare.

In chapter 5, the low-income employed mothers narrated their experiences of involvement in child care by fathers and paternal kin. This is specifically important in the context of KwaZulu-Natal because, in the Zulu culture, paternal kin is where a child's true 'belonging' is: patrilineal belonging is traditionally seen as the most important form of belonging. This is secured through the payment of *inhlawulo* (acknowledging paternity) and the custom of *imbeleko* (a ceremony where a child is introduced to paternal ancestors). Fathers are also present through their financial provision, which has traditionally been the role and place of fathers (in the Zulu context). However, when we consider the new forms of fathering being debated, one may argue that financial provision alone is not enough.

This study (from the narratives of the mothers interviewed) suggested that fathers (and paternal kin) play a much smaller role in childcare than mothers (and maternal kin). There is a need for engaged fathering, that sees fathers doing equally the amount of work that mothers do, and perhaps only then would mothers not feel stretched thin by the balance of paid work, unpaid work and cognitive labour.

In chapter 6, I engaged with the care strategies mothers develop to provide childcare, often a combination of the family, market and state support. In doing so, it was clear to see that mothers make childcare arrangements based on their kind of employment, cost and accessibility. Mothers understand the importance of quality in childcare and realise the inadequacies of the childcare services available to them. They realise that, if they made more money, they would be able to provide their children with the childcare they deem as ideal. Low-income employed mothers living in low-income communities often must find and make do with livelihood activities at the cost of providing the ideal childcare they would like to provide for their young children.

Chapter 7 tackled the discourse of motherhood. Using KwaZulu-Natal as a case study made it necessary to understand what being a mother means in the Zulu context, as all the participants identified as Zulu, and it was necessary to understand the Zulu motherhood ideal. Zulu motherhood has often been thought of as patriarchal and oppressive in nature towards Zulu mothers (Hassim, 1993); however, this thesis showed that the institution of Zulu motherhood is not the problem, but that when the institution is not supported (by the state and/or family and kin), then low-income employed mothers cannot live up to this ideal, not because they do not want to, but because they face difficult socio-economic circumstances which do not allow them to realise this ideal.

8.1 Shifts: generational and cultural shifts to childcare

More findings this study has shown is the generational and cultural shifts towards childcare in South Africa, KwaZulu-Natal. The low-income employed mothers in this study do most of the childcare work, and in this they dismantle the myth that is grandmothers or older women who usually provide childcare in low-income settings (Kimuna & Makiwane, 2007). South Africa's social history attests to the central role that has been played by grandparents in looking after their grandchildren, orphaned or not (Bray, 2003; Sidloyi, 2016). The grandparents providing childcare are, primarily, grandmothers. Although grandmothers have cared for their grandchildren throughout history, there has been an increase in the phenomenon of grandmothers as caregivers over the past 20 years (plus) in South Africa (Lekalakala-Mokgele, 2011). It is important to note that this study is not putting forward the notion that grandmothers or older women are not doing carework (childcare provision); this study expands our understanding of how women negotiate with maternal and paternal grandmothers in arranging care.

8.1.1 Older women as carers

This study followed 20 mothers, 19 of whom were living with their young children, caring for them and providing for them. This thesis showed women making the choices to be the main carers, incurring costs related to childcare (for instance, cost to childcare facilities and transport services).

South African women usually take the primary responsibility for childrearing, household reproduction, childcare arrangements and often financial support for the household, without

significant assistance from the state, workplace or men. As a result, their ability to participate fully in the economy and society outside the home can be restricted (Randriamaro, 2013). This situation is the result of the sexual division of labour (unequal gender roles and responsibilities) in our society that places the responsibility for children on women. This division is supported ideologically through the notion of the public/private dichotomy. Women's unpaid work in the household is seen as part of the private realm which provides the state with its justification for failing to intervene to improve their position. The situation is made worse by the disproportionate burden of poverty carried by most South African women.

Mothers in rural and urban KwaZulu-Natal make childcare choices based on what is most viable for them in terms of cost and time, as survival strategies, and in doing so dispel the existing myth of grandmothers doing all the childcare work. A lesson to be learnt from these mothers is their dedication to being present mothers, not deterred from mothering by factors such as poor childcare services, and perhaps opting to send their children to be looked after by grandmothers. Consensus amongst these mothers was that, although they wanted to be hands-on mothers, they have the option of having their mothers care for their children; this would mean that their children do not live with them and they are not doing day-to-day mothering.

Anthropologist Kristen Hawkes put forth the "grandmother hypothesis" that says adults live longer because there is an imperative for grandmothers to support their grandchildren (Hawkes & Coxworth, 2010); however, a strong finding in this study is a deviation from this thought: the work of raising children as subsidised by grandmothers is not necessarily true.

A clear challenge to the "grandmother hypothesis" was presented in this thesis, as was the shift in intergenerational relationships that fostered the challenge. White (2013: 216) put forward that, from a public perspective, "today's social problems are the problems of generations". Seeing the world in generational terms is a way both to capture social change and to highlight differences. For instance, the payment of *inhlawulo* is a cultural custom which is complex, contested and evolving in response to changes in broader society.

8.1.2 Culture

A generational shift, which was a firm finding in this study, is the shift amongst generations in relation to culture. Namely, observing the cultural custom of *inhlawulo* if a child is conceived and born out of marriage. Whilst older generations hold true to this custom, younger generations often do not. This generational shift thus becomes a source of contestation when

the payment of *inhlawulo* is not observed. In the cases where *inhlawulo* was not paid, this was a major source of contestation. Here, reasons for the breakdown in the relationship between father, paternal kin and maternal kin of the child/ren were depicted, which points to the small (if any) role played by fathers and paternal kin in childcare. And this role speaks to ownership of responsibilities that a custom such as *inhlawulo* attempted to foster and maintain. This point of contestation speaks to a societal generational shift and a shift in the context of time and society, that a cultural custom may continue to exist within.

This research has shown that cultural expression is not just about dress; this topic has deeper sociological and political issues and elements within it. It is these that must be worked through by diverse communities. The solutions to some of these issues lies in a middle ground between the traditional and contemporary as both have some positive and negative elements in them.

In this context, the idea of childcare as an option or choice is problematic because the mothers are merely trying to make things work with what is available and affordable to them. This can be deduced from the fact that most of the mothers expressed discontent with the childcare provision for their children, but understood that the arrangement was the most affordable, convenient or accessible in order to make their roles as mothers and employees work. Employed mothers must navigate their way through the landscape of familial, market and state childcare. They appear to be making choices. However, they often seem to have no choice: given their limited financial resources, the limited options available through either state or market, and the complications of relying on kin, working mothers have no choice but to put together a package of arrangements that they know is far from ideal.

This study showed that employed women tend to be engaged in low earning, insecure forms of employment, often without or with few benefits. Unemployed women must look for work opportunities while caring for children or must give up these opportunities when they cannot make satisfactory childcare arrangements. The study showed women carry the primary responsibility for childrearing, household reproduction, childcare arrangements and financial support for the household, often without significant assistance from the state, the workplace or kin.

As discussed in chapter 6, there has been a significant change in the welfare state in South Africa; it has expanded considerably and has become inclusive of all races (Seekings & Moore, 2013; Button, Moore & Seekings, 2018). However, this thesis showed what transpires when welfare provision does not account for the change in kinship dynamics and changing

households; this is South Africa's welfare blind spot, and the weight of childcare is borne by women.

The study has shown how support from different sources is experienced and how it has changed or changes over time. Chapter 6 was centred on depicting that, to ensure their children are in care during the time they are work, women often need to piece together whatever childcare arrangements are affordable and available to them. The chapter has shown the difficult socio-economic circumstances of low-income employed mothers, the consequent childcare choices mothers make about care provision, whether these can be considered as choices, and the predicaments, challenges and constraints faced by the women.

8.2 Women as carers

Carol Gilligan (1982) claimed that women and girls tend use a certain form of ethical reasoning; Gilligan terms this the “ethics of care”. On the other hand, she presents men and boys as using a different “ethics of justice”. Gilligan was of the view that, without women, care would fall away (Gilligan, 1982, 1987). It can be argued that this different ethical approach is due to women’s caring susceptibilities through the sexual division of labour (Ruddick, 1989). However, Tronto (1993) disputes Gilligan; for Tronto, women do not have a monopoly of the ethics of care. Tronto puts forward that morality is not gendered, and we need to move away from this form of thinking.

Concurring with Tronto, this study showed that we need to stop considering the morality of women, and that we need to stop thinking that care should be carried exclusively by women. What is needed is an ethic of care which is inclusive of values that have traditionally only been associated with women. Although their arguments are presented differently, at their centre, is the call to eliminate sexual division of labour so that both men and women could become equally involved in caring work.

However, the sexual division of labour in the household is highly resistant to change, and an unequal burden is placed on women (Bakker, 1993). Blackden and Wodon (2006:3) explain that the disproportionate cost borne by women in reproductive work in households, not only limits the amount of time women can put into their economic activities but also curbs them spatially and culturally, in activities that are well-suited to their domestic obligations. The number of women entering the labour force in the past 80 years has significantly increased; however, research reflects that men have not increased the time they spend in domestic labour by a corresponding amount (Bittman, 1999; Bianchi et al., 2000; Baxter, 2002). As a result, as was reflected in the four core chapters of this thesis, namely chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, women (and their children) are the casualties of the crisis of social reproduction, as women are faced with paid work, unpaid work, cognitive labour and a form of work not captured in literature, i.e. the work of chasing money and childrearing involvement from fathers of children, as well as from paternal kin.

8.3 Childcare policy in South Africa: What can be learnt from other countries

The findings in this thesis showed how mothers are this casualty of social reproduction. The mothers explained that the task of working and mothering was challenging and isolating, but also a fulfilling duty. All the mothers interviewed expressed that they found extreme difficulty, demands and challenges in their roles as mothers and workers. Most of the mothers interviewed drew on the market (crèche) or nannies/child-minders for childcare provision during the time they were at work. The conditions of the strategies were studied and found to be a little less than satisfactory; the mothers all held the same stance but found the strategy as the only one viable, accessible and affordable. The early childhood development centres were often not near the mothers and the mothers could not always make use of kin because their kin either worked or was not close.

This study has shown that employed mothers endure enormous pressure trying to fulfil their mothering roles under extremely demanding and stressful conditions and trying to uphold societal ideals and expectations of mothering. The mothers explained the importance of the role of motherhood and how important it is to them; one of the mothers explained the pinnacle of this role by saying:

“I feel like even if I was not married, having that title of being a mother would be enough for me”.

It is clear to see that motherhood is extremely dear to this mother and plays an enormous part of her identity, and this was supported by most mothers in this study. Again, as highlighted in chapter 7, it is not the institution of motherhood which is problematic (as existing literature has often portrayed the institution as patriarchal and confining mothers); it is when the institution is not supported that ultimately mothers are being set up for failure in realising these motherhood ideals. Another mother explained how the ‘double burden’ of work for her as a mother compromises the ideal mother she would like to be:

“[I]t is not easy being a working mother, I wish I had stayed with him until he was older and can talk and say he is hungry or wants to go to the toilet. When he can say when he is hungry, you give the simple instructions of the attention the child needs but the ladies at crèche are not attending to his needs as I would. So I constantly have that guilt”.

Low-income employed mothers are under an immense amount of pressure and all participants brought this to the surface – stress and the burden of working, caring and adhering to societal expectations. The mothers expressed the pressure of having to live up to these societal expectations due to the fear of being labelled ‘bad mothers’ and to their overall duty as wives and mothers.

As expressively explained by one of the low-income employed mothers:

“Sometimes I really just feel myself sinking, I am tired all the time. It is tiring to give so much of yourself, to my husband, children and work. It is a lot. I don’t know how much more to emphasize that”.

There are two kinds of preschool systems in South Africa. One is funded by the government and regulated provincially, namely the early childhood development programme which was established to protect children’s rights and to develop their full emotional, social and physical potential. The early childhood development programme utilises different learning processes, enabling children to learn about their environment and themselves. The other preschool system is independent and is run by private bodies.

Both government and private programs consist of two main components, i.e. for children in the age group of 0-4 years and for Grade R (reception year), which is for the age group 5-6 years. This grade focuses on mathematics, life skills, technology, arts and culture. The crèches strive to develop the children in four distinct ways, namely spiritually, emotionally, academically and physically. The crèches visited in this study were two independent crèches which were established by women trying to make a living for themselves and to provide a childcare service which was needed in their communities.

The conditions at crèche were explained by the mothers as being below satisfactory due to their low-income work necessitating reasonably priced care – it was the only option they had. The mothers also understand that the crèches function under the conditions they do because of the large number of children in the crèche and the lack of resources. Four crèche owners were interviewed to get an understanding of this childcare arrangement, and what was uncovered were the pressing challenges an owner faces due to a large crèche size and to parents not paying crèche fees in time, which cripples the functioning of the crèche. Due to being independent with no state support, the lack of payment of fees means the crèche cannot pay wages to the crèche facilitators or purchase enough groceries for breakfast and lunch served at the crèche.

Thus, it is clear to see that although the conditions indeed are not the best, the crèches are faced with a plethora of difficulties which result in the service provided being unsatisfactory.

8.3.1 Social services

It was found that Social Services are less than helpful when they pay the crèche a visit:

“Social services do come and they are usually just very critical and harsh and tell us we are not doing our jobs. That all we want to do is just spend the money received as payment for fees. A very unfair statement because we work so hard, they do not even offer workshops to try equip us with skills although we are all very keen and willing to learn. We want to learn and equip ourselves with skills as to how to deal with different issues that we encounter. We do not receive any help or support from the social services.” – Masibusiswe Care Centre principal.

This depicts Social Services’ inability to provide any viable and useful solutions to problems encountered by the crèche or providing social services such as teaching aids or skills for the crèche facilitators. Furthermore, the registration of the crèches is a tedious and bureaucratic process; this is well captured by the crèche principal of Masimanyane Care Centre, who explained the length of time it took to have her crèche registered and the challenges she faced:

“Finally, I am officially registered and that took a four years. There is a lot of red tape and things can get hard.”

The crèche principals have had to establish their own forums as spaces where they meet and discuss challenges they face and attempt to work out and share solutions to these challenges. The relationship between the crèche and Social Services appears to be strained, which is problematic because the disjuncture between the crèches and Social Services is not ideal for the desired outcome of well supported and effective and functioning care facilities for children.

This study provided insight to the constraints faced by working mothers and how these influence the choice of childcare arrangements they make use of. Perceptions and practices about mothering and motherhood shared by the women interviewed provided an understanding of what it means to be a working mother earning a low income and receiving state support in the form of a cash transfer which is meagre and not having access to state services for childcare – which are in proximity and of a good standard. The crèche visits assisted in putting into context the complaints voiced by the mothers interviewed, namely the crèches are overcrowded and working with scant resources.

Perhaps South Africa can draw lessons from Sweden's childcare arrangements, as Sweden has been hailed for its quality and effective childcare arrangement programmes. The Nordic model may not be perfect but Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden) are consistently faring among the best internationally on indicators of children's wellbeing, and perhaps there are some lessons South Africa can learn from them while being cautiously aware of the extremely different and incomparable contexts.

Sweden has led the way internationally in investing in quality, accessible and affordable childcare. Combining this with generous parental leave which replaced maternity leave as early as 1974 – the Swedish model facilitates women's participation in the workforce as much as it aims to improve men's involvement in child-rearing (the earner-carer model) (Devine & Kilkelly, 2011). Further, Sweden has generous parental leave viewed as a complement and expansion of the childcare system, with both aimed at helping mothers and fathers between balance of work and family – paid and unpaid work (Devine and Kilkelly, 2011).

This would be beneficial in South Africa to allow mothers an opportunity to provide the ideal kind of care they would like to provide for their infants and toddlers, as consistently explained by mothers in chapters 4 and 6, and in this chapter 8, that they are not necessarily complacent about the care arrangements they piece together for their children, but it is what is most affordable and convenient in terms of access. This would also allow for the achievement of economic security. Legislation on childcare in Sweden specifies requirements about the quality of care provided. Employees are so well-trained or so experienced that they can satisfy the children's needs as regards both care and stimulating pedagogical activities (Devine & Kilkelly, 2011). All of which would be useful for a developing country such as South Africa, especially looking at the feelings expressed by mothers about market and state childcare services. But I am not overlooking the shortfalls of considering Scandinavia as an example to a developing country still trying to redress 360 plus years of colonisation and apartheid.

Although Esping-Andersen (1990) made some attempts to be inclusive of caring, traditionally research focused on welfare regimes has been accused of being gender blind, thus overlooking and marginalising women and women's work (Hassim, 2005). A strong claim has been that mainstream welfare state theoretical models are ill-equipped to accommodate a gender dimension. Therefore, it would be fitting to suggest that alternative perspectives are needed to identify variables that account for differing perceptions and treatments of gender differences for policy purposes. In the early 1990s, interpretations of the welfare state concentrated on

market state relations, sometimes alluding to the family's role in social provision and welfare needs of households and women's 'market status' vis-à-vis paid work, without incorporating them methodologically in the model (Gardiner, 1997:3). But it is important to note that there was a shift in this, for instance, scholars like Esping-Andersen took on board some of the criticisms made by feminist scholars. Esping-Andersen (1999) emphasises strongly the importance of family. But prior to this, social policy frameworks had inadequately accommodated sex equity policies due to their gender-blindness and the narrow basis from which women's work was conceptualised.

Emphasising this, Gordon (1989) discussed how there is a double standard of welfare provision for men and women. One source of this differential treatment is our gender system, including norms that women, especially mothers, should be primarily domestic and supported by men. The failure of several decades of 'workforce' programs can only be explained in terms of fundamental ambivalence on the part of legislators. The lack of gender analysis has also hidden the fact that even identical welfare would have different meanings and consequences for men and women, especially mothers, who already do most of the parenting and housework labour. Esping-Andersen's welfare state typology is also critiqued for its inability to fit the context of the Global South.

However, looking to Scandinavia and its success in welfare provision (childcare in this context) would be valuable and useful in South Africa because the approach situates welfare states within a welfare mix: where the government intersects with the markets and families to produce and distribute welfare, which can be likened to South Africa.

I suggest that South African welfare policies can look to Scandinavia for attaining successful welfare outcomes, human security, and the well-being of low-income employed mothers and the children in their care. South Africa resonates with the welfare regime typology because it straddles the Scandinavian redistributive model, attested to by the country's provision of bundles of services like the social wage (exemplified by the various state subsidies and universal access to certain service by the poor) and the Anglo-Saxon liberal approach, which focuses on targeting services to the poor sections of the country and makes use of means-tests (as in the case of some of the social grants) (Noyoo, 2015). This would allow an understanding and analysis of the duality of South Africa's welfare.

8.4 What South Africa needs

The South Africa's childcare is focused on cash transfers as opposed to service provision. As depicted in chapter 6, many caregivers make use of the market as a strategy for care provision and they enrol their children in crèches using their child support grants.

There is a need to enhance the existing policies the state has directed towards childcare. Existing childcare policy assists to a certain extent by providing some support to low-income mothers. In looking at such provisions, the state also needs to be cognitive of the change in family or kin relations, for instance, fathers and paternal kin are not as proactive as they have traditionally and historically been (and are culturally expected to be). Household dynamics have changed significantly, with a rise in multigenerational and female headed households as chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7 have emphasised. There is clear shift which needs to be realised, and the dwindling of the family as the primary port for childcare must be appreciated.

8.4.1 The implications: Can the South African state handle it?

Although it is very easy to point out what South Africa needs and where it can look to amend its policies, it is also very important to consider what the implications of such an approach towards childcare would be. It is important to ask key questions: What would this cost? Does South Africa have the capacity to organise such a form of childcare provision? Can South Africa handle such an extensive approach towards childcare? Given that the South African state often battles to convert public expenditure into high quality public services, pitfalls to avoid can be drawn from a few examples, for instance health care, education and housing, where the state has promised provision of these under the socio-economic rights in the constitution but has poorly delivered.

Issues surrounding healthcare in South Africa are vast, hence, the push to establish the National Health Insurance which “seeks to realise universal health coverage for all South Africans” (South African Government, 2019). Following the end of apartheid in 1994, the ANC government placed education at the centre of its plans to build a non-racial and more equitable society; however, the 2010s saw a wave of student protests voicing demands for decolonised and affordable education (Hunter, 2019). South Africa faces immense problems in its education sector. For instance, in the World Economic Forum 2016-17 Global Competitiveness Report, South Africa's primary education system was rated 126th out of 138 countries and South Africa's higher education and training ranked 134th (Mbiza, 2018).

Still highlighting areas the South African state is faced with rectifying, housing remains an area of contention in South Africa, as South Africa's post-apartheid constitution emphasised the right of everyone to adequate housing. This has been reaffirmed in a judgement by the Constitutional Court in *Government of the Republic of South Africa v Grootboom*, 2000, but the supply of houses has not been able to keep up with the increase in the demand for housing in urban parts of the country (Osman, 2019). Herein, attention to childcare services and provision beyond the cash transfer of the Child Support Grant seems to be at the bottom of the priority list in terms of receiving attention from the state.

8.5 Mothers need to work – they need to be supported

Women need to work, they have no option, if they did not work their families (children) would starve (Lawson, 1985:83), and there is a growing number of black women becoming heads of their households and sole earners (as discussed in chapter 4). This is because of a variety of reasons such as that in rural areas large number of men are migrant workers. These migrants may stop sending money to their families, so women are forced to go to work to support households and may be forced to take bad jobs. Although black women are now able to enter into the labour force beyond domestic work, the legacy remains of the Nationalist Government which came into power in 1948 in South Africa and which had an onslaught against black women, passing one law after another to keep women out of the towns and from working.

I will intentionally borrow two points from Lawson's (1985:140-141) recommendations made over 30 years ago, in order to stress how far we have come and how far we have not come as a country in terms of prioritising employed women's needs.

Firstly, employers should appreciate that women do a double shift – at home and at work (a triple shift in fact, when considering the cognitive labour that goes into the management of households and childcare). Herein, women are continually torn and balancing their private and public lives, between family and employer.

Secondly, quality childcare preschools or nurseries are needed, to ensure quality care for children. Yes, South Africa does have the Early Childhood Development programme; however, as deduced from the interviews in this study, their quality is questionable and they are not always free, as there is a portion of payment made. Employers and the government should accept collective responsibility for providing facilities for childcare.

Low-income employed mothers need reliable childcare provision, where they can leave their children before going to work and collect them even if they come back after hours, as was the case with the women interviewed in the study. Having visited the crèches and Early Childhood Development centres utilised by the mothers, I observed the quality of the services provided is questionable but is reliable, consistent and convenient for the mothers involved. Most of the mothers interviewed use a mix between family, state and the market. It is important to understand these mixes and why it is that these mixes need to be made for low-income employed mothers to be able to balance their employment and mothering roles.

Low-income employed mothers experience socio-economic hardships regardless of whether they are unemployed or in low-skilled and poorly paid employment (Ntshongwana, 2010). Thus, although state support has been instrumental in having an impact on lifting many households out of poverty (primarily through the provision of grants, such as the Child Support Grant), there is still a significant absence of adequate resources. This is primarily due to the welfare policies, directed towards women and children and towards the alleviation of poverty, dominantly reproducing social conditions that disadvantage women and keep women at the periphery socially and economically. The gender dimension in poverty in South Africa has low-income employed mothers at a disadvantage as they try to balance the tension between a mother's unpaid care responsibilities and paid work. The study has shown the work low-income employed mothers do (paid and unpaid) and how they balance this work with the responsibility to care and as providers. What this study reflects is the cost of care, when low-income employed mothers are not supported (by family or the state, and the expense of the market if a mother wants quality care).

Many societal, economic and political hurdles in South Africa are borne of the history of the country. The historical background of South Africa created a system where black families had to provide care for one another's children; this system has been in decline. Kin does not hold a primary role for childcare as it once did, women are increasingly making use of the market for childcare (crèches or child-minders). It was necessary to understand the care strategies utilised by low-income working mothers. This research has captured how low-income mothers, working within the perimeters of the disadvantages of the past, provide care for their children while participating in the labour force.

The thesis has also attempted to make sense of policy that tries to pin down and regulate a system of care, thus operating against the negotiation of care (i.e. against understanding care

as shared and not neat to categorise). As explained by Manderson and Block (2016:212), “[b]oth families and states take for granted that people who are sick, dying, frail, ageing and disabled will be cared for primarily within the safety net that the kinship system constitutes”. The same assumption applies to how childcare has been understood by the South African state. Current policy neglects to consider: the absence of choice (money allows some choice); the fluidity of family (changes in kin relations-spatial dispersion); the fact that there is not one caregiver; that providers and caregivers are most often women; and the change of household dynamics – families are increasingly becoming female headed and multigenerational.

In this thesis I have drawn on the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers to show that they cannot exercise much choice in determining how to provide care for their preschool children. Institutional options relating to childcare through the market and state are constrained by the mothers’ inability to pay for better and ideal childcare services, and by their lack of time and money to travel to better options. Family or kin as a childcare option is constrained by kin being inconsistent and often wanting payment for providing childcare. Mothers also have their own expectations and understandings of the kinds of mothers they would ideally like to be. The result is that low-income employed mothers are often on their own, putting together a combination of childcare arrangements that is very far from their ideal.

Low-income employed mothers make childcare arrangements based on a variety of hindering factors such include, shortage of money, changing nature of kin support and barriers in the community (such as the limited availability of social and community services). The lack of adequate state and kin support make many of universal difficulties about childcare particularly onerous for already disadvantaged women. I highlight that these are difficulties facing low-income employed mothers, due to the gendered nature of childcare, where women are often the main figures taking responsibility for childcare. This thesis adds to literature in that it uses the lived experiences of employed mothers to show that neither the state nor the market nor kin provide a source of social and economic security for low-income employed mothers and their children.

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Appendix A: INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Understanding how low-income employed mothers negotiate work and family life and experience childcare in rural and urban KwaZulu-Natal.

Purpose of Study:

You are asked to participate in a study of family relationships, work life and being a low-income employed mother in Kwa-Zulu Natal. The research is particularly keen to find out how mothers organise and manage the care for their children. The research is interested in finding out what role family, the state and other caregivers play in caring for children. It seeks to understand how low-income earning mothers experience motherhood and mothering whilst traversing this role with low-income employment.

The research is being undertaken as part of a PhD study that seeks to understand low-income working mothers and childcare state policy.

Procedure and duration

You are being asked to participate in in-depth interviews which will be carried out in two occasions. The dates will be discussed and decided based on what works best for you.

Storing of Data

The interview will be recorded using a recording device. The interview will then be transcribed, please note that your name and any other information which identifies you will not be included on the transcript. Your identity will be confidential to me as the researcher.

Voluntary participation

Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to discontinue participation at any time of the research. Further, you can choose to not answer questions.

Consent Form

I volunteer to participate in a research project conducted by Nonzuzo Mbokazi from the University of Cape Town. I understand that the project is designed to gather information about the lived experiences of low-income employed mothers caring for children between the ages 0-4.

1. My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time.

2. I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.

3. Participation involves being interviewed by a researcher for a PhD study from the University of Cape Town. The interview will last approximately 60 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue comprise of the interview. If I do not want to be audio recorded, I will not be able to participate in the study.

4. I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.

7. I have read and understand the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

8. I have been given a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Signature Date

Researcher's Signature Date

Appendix B: Interview Schedule: Pilot Study- Khayelitsha, Site C

Background

- Can you tell me a bit about yourself, what work you do, where you're from, where you live?

Can you describe concretely what you do day in and day out at work, what you enjoy at work and what you don't like at work?

- Who you live with? What are the living arrangements at home?
- What about your own family background? Brothers/sisters/parents?
- Local or Not/ if no, can you tell me a bit about when you moved here?

Childcare Practicalities

- Can you tell me a bit about your child
- Who looks after your child most of the time?
- Weekdays/ Evenings/Mornings /Weekends/Holidays
- Travelling/ Sleeping in carer's house/ Logistical Arrangements (*getting to and from childcare provider*)
- Changes over time in childcare arrangements?
- Can you tell me more about what happened last time you had to call upon someone to mind your child? (who was it, what happened, how often does it happen etc)

Childcare Facility (Granny/Crèche/Nanny/Aunty)

- How did you decide on this form of childcare?
- Can you tell me how it unfolded?
- Did you have any doubts about it?
- Did you consider any other options?

How satisfied are you with your arrangement?

- Why? How have your feelings changed over time? How is it difficult?
- In your opinion, how does it compare to other options that might be available to you?
- What aspects of the arrangement would you like to change?

Work

- Can you tell me a bit about your everyday life at the moment?
- What is a typical week like for you? So, for example this week

- How much maternity leave did you have? What did you do?
- Would you have preferred more? What would have been the ideal? Why?
- What would you have done differently?
- How did you find going back to work?
- How supportive is/was your workplace?
- Have you had to leave work early to care for your child? If so, how did your work respond?
- Has your attitude to work shifted at all? If so, how so?

Work / Family Balance

- What kind of thoughts do you have about combining work and family life?
- How has that changed from the past?
- How are domestic tasks arranged? How do you manage the household?
- Cooking/cleaning/Shopping/washing
- Are you happy with this?
- What sort of resources do you need to improve this?

Relationships

- How have your family been involved? How has that been? How have your relationships with you parents/siblings changed?
- How do you feel the relationship with your friends has been affected? What are your thoughts on it?
- How do you feel your relationship with the baby has developed?
- Where do you look for support? Can you tell me about the last time you got support? (financial, childcare, housing, emotional)

Partner and Parenting

- Can you tell me a little bit about yourself and the father of the child? How you met and got together? What was the relationship like?

How much did you talk with your partner about becoming a parent?

OR

If they were not together ask: how did the father of the child react when you told him the news

- What kind of things did you talk about?
- Have you always wanted to have a family?
- When did you first discuss it with your partner?

Views and Opinions on Parenting

- How do/did you feel about becoming a mother?
- Has that changed over time?
- What do you think is the most important role a mother plays with babies? And with older children?
- What kind of things makes a ‘good mother’ or a “bad mother”?
- Do you have any role models for how you think you’d like to be as a parent?

Appendix C: Interview Schedule – KwaZulu-Natal Study (Main Study)

Crèches and ECD questions

1. Can you tell me about the history of the crèche/ECD?
2. Can you elaborate about the application process to register the crèche/ECD? (What documentation was needed?)
3. What requirements did you need to meet to be registered?
4. What kind of state support do you receive? (If any)
5. What kind of support do you receive from other bodies? (for example, sponsors, NGOs etc).
6. What is the fee for the service?
7. How would describe your relationship with the Department of Social Services/Social Services/Department of Basic Education?
8. Can you take me through a typical day the crèche/ECD?
9. How do you compile the syllabus?
10. What activities does it consist of for the different age groups? Mind stimulation **
11. What are the sleeping arrangements like?
12. How is food arranged?
13. How would you describe your relationship with the children you care for?
14. How would you describe your relationship with the children's mothers?

Low-income employed mothers' questions

1. Can you please tell me about yourself?
 - Where are from?
 - Can you tell me about your upbringing?
 - What work do you do?
 - How many children do you have?
 - What are their ages?
 - Can you tell me more about them and your relationship with them?
2. Please can you give me a detailed description of your typical working day?
3. Childcare arrangements (state, family or market? - relatives/nanny/crèche/ECD)-
Which arrangement do you make use of?

4. Please tell me about the logistical arrangements of care for your child.
 - Traveling- pick up times
 - How has the arrangement changed from when the child was 6months, 1 year?
5. How do you feel about this form of childcare arrangement?
6. How much do you pay for it? (if payment is required)
7. Do you or did you have any doubts about it?
8. Did you consider other options?
9. How satisfied are you with this arrangement?
10. In your opinion, how does it compare to other options that might be available to you?

The work life of a low-income employed mother ...

1. Can you please give me a detailed description of the work that you do?
2. Please can you take me through your typical day and working week?
3. Is your work accommodating to your role as a mother? For example, have you ever had to leave work early to tend to your child? How was this received at your work?
4. Did you take maternity leave?
5. Was it enough for you? How did you make ends meet during this time?
6. How did you find going back to work?
7. How supportive was/is your work?

Money and the household

1. Can you tell me about your household budget?
2. How did you negotiate this?
3. Who has control over the household budget? (who decides how the money is spent and managed?)
4. In times of financial distress, who assists you?
5. Can you tell me about the last time you asked X for help?
6. Can you tell me about a time when you needed support but couldn't get it?

Childcare grant

1. Please can you share with me how you make use of the grant money?
2. To what extent do you feel the grant money has contributed to making a difference or its general contribution to the household?

Being an employed mother and what about your emotional well-being?

1. Can you explain the dynamics of being a working mother?

2. What kind of thoughts do you have about combining work life and family life?
3. How has this change from the past?
4. How do you manage household tasks (cooking/cleaning/shopping/washing)?
5. Are you happy with this arrangement? What resources would you say you need to improve this?
6. How would you describe your emotional well-being?
7. Do you feel any maternal guilt of working and mothering?
8. Do you feel supported in your role as a working mother? (by family and/or state)

Being a mother, a Zulu mother

1. How did you feel when you learnt you were going to be a mother?
2. What do you think is the most important role about becoming a mother?
3. What does motherhood mean to you?
4. What do you think it means to be a Zulu mother?
5. Do you feel any expectation from your family or community?
6. Can you share some pressures of being a low-income mother?
7. Please can you describe your relationship with the father of the child?
8. How does he contribute to childrearing, financially/emotional support etc?
9. How does you kin assist you with raising the child? Paternal kin? (Inhlawulo? Obligation based on blood ties?)

uAppendix C: Uhlaka lwemibuzo – KwaZulu-Natal (Ucwaningo olukhulu) [Interview Schedule in IsiZulu]

Imibuzo yaseCrèche kanye namaECD

15. Bengisacela ungilandise nge-creche/ECD?
16. Bengisacela ungichazele ngezigaba zokubhalisa icreche/ECD? (Kwakudingakala maphi amaphepha?)
17. Uluphi uxhaso owaluthola kuhulumeni?
18. Uluphi uxhaso owaluthola kweminye imizimba (isibonelo, izinhlango ezizimele? nezinye)
19. Wakhokha malini ukuthi ubhalise?
20. Ungabuchaza kanjani ubudwelane bakho noMyango wezenHlalakahle nowezeMfundo?
21. Bengisacela ungilandise ukuthi usuku lwakho ecreche/ECD lubanjani?
22. Uyihlanganisa kanjani i-syllabus?
23. Uyihlukanisa kanjani ngemnyaka? Ukuze abantwana bakheke ngokwamazinga abo?
24. Uhlelo lokulala lumeke kanjani?
25. Uhlelo lokudla lona?
26. Ungabuchaza kanjani ubudlwelano bakho nomama babantwana?

Imibuzo yomama abasebenzayo

11. Ngicela ungitshela kabanzi ngawe?
 - Uqhamukaphi?
 - Ngicela ungitshela ngokukhuliswa kwakho?
 - Wenza luphi uhlobo lomsebenzi?
 - Unabantwana abangaki?
 - Iminyaka yabo?
 - Ngicela ungitshela ngobudlwelano benu?
12. Ngicela ungichazele ngomsebenzi wakho nosuku lwakho emsebenzini?
13. Ngicela ungichazele ngokuthi ulumise kanjani uhlelo lokunakekela umntwana? Icreche, ECD noma umndeni?
14. Ngicela ungichasisele ngezinto ezifana nokuthi:

- Umtwana uhamba ngasikhathi sini? Ngani?
- Ngabe kwakuhlezi kumeke kanjena? Ezinyanga zesithupha? Unyaka?

15. Uzizwa kanjani ngaloluhlelo?
16. Ukhokha malini?
17. Kukhona ukungabaza onakho ngalo?
18. Usuke wazibheka ezinye izinhlelo?
19. Ugculisekile ngaloluhlelo?
20. Ungaluhathanisa kanjani nezinye izinhlelo?

Umsebenzi womama osebenzayo ...

8. Bengisa cela ungitshela kabanzi ngomsebenzi owenzayo?
9. Ngicela ungichasisela ukuthi usuku lwakho emsebenzini luba njani?
10. Umsebenzi wakho uyakuvumela ukuthi ukwazi nokuqhubeka nokudlala indima yakho njengomama? Isibonelo, usuke wakwazi ukushesha uphume emsebenzini ukuze ukwazi ukuyonakekela umntwana wakho?
11. Wakwazi ukuthi uthathe i-maternity leave?
12. Yakwanela? Wamisa kanjani ngesimo semali ngesikhathi se-leave?
13. Wakuthola kanjani ukubuyela emsebenzini?
14. Wakuthola ukushokeka emsebenzini usuphindela emva kwe-maternity leave?

Imali naseNdlini

7. Bengisacela ungitshela ukuthi ibudget yasendlini ime kanjani?
8. Ngabe niyimisa kanjani?
9. Ngabe ilawulwa ngubani ibudget?
10. Uma uxakekile ngemali?
11. Ngicela ungitshela ngesikhathi ugcina ukucela (lowo) ?
12. Ngicela ungitshela ngesikhathi udinga ukuxhaswa kodwa wangakuthola?

Imali 'yeqolo' /ye-grant

3. Bengisacela ungitshela ukuthi imali ye-grant uyisebenzisa kanjani?
4. Ungathi ukhona umehluko oledwe ilemali endlini?

Ukuba umama osebenzayo nokunakekeleka kwakho emoyeni?

9. Ngicela ungitshela ngokuba umama osebenzayo?
10. Ithini imicabango yakho ngokuhlanganisa umsebenzi, nomsebenzi wasendlini?
11. Ngabe lukhona ushintsho kulokhu?

12. Uyimisa kanjani imisebenzi yasendlini (ukupheka/ukuhlanza indlu/ukuthenga ukudla/ukuhlamba izingubo)?
13. Ngabe ucabanga ukuthi yini engakusiza?
14. Emoyeni ungathi uphatheke kanjani?
15. Ngabe kukhona ubuhlungu obuzwayo ngokuba ngumama osebenzayo?
16. Uzizwa usekeliwe kulendima oyidlayo njengomuntu osebenzayo nokuba ngumama? (ngabomndeni Kanye/noma nohulumeni)

Ukuba ngu-mama, umama womZulu

10. Wazizwa kanjani mhla uthola ukuthi uzoba ngumama?
11. Ungathi yini ebalulekile ngokuba ngumama?
12. Ngabe umnyango wokuba umama usho ukuthini kuwena?
13. Ngokuwena kusho ukuthini ukuba ngumama womuZulu?
14. Ngabe kukhona ocabanga ukuthi kubhekwe ngumdeni wakho noma umphakathi wakho kuwena njengomama?
15. Ngicela ungitshela ngengcindezi oyizawayo ngokuba ngumama osebenzayo kodwa ohola kancane?
16. Ngicela ungitshela ngobudlwelano bakho nobaba wabantwana bakho?
17. Ungathi ukusekela kanjani ngokunankekela umntwana, ngokwemali kanye nangokomoya?
18. Ngabe abomndeni wakho bakweseka kanjani ekwanakekeleni umntwana? Abokubo kamntwana bona? (Ngabe bamuhlwaula umntwana?)