EXPERIENCES AFRICAN DOMESTIC WORKERS UNDERGO AS A RESULT OF SENDING THEIR CHILDREN TO PREDOMINANTLY WHITE SCHOOLS

BY

NONDWE P. MANGE

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ABSTRACT

Sending African children to white schools brings about potential problems for all parties involved. However, the complications are more pronounced in situations where the child's mother is a domestic worker and the employer assumes an active role in the child's education. One such case triggered this research. Based on that particular case, the aim of this study was to explore experiences and feelings of African domestic workers with children in white schools.

Using qualitative research methods, semi-structured interviews were carried out with six African domestic workers. Data were analysed according to themes. A review of the available literature suggests themes in relation to hardships experienced by domestic workers. These include powerlessness, stigmatised experiences, disrespect and invisibility, paternalistic relationships, insecurity, employer insensitivity, distorted family life, and unionism or ignorance. The findings confirmed these difficulties but discovered additional problems domestic workers experience in relation to sending their children to white schools. Appropriate recommendations have been made to childrens' clinics, parents, employers, and schools alike.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

A clinical experience with which I was directly involved as a first year Master's student in Clinical Psychology at the Progress center[1] first drew my attention to some of the questions explored in this study. The case involved an eight year old African[2] boy who had recently been moved to a white[3] school from an all black township school. He was referred to the center by his class teacher for "aggressive behaviour and inability to play with other children".

In the assessment phase it was noted that the child's mother (a widow) worked as a domestic worker for a white bachelor who had been a central figure in the decision to send the child to a white school.

During the first few sessions the mother was visibly tense, had a downcast gaze and was quiet throughout almost the entire session. She only began to talk freely when she was seen alone. In these sessions she talked about how the child's reportedly bad behavior at school was stressing her, as it seemed to her a reflection on her bad parenting. She seemed blind to other possible contributory factors.

Mother also reported her discomfort in attending school meetings and how she relied on her employer to play that role for her. She registered her dissatisfaction at having to

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[1] For purposes of confidentiality a psuedonym has been used
2 The word African is used interchangeably with black
[3] Because most of these schools are still predominantly white

sleep-in at her employer's home, as it meant that she had to abandon her house for the whole week, which increased the chances of burglary.

Further contact with this "family" revealed the powerless position the domestic worker was in, both as a worker and a parent. There was an incident in one of the sessions with the employer where the domestic worker was clearly infantilised. Such treatment might have affected the way the child viewed his mother because, when he was asked to draw a Kinetic Family Drawing (KFD), he left the mother out. The child's response upon being probed about this was, "she is busy in the kitchen preparing food for us". This suggests that he seemed to identify more with the employer and had internalised the way the employer perceived his mother's role, i.e. being there to serve others in the house.

There was evidence of a closer bond between the employer and the domestic worker's child, who was rapidly becoming fluent in English. This appeared to interfere with the parent-child relationship because the employer spent most weekends with the child when the mother was off duty. The domestic worker's material powerlessness was also evident when the child reported that the employer had bought him a T.V. game for his birthday while his mother bought him "just a cake".

The index patient reported that he was the only black in class and that white children teased him. He retaliated by hitting them because, "the teacher was not listening to his side of the story as he is black". This came as a shock to the employer who thought that the child did not see any differences between blacks and whites.

My own observations and the parent's report made me wonder why the domestic worker let her son go to a white school if it had such alienating results for both of them. By the end of the assessment phase it was apparent that the child's unacceptable behavior at school could be attributed to factors which included having to adapt to new norms and values at his new school, as well as finding ways to handle the complex relationships at "home".

Based on this case, as well as the growing trend of African children attending white schools, one could speculate that children's clinics are going to receive more and more referrals of this nature. Therefore, it is important for such clinics to equip themselves with appropriate forms of intervention as well as to decide when, and how best to implement such interventions.

A literature search yielded a body of literature on conditions of domestic workers and black children attending white schools. There was however no literature on the children of domestic workers attending white schools. This, together with the complex nature of this case, made it imperative to explore domestic workers' experiences further in order to establish if there are any common trends in so far as sending their children to white schools is concerned.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Research in this area is still very scarce. Some studies point to areas of concern or potential problems (Christie, 1990; Freer, 1992). However, a review of the literature on open schools reveals that most authors have focussed their attention almost exclusively on the school children's experiences. Some writers in this area include Verma and Bagley (1975), Christie (1990), Gaganakis (1991), Freer (1992).

Sacco's (1991) work is one of the few which focussed on interviewing the families of the children attending white schools in order to establish the impact of this new trend on black families.

The reviewed literature includes terminology problems, a brief history of desegregated schooling in South Africa, the complicated nature of domestic work employment, as well

as the advantages and disadvantages domestic workers encounter in sending their children to white schools.

TERMINOLOGY

The reviewed literature presented a range of terms used to refer to schools with children from various backgrounds. Some of the terms used are Desegregated schools (St John, 1975), Multiracial education (Sarup, 1986), Open schools (Christie, 1990; Sacco, 1991; Freer, 1992), Non-racial schools (Gaganakis, 1991), Multicultural education (Pusch, 1992), Multi-ethnic schools (Verma, Zec, and Skinner, 1994).

The terminology used is not discussed in any detail in the reviewed literature. Therefore, for the purposes of this study which focuses on the South African context, the schools with mixed children are referred to as 'white schools' because most of them are still predominantly white. Further discussion on the terminology problem is outside the scope of this study.

DESEGREGATED SCHOOLING IN SOUTH AFRICA

The 1976 South African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) is seen as the hallmark to the policy of integrated schools because it was there that the decision was taken in principle, to open white schools to all races (Freer, 1992). This decision challenged the South African state, and formulated an alternative to the racially segregated state system (Christie, 1989).

The need for black children to attend white schools could be seen as a way of redressing their adverse life experiences, such as lack of education, to which they were exposed by

being black (Dawes, 1994). However, they experience problems as there is evidence that most white schools operate on principles of assimilation (Breaktime, 1990; Nkomo, 1990; and Gaganakis, 1991).

The problem with this is that it fails to reflect the multiracial nature of society, and goes against maintenance of separate culture patterns essential to a psychological sense of identity (Verma, 1989; Riley, 1994).

The debate on multiracialism and its effect on culture resulted in an ongoing similarities-differences discourse debate (see Kottler, 1990) who draws attention to the work of some of the writers in the similarities-differences discourse quoted Alexander (1983), Boonzaier and Sharp (1988), Chavunduka (1986), and Ngubane (1988).

Although this debate is outside the scope of this study the conclusion that "a blanket refusal to look at difference has serious implications for psychological research and practice" (Kottler 1995, p. 4) is relevant to this study, and in particular to the case which triggered it.

The work done by Verma (1994) in the United Kingdom revealed that provision of mother tongue lessons in multi-ethnic schools still presents problems. The fact that African languages are either not taught or only partially taught in white schools in South Africa results in children losing the ability to master their mother tongue. In the domestic worker's situation this affects parent-child relationships as the child then becomes closer to the employer who represents his or her newly acquired culture.

Such effects on black children and their families could be attributed to the children's prolonged and close contact with whites and thus incorporation of their values (Paine, Dorea, Pasquali, and Monteiro, 1992).

Sarup (1986), St John (1975), and Troyna and Hatcher (1992) addressed European and British children's experiences in white schools. Christie (1990), and Freer (1992) did the same work within the South African context. All of these writers concluded that there is evidence of racism being a significant feature in multicultural educational contexts. Furthermore, black children's' racist experiences outside school resulted in alienation from their communities and peers (Christie, 1989; Troyna and Hatcher, 1992). Such negative experiences could lead to less directly observable disabilities such as reduced self-esteem (Foster, in Dawes, 1994) which affects scholastic performance.

Recently, African American adolescents' perceptions of racial socialisation to racial identity were studied, and it was reported that their racial and gender identities result from interpersonal and intrapersonal processes influencing cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (Howard and Stevenson, 1995).

Perhaps, from a slightly different perspective Sacco's (1991) work focussed on the effects of sending children of aspirant black middle class families to white schools. Among her findings was the fact that, because they have developed resources and skills which other family members value, these children could get whatever they wanted and had subtly taken over parental power.

This is significant as it would mean that the traditional way of running the family would be significantly interfered with.

DOMESTIC WORK

FEARS AND ASPIRATIONS

There has been a sizable amount of research done on domestic workers generally. Among other writers in this area are (Cock, 1989; De Souza, 1980; Kedijang, 1990). Their work highlights the poor conditions of service, a string of deprivations, poor relations with

employers, and mostly paternalistic relations which disempower the domestic workers, all of which will have serious implications for the kind of case focused on in this dissertation.

Mohutsioa- Makhudu (1989) highlighted the fears that domestic workers have had to face over the years in South Africa. These included fear of leaving the safety of their homes and facing the threat of arrest for contravening pass laws; losing their families; staying in a white neighbourhood while the Group Areas Act is enforced; inability to communicate in the employer's language, and thus insecurity as a result of the fear of being sacked any time.

Cock (1989) concluded that given their own extremely deprived educational backgrounds, the domestic workers' educational aspirations for their children were pitched very high. This conclusion is relevant to this study as it focuses on the sacrifices domestic workers undergo in an attempt to give their children better education.

POOR EDUCATION FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS

In South Africa, poverty and educational deprivation have trapped many black women into domestic work (Cock, 1980).
"The choice to select their labour is outside their control" (Marks, 1993, p. 170). Since domestic work is full of anomalies (Cock, 1989) the situation becomes even more problematic when domestic workers send their children to white schools. This is because as parents, they are subject to a lot of contradictory experiences which include having to pay expensive fees while they earn next to nothing (Cock, 1989). This compels them to rely perpetually on employers for assistance.

This might further imply that they have to put up with every demand (Cock, 1989) made upon them if they want this financial assistance. In spite of being mostly uneducated, they have to attend school meetings and help their children with homework. Such expectations

involve contradictory experiences for the domestic worker. In essence better education for their children has meant extra burdens for them financially psychologically and otherwise. This forced them to neglect their own personal needs (Turshen, 1991).

The newly acquired obligations heighten the domestic workers' stress levels, yet failure to fulfil them allows the employers to take over. Such situations consign the worker to a dependent position (Cock, 1989). Having been disempowered all their lives, the only area left where domestic workers still had some control is as parents. However, this power is interfered with when they send their children to white schools and the children subsequently adopt 'white ways' (Sacco, 1991).

POWERLESSNESS

The word 'power' has been defined in various ways by different writers. However, Grossman and Chester (1990), Henderson (1981), Lukes (1974), and Margrit (1981), see 'power' as one person's capacity to affect another person's behavior. Duke (1976) and Fogelson and Adams (1977) argue that power always involves inequality and one party having certain attributes which are influential in a particular context. This is relevant to the employer and domestic worker relationship whereby the employer's power results from her ability to hire and fire her employee.

According to Hawley (in Cromwell, 1975) all social systems are organisations of power. Therefore, white schools as social systems lead to powerlessness on the part of black children because they come in as "sociological strangers" (St John, 1975, p. 99). Even more powerless though are domestic workers, whose place of employment is normally someone else's home (Whisson and Weil, 1971). Their children on the other hand are in someone else's school, it seems.

Cock (1989) argues that domestic service is the crudest, most hidden expression of inequality in our society. Central to household work is the differential access to power between employers and workers (Sanjek and Colen, 1990). Writing on the European experience Sik Hung Ng (1980) adds that power breeds privilege, and enables its wielder to dominate over others. This powerlessness in South Africa encompasses discriminatory laws, low wages, long working hours, and racist employers (Mohutsioa-Makhudu, 1989).

Domestic workers are therefore "trapped workers with few alternatives, and they often live out an infinite series of daily frustrations" (Cock, 1987, p. 133). Because of this, managing their own lives and those of their children becomes extremely difficult for them.

STIGMATISED EXPERIENCES

The low status of domestic work is summarised in the following statements. "Domestic work brought with it loneliness, isolation, overwork, and very little free time" (Pennington and Westover, 1989, p. 8). The demeaning nature of domestic work is discussed amongst others by Whisson and Weil (1971); Turshen (1991) and Marks (1993). It is said that the stigma of inferiority is inescapable and pervades the domestic workers' whole identity (Katzman, 1978). This is so because "Domestic workers spend their days and nights serving others" (Perold, 1985, p. 30). On one hand domestic workers "have a sense of being exploited based on their low wages, and lack of appreciation by their employers" (Cock, 1989, p. 87). Handouts, on the other hand, serve to mitigate the harshness of such exploitation (Jansen, 1987; Kedijang, 1990). These often include contributions towards school expenses, clothing and food (Cock, 1989). Their presence "induces feelings of gratitude and faithfulness in the employee" (Hickson and Strous, 1993, p. 110). Domestic workers's stigmatised position in society translates to the bad treatment they receive from the very people they are supposed to be intimately involved with, their employers.

DISRESPECT AND INVISIBILITY

Whisson and Weil (1971, p. 39) argue that "the ordinary girl grows to be a lady, the servant remains a 'girl' for ever". The word 'girl' implies that the domestic worker is incapable of making her own decisions and thus denies her status as an adult (Turshen, 1991). The process of being stripped of their names is a form of depersonalisation (Cock, 1989; Kedijang, 1990).

Among other things Whisson and Weil (1971), Preston-Whyte (1976) and Cock (1980) argue that the working attire is a form of disrespect and marks a distinction in status.

Domestic workers are often treated as invisible beings. It is said that "only blacks could be invisible people in white homes" Katzman (1978, p. 188), in the sense of being discussed (mostly negatively) in their presence. Kotze (1993) adds that being mostly non-conversant in the employer's language excludes domestic workers from talking about the intimacies of the family. Cock (1989) adds that domestic workers are not expected to have thoughts, opinions, feelings, or identities beyond those necessary for the discharge of their duties.

PATERNALISM AND INFANTILISATION

The relationship between domestic workers and employers is intensely paternalistic (Kedijang, 1990). Such relations in domestic work empower employers and leave the worker dependent and powerless (Cock, 1980). The private territories of the domestic worker's self are violated, because without consultation employers set wages, decide on daily tasks, and make rules that impinge on the domestic worker's private life (Hickson and Strous, 1993).

In her work on the Chicana people, Romero (1992) adds that masters often assume total control over the behaviour of their servants, including their leisure activities. Such controls continue to this day.

This paternalistic attitude is employed in all areas of the domestic worker's life, including sexual activity. Due to evidence of domestic workers being infantilised, Cock (1989) and Whisson and Weil (1971) concluded that domestic workers had a childlike status within their unequal relationship with employers.

However, paternalism has another side to it whereby domestic workers assume a mothering role for their employers. By being "motherly", they support and enhance the well-being of others, while eliminating many negative and harsh attacks on their self-esteem (Romero, 1992). Cock (1987) reports ironically that domestic workers sometime dilute the isolation of white housewives.

ACCEPTANCE AS FAMILY MEMBER OR PERPETUAL INSECURITY

The issue of being recognised as part of the employers' family is a delicate one because, while domestic workers are forced to share the lives of their employers, they are simultaneously kept at a distance by a number of rules and regulations (De Souza, 1980). Kedijang (1990) reports that their peripheral existence means that they are not really part of the households they serve. However, in their quest for respect and psychological benefits, they may be vulnerable to their employers' definition of their relationship as "one of the family" (Romero, 1992, p. 125).

Cock (1981) and Makosana (1989) argue that because of their working conditions domestic workers are neither full members of their own family nor of the employers' family. This supposedly puts the domestic workers in a difficult position, especially in cases where the employer is involved in making major decisions on behalf of the

domestic worker and her children. This insecurity affects personal relationships with their employers, as discussed in the following section.

INSECURE RELATIONSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

It is said that relationships always involve a delicate element since familiarity in the interaction between 'maid' and 'madam' is not taken to mean equality by either side (Preston-Whyte, 1976; Hickson and Strous, 1993). Employers emphasised that "familiarity breeds contempt" (Preston-Whyte, 1976, p. 74). At the most, there is pseudo integration (De Souza, 1980). This is so because domestic workers are always viewed with suspicion or resentment by employers (Lauderdale, 1988).

Of significance is the fact that the extent, and the duration of familiarity with the domestic worker is determined by the employer whose attitude can change at any time (Cock, 1989). The termination of this familiarity by the employer also affects the domestic workers' children. Similarly, domestic workers' children also experience termination of familiarity from their white peers at school. Reportedly, they feel that their white classmates can be friendly at times but as soon as they are outside school "then they are big snobs" (Christie, 1990, p. 57).

Evidently domestic workers have to maintain a very delicate balance between running the house and guarding against taking over the household otherwise, they may lose their work (De Souza, 1980).

EMPLOYER INSENSITIVITY AND PHYSICAL STRESS

Employers have political and economic power and this puts the domestic worker in a vulnerable position (Makosana, 1989). This vulnerability subjects domestic workers to immense stress and anxiety about their numerous problems.

These include among other things job insecurity, the demeaning nature of their job, and poverty (Turshen, 1991). Such problems often trigger serious health problems which affect domestic workers' physical and psychological well-being (Weinert, 1991; Mohutsioa-Makhudu, 1989; De Souza, 1980). Without sick leave, domestic workers often present at hospital with severely advanced diseases (Turshen, 1991).

It is added that much of the domestic workers' psychological burden lies in the fact that they are seen by both employers and their families as "mammy" figures (Tucker, 1988, p. 73). Therefore, they pay a high psychological price for their ability to nurture (Mayekiso, 1991, p. 3). Physical stress is part of the price they pay for being domestic workers.

DISTORTED FAMILY LIFE

Apartheid systematically eroded the concept of the family unit and conjugal stability among South African blacks (Turshen, 1991). This experience is more true for domestic workers whose long working hours curtail social activities, and deprive the domestic workers of "enough" time to spend with their own families, thus distorting their family life (Makosana, 1989). They spend the rest of their time agonising over the well being of their families (Turshen, 1991) and are frequently psychologically drained from surrogate mothering (Hickson and Strous, 1993) rather than looking after their own children.

Family breakdowns and hence female-headed families are some of the consequences of black women's employment conditions (Dressler, 1991; Scanzoni, 1971).

With their harsh working conditions, one would expect that domestic workers are actively involved in union activity, but as some of the literature suggests that does not seem to be the case.

UNIONISM OR IGNORANCE

Their vulnerability leads domestic workers to acquiesce to low wages (Cock, 1987). Being isolated, domestic workers can only rebel individually and privately (Boddington 1983; Cock, 1981). Because of their isolation domestic workers lack a commonness of purpose and a sense of belonging (Moahloli, 1992). Their alienation could be related to that experienced by their children as a result of not being fully accepted by their white peers, while they are isolated by their communities for being in white schools (Christie, 1990).

Attempts to empower domestic women came through trade union activity. The Basic Conditions of Employment Amendment Act in South Africa (number 137 of 1993) was only introduced on January 1, 1994. Difficulties encountered in organising domestic workers have been mainly attributed to "the atomised and scattered nature of the work force" (Cock, 1989, p. 152).

Writing on the Namibian experience, Cross (1995) attributes the problems to either employers' resistance or ignorant domestic workers. In South Africa Margaret Nhlapo (SADWU president) (in Cock, 1989) shared the same sentiments. Perhaps in a slightly different context, Pape (1993) writing on the Zimbabwean experience, seems to blame the recent deterioration in domestic workers' conditions on the country's changes in the political economy.

CONCLUSION

The literature in relation to open schools is limited to exploring children's views and experiences of being in white schools. The authors have not addressed pertinent issues related to effects on the parent-child relationship. However, important work was done by Sacco (1991) on the impact on black families of sending children to white schools.

According to the literature, domestic workers have a lot of negative experiences in their relationships with employers. These experiences are likely to emerge as themes in this study. The sense of powerlessness on the part of domestic workers is likely to underlie all of them.

Some of the themes include stigmatic experiences as well as feelings of disrespect and invisibility. These are based on domestic worker's negative experiences highlighted by Cock (1987, 1989). Paternalism and infantilisation, acceptance as family members, as well as insecure relationships are further likely themes, as they pertain to the reportedly fragile domestic worker-employer relationships. The work by De Souza (1980), Kedijang (1990), and Preston-Whyte (1973) relates to the problems in the worker-employer relationships. Additional themes are likely to arise from what is perceived to be employer insensitivity and distorted family life due to strenuous working conditions. The literature by Turshen (1991) and Hickson and Strous (1993) deals with these aspects of domestic work.

The theme of unionisation emerges with the attempt to solve domestic workers' problems. According to the literature however, this area still presents problems (Cock, 1989; Cross, 1995).

STUDY OBJECTIVES

Given the fact that experiences of domestic workers whose children attend white schools seem to be an unresearched area, the aim of this study is to explore the experiences and feelings of domestic workers who send their children to white schools. This would help to establish common features in their experiences, when compared with the original case which prompted interest in this study in the first place. Knowledge of domestic workers' experiences and feelings in this regard could play an important role in assessing plans to

help children of black domestic workers who attend white schools and are referred for clinical intervention.

Appropriate recommendations could come out of the findings.

CHAPTER 2: METHOD

STUDY DESIGN

Because of the sensitive nature and the relative newness of the topic explored, an exploratory, descriptive, and qualitative research approach was employed.

The decision to choose this approach is supported by Anzul, Ely, Friedman, Garner, and McCormack Steinmetz (1991), Banister, Burman, Parker, Taylor, and Tindall, (1994); and Miles and Huberman (1994) who point out that qualitative data with their emphasis on people's lived experiences, are well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes, and structures of their lives.

This study consisted of three phases. These are the pilot study, main study, and analysis of data. Considering that the topic under study seemed to be a relatively untouched area, a pilot study was necessary to give a more focussed exploration of the topic. In this phase three "families", each consisting of a parent, employer, and child were interviewed, thus providing a total of nine participants.

The participants were chosen because of their willingness to participate, and all except for one of the interviews were conducted at their homes. One employer was interviewed in her office because of her "busy schedule".

In the process of conducting the pilot study a semi-structured interview schedule was used (appendix A). This had three categories of questions aimed at the employers, parents and children. The reasoning behind this was to try and elicit experiences which were particularly relevant to each one of them, and it was also meant to make analysis as simple as possible.

All the interviews were audio-taped and three interviews by parents had to be translated into English while being transcribed. Following the pilot study results, the focus of the study was changed because of "data overload" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Data reduction occurs continuously throughout the life of any qualitatively oriented project (Miles and Huberman, 1994). And in the end parents' experiences were targeted as the only focus. This narrow focus would also accommodate the required space limitation of the study and the apparent research gap in the literature available in South Africa.

POPULATION AND SAMPLING

People considered eligible for the study were African domestic workers with children attending white schools. People with township links were preferred, in order to highlight possible contradictions which emerge when children are being exposed to two distinct environments. This last criterion however, presented problems because some domestic workers never stayed in the townships. These were people who had no relatives nor owned property in the townships, and have stayed on their employer's premises ever since they arrived in Cape Town.

PARTICIPANTS

Following the pilot study further schools were approached. After contacting several schools without much success, one school principal provided a full list of children and their parents' employment. As the focus had changed, only those parents in domestic work were targeted because their experiences were primary to this study.

The final sample used was a total of six domestic workers plus three from the pilot phase, with ages ranging between 27 and 46 years. Some were single, some widowed and some divorced. Their education level was between standard 5 and 10. (appendix B.) All their children attended the same white school but none of the parents had met each other before.

DATA COLLECTION

RESEARCH TOOL

Type

Semi-structured interviews (see appendix C) were used as they do not require any written responses which was likely to present difficulties as the participants would probably be relatively uneducated. These are valuable strategies for discovery (Gilbert, 1993). The ability of interviews to give greater depth, as well as allowing respondents to use 'their unique ways of defining the world' are raised by Silverman (1994, p. 95) and Reason and Rowan (1981).

Interviews allow for the possibility of formulating and reformulating questions until a desired response is obtained (Kerlinger, 1986). This flexibility was valuable in cases where instant translation from English to Xhosa had to be done for the purposes of the participants' full understanding of the questions asked.

Semi-structured interviews also helped in maintaining focussed group discussions (Morgan, 1988). This is necessary because accounts by people on sensitive topics, like the topic under study, are frequently full of ambiguities as well as contradictions and are "shrouded in emotionality" (Brannen, 1987, p. 553).

DEVELOPMENT

The final interview schedule came about as a result of the pilot study as well as studies reviewed in the literature. The work of Kerlinger (1986), Banister et al (1994), Miles and Huberman (1984, 1994), Denzin (1994) and Silverman (1994) were used to clarify issues relating to the use of interviews in collecting data. The interview schedule was compiled drawing on work done by Cock (1989), Makosana (1989), Nqgakayi (1990), Sacco (1990), and Roper (1994).

Field procedure

Initially, the participants were to be interviewed in a group. Some of the advantages of group interviews include being inexpensive, obtaining rich data, flexibility, and stimulating to respondents (Miles and Huberman, 1984). The difficulty faced however, was that not all participants could attend on the same day. As domestic workers, some of the complicating factors included being unable to obtain permission from employers, as well as financial problems which made it difficult to reach the meeting place. (The latter was revealed during the course of the interviews.) The end result was that three participants were interviewed at a time.

Gathering of data

The participants met at the Progress Center because the material was to be recorded on a video (with maximum confidentiality assured), because that would help the researcher with the analysis procedure. Secondly, the venue was central and accessible by public transport to most participants from their work places, most of which were in different, previously white suburbs near the Center.

Focus groups (group interviews) were used because they allow the researcher to elicit insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group (Morgan, 1988).

The interviews were undertaken in Xhosa, and an effort was made wherever possible to ask all participants the same questions. The two interviewing sessions lasted for 2-3 hours, and all the recordings were translated from Xhosa to English as they were transcribed. The total number of pages gathered from the transcripts was 93.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This process was covered in four stages. Having personally undertaken the interviews the researcher also transcribed and translated the interviews. This process provided assistance in recalling the experience, expanding details, and often provided a fresh perspective on the material (Anzul et al., 1991). This experience confirmed Robson and Foster's (1989) comment that qualitative data has life and emotion.

The second stage involved constructing a table with personal information of all the participants, which helped to identify the spread of salaries (appendix B). Then followed an attempt to draw together the responses in columns, with participants' responses along-side the semi-structured questions asked.

The third stage flowing directly from the second entailed categorising the responses according to patterns or themes. Pattern finding helped deal with "data overload" (Miles and Huberman, 1994). The conclusion of this stage involved focusing on the evident themes and reluctantly discarding less helpful data for this present study. Data reduction is a form of preliminary analysis and allows for cross-site analysis (Van Maanen, 1983; Wolcott, 1990). It also highlights possible contradictions in participants' responses, and unveils and enhances understanding of covert messages.

The above data was recorded by using participants' quotations and tables. The themes expected by the researcher were either confirmed or refuted using the above data as a base.

RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability of a study refers to the ability of the researcher to reproduce research results from a particular sample at a later stage (Kerlinger, 1973). This would be difficult to achieve in an exploratory study such as this one because qualitative research does not pretend to be replicable (Marshall and Rossman, 1989).

This study can be said to have some validity as it appears to measure what it purports to measure (Bellack and Hersen, 1984). More specifically, this study has some face validity because the subjects did not know the likely questions beforehand and thus could not prepare their answers in advance (McLeod, 1994).

According to Miles and Huberman (1984) qualitative data involves a serious question of sampling. In this study the number of participants was decided according to the limits of the study, therefore, although it would be difficult to claim that the study had complete content validity (adequacy with which a domain is sampled), some validity could be claimed in relation to the study limits.

Although the small size of the sample would prevent generalising the results, the final outcome has forged certain inroads and provided some answers to this relatively new situation under investigation. Perhaps, of more significance and worth noting in this study, were the constant similarities in the responses of the two groups despite the fact that the interviews were done at different times. This is probably so because "any person's account is a product (albeit complex) of the social domain" (Hollway, 1989, p. 15).

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study show that in addition to problems they encounter in their work, domestic workers also experience problems as a result of sending their children to white schools. Although they reported some positive experiences, the disadvantages of the whole process seem to far outweigh the advantages.

The data obtained was vast, and much had to be discarded because of the limited size of this study.

The results and discussion are presented below. Firstly, there is a brief discussion about domestic workers' experiences in relation to the expected themes set out in chapter 1. Secondly, the results are discussed under the headings ADVANTAGES and DISADVANTAGES of sending children to white schools.

HARDSHIPS EXPERIENCED BY DOMESTIC WORKERS

Most employers' involvement in the children's education and the control over resources seemed to weaken the parents' position, while it increased anxiety. This is so because domestic workers tended to lack sufficient resources necessary for the expensive education of their children. Therefore, the decision to send their children to white schools made them more dependent with feelings of being trapped. This is consistent with Cock's (1987) findings.

The findings revealed a lot of feelings of shame on the domestic workers' part. The results of Whisson and Weil (1971) also highlighted this sense of shame. The main grievance from domestic workers in this study was the little money they earn compared to the workload they were expected to undertake. Handouts appeared to be used to compensate low wages. The findings by Hickson and Strous (1993) also supported this view. However, domestic workers' responses towards these gestures were ambivalent. Interestingly, they also seemed to struggle with their inability to reciprocate the gifts they received. Overall, these experiences raised feelings of sadness, helplessness, and anger.

In the literature much was said about domestic workers being stripped of their names (Whisson and Weil, 1971 and Turshen, 1991). Perhaps an important finding in this study was that employers used first names to address their employees. This probably reflects a change of attitude since the previous studies. There was however, some evidence that domestic workers were treated by employers as if they were non-existent at times (Katzman, 1978).

As discussed by Cock (1987), still very prevalent in the findings of this study were the paternalistic relationships that exist between domestic workers and their employers. Among other things, invasion of the domestic workers' privacy featured strongly (Kedijang, 1990). Interestingly, and hardly ever referred to, there were two sides to these paternalistic relationships where domestic workers were either infantilised, or alternatively they played a mothering role for their employers (Romero, 1992).

The other side of these paternalistic relationships was that domestic workers tended to have a sense of entitlement over their employer's assistance. This appeared to be prevalent in cases where the domestic worker had known her employer for a long time.

Most of the literature did not see domestic workers achieving full acceptance as family members by employers, because of the nature of relations within domestic work (Cock,

1981; De Souza, 1980; Makosana, 1989). In this study while some domestic workers had given up on becoming part of their employers' families others were more optimistic that things would change.

According to Hickson and Strous (1993) and Preston-Whyte (1976) the 'maid' and 'madam' relationship remained at a delicate level. There was little hope that they would ever treat each other as equals no matter how long the service had been rendered. Domestic workers felt that whites were unpredictable. These fragile relationships tended to affect the domestic workers' children because, when the employer changed, favours done for them in the past such as being given gifts were suddenly terminated without any explanation.

The literature linked domestic work to the physical consequences which resulted in domestic workers' severe ill health (Turshen, 1991; Weinert, 1991). In this study some of the grievances related to how domestic workers were treated by employers when they were sick, and how they are sometimes refused permission to go home on "long holidays".

In the literature it is highlighted that the nature of their work does not allow them enough time with their families (Makosana, 1989; Turshen, 1991, Hickson and Strous, 1993). In this study domestic workers found it difficult to cope with being away from their families. Their situation had grave consequences for the domestic workers and their families (Scanzoni, 1971; Dressler, 1991).

Domestic workers are said to be difficult to organise into joining trade unions for better working conditions (Cock, 1987; Cross, 1995). Findings of this study showed that due to lack of choice because of the isolated nature of their work domestic workers tended to rely on their employers and ignored the need for outside help and advice. The lack of contact with the outside world maintains their stigmatised experiences. This is consistent

with Cock (1987, 1981) and Boddington (1983). These findings have implications for what is said below.

ADVANTAGES OF SENDING CHILDREN TO WHITE SCHOOLS

1. Improved parent and child relationships

In this study some domestic workers felt that as a result of their children going to white schools they have become closer to them as parents, they are involved with their school work and are more open with each other than before. Worker (A) said:

> there is a difference because I never used to sit and discuss things with them . In these schools there are notices, homework to be checked and signed.

(D) related that her child has taught her to be cuddly and demands her attention.

She says:

> There is a big difference because he will demand my attention and will even tell me he likes hugging which we don't often do as blacks, he will tell me thatother children do this, and he wants me to buy a teddy bear for him. He takes books and demand that I play with him.

It would appear from what the parents say in the above excerpts that while in another context they perceive compulsory school meetings as a burden, they simultaneously enjoyed being able to keep track of their children's performance at school as well as being more involved and open with them (although, they do not necessarily make this connection themselves).

This is consistent with the findings of Sacco (1991) who reported that while parents felt that schools fees were high, they welcomed the opportunity to socialise with parents from other cultural groups.

2. School gains for children

The domestic workers spoke of gains for their children who are in white schools. Besides learning English, they mentioned access to sports facilities, and other extra-curricula activities. Of significance, was that some of these gains were also seen to indirectly spill over to the parents in the process of their involvement with their children's' school work. One respondent (D) expressed herself like this:

> He can speak English and correct me as well in certain things. He is also able to read properly now and obtains an A symbol in reading at times.

Parent (B) corroborated this view:

> At times they are given homework to read out loud and as a parent you also gain from that exercise.

There seemed to be a willingness on the part of domestic workers to learn from their children. Being conversant in English was a source of pride for parents. Respondent (F) said:

> The major change is that of expressing themselves in English from a young age which means that they become more independent, that is, you can send them to the shop without worrying, he can go to the doctor and explain where the pain is on his own.

Domestic (A) supported this:

> I like the fact that he can express himself and even when you take him to work you are not worried about constantly have to watch him and answer on his behalf.

Similarly worker (B) had this to say:

> I also like the idea of white schools because even if my child finds himself in Lesotho he can always converse in English.

The willingness of parents to learn from their children could be contrasted with the tensions created between siblings who attended white schools and those who did not (Sacco, 1991).

Because of the new school environments and values, some parents reported having observed new behaviours. These mostly had to do with how the children carried themselves. Worker (C) had this input:

> ...he has a board and tends to teach his friends what he gained at school, so I think they have gained a lot in those schools more than we know as parents.

Domestic workers pointed to some specific gains for their children such as sporting opportunities, and improved performance at school. But when probed about gains later on, some felt that the only advantage for their children is to have learnt English. It is however not clear whether these views are based on some disappointment (in the sense of having very high expectations about white schools) or whether they were reluctant to give too much credit to white schools. As worker (E) puts it:

> Besides English I can't think of any other thing.

Respondent (C) supported this view:

> I would not say that he has more respect because even in the township he had it, so I cant think of anything else.

There were other views which related to the smooth running of things in white schools compared to their township counterparts. Respondent (A) said:

> ... school time is not wasted in these schools as it is the case in the township. Another thing is that the standard of education in white schools is different from that of our school. These kids therefore stand a chance of getting first preference in opportunities because of their higher standard of education.

The main advantages of sending children to white schools seemed to relate to the perceived opportunities for children to learn English. However, parents' involvement with their children's' school work has improved parent-child relationships and it vicariously provided a learning opportunity for the parents.

What was striking about these findings was that the advantages were far outnumbered by disadvantages. This probably tallied with the initial case which triggered this study and confirms the idea that while decisions by domestic workers to send their children to white schools are a good thing, this brings about extra difficulties for all parties concerned, especially the parents.

DISADVANTAGES OF SENDING CHILDREN TO WHITE SCHOOLS

1. Burdens and sacrifices

Although no writer in the reviewed literature focussed specifically on the burdens experienced by domestic workers as a result of sending children to white schools, their

experiences could be compared with Sacco's (1991) research on the experiences of black families who sent their children to white schools.

In this present study only two of the six domestic workers were responsible for all the school fees. It appeared however, from what the domestic workers said, that this help did not come without cost. (C) said:

> At times you see that they even demand your services during lunch time and you cannot complain because, you are thinking of the R 120 he is going to give to you at the end of the month, yet you have worked for that money but they think that you don't see that.

As already noted above domestic workers felt that having children in a white school had become a burden for them. Their statements in the findings clearly illustrated how trapped they had become in these complicated arrangements with employers for the sake of their children's' education: Respondent (C) had this to say about her feelings:

> I normally have long thoughts about leaving but the question is what am I going to do with the children because my wish is that they become better equipped and not do the kind of work I am doing.

(B) highlighted how this burden pressurised her:

> What pressurises us in our thoughts and minds are these children, even when you are asleep you are haunted by this dilemma (that of educating children)

What stood out from what they said were their high aspirations on behalf of their children as described similarly by Cock (1989). Nevertheless, it also seemed as if the domestic workers felt that things would be different if they did not have children in white schools.

The three who felt that they were mostly dependent on their employers for fees, reported that their situation was very strenuous and humiliating. One of them (D) said:

> It strains you even health wise because, even if you don't feel well you are forced to work because you are begging for something.

This excerpt introduces us to the reported sacrifices that domestic workers have to undertake to ensure the necessary benefits for their children.

2. Suppressing needs

Domestic workers often found themselves in difficult situations where they are loathe to express their own needs and grievances, because they might loose the favours they receive from their employers in relation to educating their children. They tended to forfeit things they would like to do for themselves or those due to them by their employer, because they want to secure these favours.

Admitting this difficulty (E) said:

> Yha it's difficult. At times you find that you want to rush and cover your commitments in the township, and when she asks for a favour you cannot refuse because you know she helps you here and there.

(B) supported this statement when she said:

> You forfeit your own commitments no matter how important they are.

The two above statements were corroborated by (C) who said:

> you leave your own problems because she also helps you and all we say is 'thank you'.

What the last respondent said about the fact that as domestic workers all they said is 'thank you' because they were not in a position to return favours, raised the issue of how they felt about payment in kind which they received (those who do) from employers. Interestingly, while payment in kind is discussed in the reviewed literature (Cock, 1989; Jansen, 1987) no writer talked about the emotional feelings of the recipients towards these gifts.

The ambivalence shown by the respondents towards gifts in this study was significant and revealing.

While five out of six of the workers felt dependent on their employers, one interestingly felt that she was in a more "powerful" position compared to other workers. She said:

> My situation is different because we face (talk freely) each other with my employer and I told her from the start that she must tell me if she does not like something. Her fear is that I will go back to my old employer because they still need me and she knows that they like and see me as part of their family.

The picture painted here of power vested in the domestic worker is a rare one. Her employer was threatened by the possibility of her domestic worker leaving her for someone else. It seemed that this domestic worker felt that her employer did things for her only to keep her from leaving. This statement also highlighted lack of trust on the domestic worker's side.

3. Attendance of school meetings

While attending white schools has been a powerless and strange experience for a black child (St John, 1975); the situation appeared in this present study to be equally difficult for parents. They were required to attend school meetings where they played a parental role in a completely alien role environment. It was an alien role because they were expected to relate on an equal footing with white parents who are their madams elsewhere. This must have been a difficult role to assume. (D) said:

> I feel very shy and feel looked down upon. It seems funny to be there with them because I know that I have nothing.

She went on to say that:

> It is because I know the kind of work I am doing, the money I get, and the suffering I have endured.

(A) reported of her own stigmatised experiences:

> My kids have been there for quite some time but you still find that there are some whites who will find it difficult to even sit next to you.

Because they felt like stigmatised strangers in those meetings, they tended to look for people they could identify with in terms of their skin color. (F) said:

> The fact that you know you are a domestic worker will never go away, as a result when I am there, I always look around for someone like me and then I will move closer to her. What I am saying is that the feeling is still there, but you go there because you are forced to.

At times domestic workers had to sacrifice attending meetings because the employer needed to go out "for fun". (B) had this to say about her inability to attend school meetings:

> The reason why I am not attending is that I work for a 'cat' of a woman who likes to 'freak'(have fun). What normally happens is that the meeting days coincide with her fun activities. Now, because she has small children I normally have to sacrifice.

4. Closer to employer than parent

Although the reviewed literature did not discuss the close bond which developed between employers and domestic workers' children, there was evidence from the findings that this did occur. Some domestic workers seemed to have experienced a period in their lives where their children were closer to the employer than to themselves. (C) said:

> It happened a lot with my child that is why he is hurt because he was close to my employer as a result I would leave him behind on weekends.....but I used to question the reason why I was left behind and separated from my child or is it because I cant speak English..

Similarly, (F) related that there was a period when her children were close to the employer. She would go shopping with them and buy them gifts. However, their closeness "cooled off" when the employer's attitude changed. Here is how the worker put it:

> Mine were once very close to her but, children are quick to notice changes, so when they realised the change they kept their distance, now, when they hear the car they close the door and keep away from her.

Respondent (D) added that:

> ... over the years they have been doing things with my child e.g. swimming, but there was a recent pattern that when visitors came they would suddenly change and chase him away to go downstairs.

Central to the domestic workers' experiences was the issue of employers whose attitudes changed without any apparent cause. Coincidentally, from what the domestic workers said, it looked as though their children also underwent the same experiences in their relations with employers. There is reportedly, an initial phase where the child became much closer to the employer, to the exclusion of the parent. This phase was followed by a lull or even a complete change from the employer's side and it is at that point that the parents and children start working at their relationship and became closer to each other.

5. Parent and child relationship (difficulties)

Interestingly, parents revealed a range of difficulties about their relationships with their children. These included their own difficulty in understanding (a) English at times and (b) their children's' attitudes towards domestic work. Parent (C) talked about her difficulty understanding English at times:

> It makes me feel hurt although I can see that they also feel sorry for me and almost wish that I should be the one who can speak English properly.

Probably underlying this statement was the fantasy by the domestic worker that, if she had a better command of the English language, her relationship with her employer would be improved.

Still on the issue of the English language (F) said:

> I will say that I have times when I don't understand because at times my eldest daughter will correct my pronunciation that is when I realise I must have made a mistake because this language is theirs, they know it better.

One would expect such experiences to be humiliating and embarrassing for domestic workers, but further probing of the parents' feelings about the language difficulty was underplayed by the domestic workers who claimed that they had no ill feelings about being corrected by their children.

Despite other difficulties, parents felt that their children were still respectful. (D) said:

> My child has always been respectful but it's even worse now (meaning he is more respectful).

Consequently, parents felt in control over their children as respondent (A) put it:

> They still follow my rules and I encourage them to respect every adult not just me.

In relation to their children's views about domestic work parent (D) had this to say:

> Mine normally say that I work hard and if he was old enough he would be relieving me from the strenuous work.

Parent (B) echoed the same views:

> They are really hurt I think according to their wishes there should be no one working for whites, because they see tht even when they have visited I spend limited time with them because I have to rush so that I can finish.

Along the same line worker (F) said:

> My eldest daughter was saying that as soon as she finishes she will work and I will have to rest because everyday I complain and yet I really do complain.

From this statement, it looked like the children were also made to feel guilty about the strain their parents had to undergo on their behalf, but they were equally helpless to do anything to redress the situation because they were children. All they did, was to make promises that when they grow up they would somehow make it up to their parents.

6. Parental fears and concerns

The parental fears highlighted the domestic workers' lack of trust for the world out there. This probably had a lot to do with their own experiences and the harsh treatment they had to undergo (and are probably still undergoing) when they first came to urban areas. These included the various laws which existed as well as awkward working hours which exposed them to potential danger while travelling to and from their place of work.

Parents related fears about various things which could put their children in danger. The fears ranged from what could be done to their children by whites (in white neighbourhoods) on their way to or from school, to fears about the use of public transport to travel long distances. Some of their fears were expressed by (B):

> My fears are related to things like boycotts which would mean that he is stuck in the township. The fact that they travel long distances is a worry. Parent (D) added:

> ... you find that the child is assaulted for no apparent reason just because he is wearing a different uniform. They have to travel long distances so you are never happy until he comes back home.

Parent (A) had fears about what could happen to her children while going through a predominantly white neighbourhood:

> The first problem is that my kids travel by train. Secondly Pinelands is quite a strict area and I don't really trust the whites there. Some houses there have loose dogs which tend to chase the children, and due to the fact that some whites still can't accept us as blacks, so when they come across them --- and blacks are very few at Pinelands North.

There is some evidence that children of domestic workers were made to feel bad by some community members for attending white schools, and such experiences had an alienating effect upon them. This was also discussed in the literature (Sacco, 1991; Christie, 1989)

7. Alienation

It appeared that there were situations which occurred at the community level which tended to leave the children with feelings of alienation. Such negative experiences were attributed to jealousy from neighbours whose children were not in white schools. Respondent (A) had this to say:

> ... my child is very reserved of late because he was accused of being silly ever since he attends school with boers. There is a lot of enmity in the township as a result he has forfeited his scout class because he was apparently harassed by the guy in charge.

Among some of the disadvantages of sending their children to white schools, loss of the mother tongue (Xhosa) by children was significant as it was either not taught or superficially taught in white schools. Where it is perhaps taught, they do so at a very basic level which is only useful to whites.

8. Losing the mother tongue

The need to teach children their mother tongue in schools that have children from various ethnic backgrounds was raised in the literature (Riley, 1994; Verma, 1994). Interestingly, although places like the United Kingdom embarked on integrated schooling decades ago, they still struggle with the problem of how to balance things out when it comes to maintaining the mother tongue in schools with children from multiple backgrounds. This is probably an indication of the difficult road ahead for schools in South Africa.

In this study this topic raised various conflicting views from the domestic workers, and was interestingly a source of tension at times. Those who were worried about their children losing Xhosa had the following views as represented by (C):

> I don't like the idea of losing the Xhosa language because even if he can't write it but, he needs to be able to converse with me in Xhosa. He will use the Xhosa to accommodate me as an illiterate because, I wont always understand English. So it's important that he does not lose his language.

(A) added that white schools are not addressing this matter seriously:

> This is a worry for me especially with the girl because she cannot even write it (Xhosa). My problem is that even when they attempt to teach Xhosa in these schools, they teach the most basic stuff fit for sub-A because they are trying to accommodate whites, so, there is nothing they gain from those classes and thus they lose their mother tongue.

Similarly (F) said:

> Since my kids are in white schools you find that when they talk among themselves that their Xhosa is not okay. They can hardly write Xhosa.

For this particular domestic worker the effects of children not learning Xhosa were frustrating her in relation to effective participation in church:

> I do have a problem because my eldest daughter cannot read the song book in church. She even has problems spelling Xhosa names over the telephone.

The other domestic workers felt that losing the mother tongue by their children was not an issue. (D) said:

> It is something I expected because I knew there was no Xhosa there which is why he is losing his Xhosa. What I am saying is that this is about all he is losing and its not that much of a headache for me.

Similarly worker (E) felt that it was not necessary for the child to learn the Xhosa language thoroughly if he can communicate superficially, that would suffice. She said:

> ... some people have reservations because they fear that children will lose their Xhosa. To me that is not the issue as long as the child can speak the language, knowing the idioms wont really help him. My child is okay where he is (at a white school) my role is to teach him to speak and write it (Xhosa).

The differing opinions about the loss of the mother tongue in children brought about the different psychological experiences of the parents, and in a way brought back the similarities-differences discourse debate discussed in chapter 1 (Kottler, 1990). These

findings were also consistent with the research carried out by Verma (1989) and Riley (1994) about the psychological difficulties which came about as a result of children losing their mother tongue.

In summary the disadvantages of sending children to white schools seem to have resulted in inreased burdens and sacrifices for domestic workers who have ended up suppressing their personal needs in order to attend to their children's' school requirements. Furthermore, parents have had to attend school meetings at awkward times and in alienating environments. As they became fluent in English, children tended to be closer to employers and this led to difficulties in the parent-child relationships. Parents also experienced fears and concerns about various things which were likely to harm their children. Sending children to white schools resulted to children being alienated from their communities. This has been exacerbated by the loss of the mother tongue.

Overall, the findings of this study have indicated that the domestic workers' decision to send children to white schools has advantages and disadvantages although the latter far outweigh the former. Most of the literature reviewed focussed on the hardships domestic workers undergo. This was also confirmed by these findings. Furthermore, although there was no literature found on domestic workers with children in white schools, the findings confirmed some of Sacco's (1991) research on aspirant black middle class families with children in white schools.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study included two main advantages and eight disadvantages experienced by domestic workers whose children go to white schools.

Although the findings of this study cannot be generalised to all South African domestic workers with children in white schools because of the small sample used, in Hollway's (1989) terms they contributed significantly in highlighting the experiences which domestic workers with children in white schools have had to undergo in their efforts to secure a better future for their children.

These findings also partly showed some of the difficult situations domestic workers' children were subjected to both at school and in their various home situations as a result of being in white schools.

Since admission of African children to what remains predominantly white schools is a growing phenomenon, one could predict that more children in such situations are going to encounter psychosocial and scholastic difficulties. Notwithstanding the importance of the reported gains both for children and parents, it is necessary that the disadvantages be addressed with the seriousness they deserve. Based on this, several recommendations as set out below should be considered.

In so far as the first three disadvantages are concerned (burdens and sacrifices, suppression of needs, and attendance of school meetings), it would appear that domestic workers need to be educated by both prospective schools by giving them more information beforehand about what schools expect of them as parents. This is important as parents seemed to struggle psychologically in having to cope with the transition from the less demanding township schools to white schools where demands are different and

greater. Schools may have to rethink the times they set for parents' meetings as these tend to be held at awkward times and thus become a source of enormous psychological pressure for domestic workers who mostly rely on public transport.

The issue of children being closer to employers needs to be handled with extreme care by employers who because they tend to be in a dominant position, have the responsibility of preventing the situation becoming intolerable. This fragile area essentially calls for some sensitivity and constant self-monitoring so that they do not take over the domestic workers' role as a parent.

Domestic workers appear to have to endure humiliating situations such as not being able to comprehend fully when their children speak English and being corrected by children for mispronunciation. These, together with parental fears and concerns, as well as feelings of alienation would probably be addressed well if domestic workers as parents had regular group discussions with a clinical psychologist as facilitator. Sharing the same experiences would help to reduce the baggage of frustrations they are carrying as individuals.

The decision to send children to white schools has meant that parents have had to watch helplessly as their children struggle to express themselves in Xhosa which is their mother tongue. The effects of this problem spill over to other areas of the child's life like the parent (F) who noted that her child cannot read the Xhosa bible in church.

It is imperative that white schools make the necessary adjustments and changes in their curricula so that African languages are being taught as first languages in white schools. According to personal conversations held with Ruth Versveld of the Early Learning Resource Unit at UCT and Mandy Singer of the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), individual schools are involved mainly in bridgeing courses for black students. In essence therefore schools still maintain what Christie (1990) referred to as the assimilationist principles. This situation calls for more visible and acceptable change in

in schools, as failure in this respect will continue to create serious psychological disturbances in the masses of South African children.

Perhaps of more importance is that clinics where children are normally referred for behavioural problems, should gear themselves for the increase (already evident at Progress Center) of such cases from white schools. This will require them to devise increasingly appropriate and community-oriented interventions in order to address this particular problem successfully. These could include workshops run by psychologists to help teachers to identify children experiencing emotional problems.

Psychologists could also run workshops for the children on how to handle the transition between the various environmental demands without necessarily suffering from an identity crisis. There could also be support groups for parents and children whose relationships have been affected by the newly acquired experiences. The clinics could also act as a consultative liaison and help involved parties to face problems which they would otherwise avoid solving on their own. In so doing cases such as the one which triggered this study could hopefully be resolved at an early stage.

Finally, implementing the above recommendations could be met with resistance from people who feel that their privacy is being invaded as domestic work is a private affair between those involved. One could only hope that people with such difficulties will gather strength within themselves to try and find solutions for the benefit of all concerned.

The value of this study lies in the fact that it has succeeded in identifying an important area of concern in the mental health system. In the absence of studies like this one the effects of the transition from black to white schools on both children and parents is likely to be overlooked by the schools concerned. Based on this therefore, further research is necessary to clarify issues within this very sensitive area.

Psychologists in particular have a crucial role to play within this transitional process as all the problems eventually affect the parents' and children's mental health. Their role in relation to the above recommendations involves preventative work, early intervention, and to reversing existing damage where possible.

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APPENDIX A

PILOT STUDY INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Employer's questions

1. For how long have you known your employee?
2. What kind of a relationship do you have with him/her?

3. (a) Whose decision was it to send the to a multiracial school?
   (b) Why did you decide to do so?

4. Did the parent/s have any say in this decision?

5. (a) Were there any concerns raised by the parent/s?

   (b) How were these addressed?

6. Whose responsibility is it to attend the school related meetings and functions?

7. (a) Have you noticed any changes in the child ever since he started attending multiracial school?

   (b) What were those changes?

8. (a) What would you say was positive about sending the child to this school?

   (b) What would you say was negative about sending the child to this school?

9. (a) Do you think that there is a possibility that the child could lose his/her identity?

   (b) How would that affect the parent-child relationship?

10. (a) Is it possible that the child identifies with you more than the parent?

    (b) How do you feel about that?

11. (a) Do you think that the child has gained anything by removed from the township?

Parent's questions

1. How would you describe your relationship with your employer?
2. Whose decision was it to send the child to a multiracial school?

3. Do you feel that you were given an opportunity to be part of the decision?
4. If you did not agree with the decision would you have been able to oppose your employer's decision?

5. (a) Do you still feel that it was the correct decision?

   (b) If not why not?
6. Was it a fair decision from the child's point of view i.e. removing him/her from familiar surroundings?
7. What does the child stand to gain from this decision?
8. What negative effects are likely to come from this decision?
9. Do you have any fears about your child attending a multiracial school?
10. (a) Do you think that your child has changed in any way?
    (b) What changes have you observed?
11. Is the child still able to socialise with her/her peers in the township?
12. Does your child's fluency in English intimidate you in any way?
13. (a) Would you say that the child identifies more with your employer than yourself?
    (b) How does that make you feel?
14. Has the child's level of respect for you changed since he/she attended a multiracial school?
15. Do you still feel in control as a parent?

Children's questions

1. How does it feel to attend a multiracial school?
2. How different is it from the township school?

3. (a) What is it that you like about your school?
   (b) Is there anything you hate about it?

4. (a) Are you ever confused about your identity?

(b) What causes this confusion?

5. (a) Do you see yourself as being black or white?
   (b) Are your friends black or white?
6. Do you miss having to communicate with your peers in your own language?
7. (a) Are you coping with your school work?
   (b) What is it that you find difficult?
8. (a) Do you still have friends in the township?
   (b) What sorts of things do you do together?
   (c) Are these different from those you do with your peers at school?

9. Are there any difficulties that you experience in the township now that you attend a multiracial school?
10. How do you feel about the fact that your parent is not as fluent as you are in English?
11. Is there any change in your relationship with your parent ever since you attended a multiracial school?

12. Do you still identify with your parent/s as before or not?

PARTICI-PANTS	AGE	EDUCATION	MARITAL STATUS	NO OF CHILDREN	CHILDREN IN WHITE SCHOOLS	SALARY
E	27	STD 10	SINGLE	1	1	R500
D	37	STD 8	SINGLE	3	1	R600
A	35	STD 7	MARRIED	4	4	R1400
C	46	STD 5	DIVORCED	2	1	R600
D	39	STD 8	WIDOWED	3	1	R1050
F	41	STD 8	DIVORCED	4	4	R1199

APPENDIX B - PERSONAL INFORMATION

APPENDIX C

GUIDING QUESTIONS

1. How do you feel about having children in a white school?
2. How was this decision made?
3. What was your role as a parent in this decision?
4. Would you have been able to oppose this decision if you deemed it necessary?
5. Who is responsible for attending school meetings and helping with homework?
6. Do you make major decisions on your own or you leave it to your employer?
7. Who is responsible for the payment of school fees?
8. How does it feel to have someone taking that responsibility for you?
9. How is your relationship with your employer?
10. What kind of a person is your employer?
11. What is that you like most/least about your employer?
12. How do you feel about your work?
13. What do you like most/least about it?
14. Would you say that you tend to look for a paternalistic employer or not?
15. Are you able to voice your needs without feeling guilty?
16. Are you union members?
17. How do you feel about wearing a uniform?
18. How do you feel about the sleep-in arrangement?
19. Are you allowed visitors?

20. How do you feel about getting handouts?

21. How are you called?

22. Do they know your surname?

23. Is this your real name or was it given to you?

24. How are you supposed to address your employer?

25. Do you feel that you are part of your employers' family?

26. Do you have any second thoughts about the decision you made of sending your children to white schools?

27. What does the child stand to gain?

28. Is there anything the child loses?

29. What are your views about Xhosa not being taught in white schools?

30. Do you have any fears related to having your children in white schools?

31. Have you discussed these with your employer?

32. What career would you like your child to follow?

33. Are there any noticeable changes in the child ever since she/he attends a white school?

34. Are there any changes in peer relationships?

35. Does the child confide in you?

36. How do you feel when your child is fluent in English?

37. What language do you use to communicate with your child?

40. How do you handle situations where you don't understand what the child says?

41. Is there a time when your child was closer to the employer than to you?

42. Has the child's level of respect changed?

43. Do you still feel in control as a parent?

44. How do your children feel about domestic work?

45. What was the best/worst thing about sending your child to a white school?

46. How do you feel about this interview?