

**THE LIVE-IN DOMESTIC WORKERS' EXPERIENCE OF  
OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

**A DISSERTATION COMPLETED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
A MASTERS DEGREE IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

**University of Cape Town**

**Department Of Occupational Therapy**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative, ethnographic study endeavoured to describe the live-in domestic workers experiences of engaging in occupations. Rich data was gathered through unstructured interviews. **Occupational Restriction: You are just the girl; Occupational Reconciliation: Doing my Best and Tomorrow...definitely, maybe** emerged as themes describing the domestic workers' occupational engagement. The influential **characteristics of domestic workers and their environments** were inherent within these. These characteristics revealed that the live-in domestic workers experiences of occupational engagement place them at **risk of developing health disorders**. Implications of the findings are discussed with reference to domestic workers, occupational scientists and therapists and policy makers.

The historical context of this study is based on knowledge derived from the literature about domestic workers, human occupation and health. This information shaped the researcher's rationale for the study.

## 1.1 LIVE-IN DOMESTIC WORKERS

Alone I sit in my cell  
Thinking of my poor children and  
Husband  
No one to talk to  
Nor to listen to  
My poor feet are aching  
My shoulders are drooping from tiredness  
I am given names  
Some call me maid  
Some call me Mary.  
Is it so hard to be called Izhutso  
I am a nurse, doctor, cook, you name it I do  
My reward comes when they want  
Oh land of my forefathers  
How can you forget one who sacrificed  
her children to be with yours  
Oh rulers of our country  
How can you forget me in your house  
How can you forget the lonely worker.

*Anonymous Domestic Worker*  
(Abrams, 1988)

Domestic work is the oldest and most common form of wage labour for black women in South Africa (Lessing, 1994). Initially domestic workers were employed in rural communities, with the main concern being the provision of food, shelter and clothing. This pattern changed so that the majority of domestic workers are now employed in

urban areas (Lessing, 1994). The factors that contribute to the vulnerability of live-in domestic workers are outlined below.

### **The need to adapt**

Black women are often coerced by poverty from rural to urban areas to do domestic work. Their desperation for work is aggravated by the lack of employment alternatives (Cock, 1989) and the high demand for such workers (Kenyon, 1991).

The most reliable statistics suggest that there are between one and two million domestic workers in South Africa. However it is the least prestigious employment in South African Society (Cock, 1989). The reasons for this are both economic and social.

### **The law**

Domestic workers are further rendered vulnerable by the law. Previously, they were not included in the law. Thus domestic workers who made demands stood a high risk of dismissal. Domestic workers were only included in the Labour Relations Act definition of employees in 1995. Their inclusion in this act provided a framework in which workers could bargain within the labour market. However, domestic workers are poorly positioned to bargain because of their isolation and the inaccessibility of their place of work (e.g. labour inspectors may be denied access to the work place because it is private property). The difficulty that domestic workers experience with bargaining leaves them vulnerable (Grossman, 1997).

The law has also recognized domestic workers by including them in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (1998). This act obliges the employer and worker to enter into a contract that stipulates the employers work conditions. COSATU (1998)

drew attention to the fact that the success of the policy depends on the effective monitoring of wages and conditions and access of inspectors to the work place. It also relies on dealing with domestic workers' disempowerment and fear of dismissal or reprisal if they take up their grievances.

### **Devalued work**

Domestic work is socially-useful as it involves great responsibility and the application of a wide range of socially-useful skills, for example cleaning, cooking and caring for employers' children. Despite being expected to fulfil numerous roles in the household and doing necessary work, they are regarded as easily replaceable, low- skilled and of little economic value to the employers (Grossman, 1997). Furthermore, employers undervalue their work so that it is viewed as unskilled woman's work (Budlender, 1997).

### **The environment and work conditions**

The domestic workers are often accommodated (live-in) at their workplace and function in isolation from other workers (Abrams, 1988). Their work conditions are characterized by long irregular hours, low wages and a low status (Cock, 1989). They are expected to start work early in the morning as well as be available until late in the evenings. Their work hours and time off (both during the day and paid leave) is dependent on the employer's lifestyle (Barret et al, 1995). Besides their wages being low, a proportion of it is often "payment in kind".

### **The power imbalance**

The low economic status is paralleled with a rigid, intensely paternalistic relationship between the domestic worker and employer. This generates a powerless dependence for the worker and a sense of superiority for the employer (Cock, 1989). This relationship is further characterized by intimacy whereby the worker is treated as though she is "part of the family", but the worker is not allowed to behave as she would usually do in a family (Grossman, 1997). She thus has the burden of being a "family member" without experiencing any of the benefits.

This study endeavors to uncover the way that these factors relate to the live-in domestic workers' experience of occupational engagement.

## **1.2 HUMAN OCCUPATION AND OCCUPATIONAL ENGAGEMENT**

Occupational Therapists' understanding of the concept of human occupation (referred to as occupations) has always been different to that of the general public (AOTA, 1997). Human occupation is defined as "*chunks of activity that are personally meaningful and are named by the lexicon of the culture that humans engage in*" (Clark et al, 1991, p303). Thus the essence of occupation is related to personal meaning. Occupation is also perceived to be multi-dimensional, consisting of spiritual, temporal, cognitive, psychosocial, symbolic, social, physical and contextual factors.

Wilcock (1998) argues that occupation is a central aspect of human experience. It is innate and related to health and survival. This argument is largely drawn from literature about evolution of occupations in man and the biological and socio-cultural aspects of occupational behaviour (Wilcock, 1993). She views occupational

engagement as a mechanism through which people demonstrate and use their capacities.

The way individuals use their capacities is influenced by society. Society places value on the use of certain capacities or engagement in particular occupations. On the other hand, the way that individuals use their capacities and engage in occupations influences society. (Wilcock, 1998).

### **1.3 HEALTH**

#### **Achieving Health**

The OTTAWA Charter of Health Promotion (WHO, 1986) acknowledges the concept of well being and the influence of the environment on health. Within this, health is perceived as a resource for everyday life. The declaration proposes that in order for people to achieve health, an individual or group must be able to identify and realize aspirations in order to satisfy their needs and be able to change or cope with the environment (OTTAWA, 1986). The subjective experience is acknowledged as being of importance to health.

#### **Wellbeing within a context**

This view of health stipulates that the basic conditions for health are a stable ecosystem, peace, shelter, education, food, income, sustainable resources, social justice and equity (OTTAWA, 1986). Physical well being is equated with the use of physical capacities to meet a physical challenge. Mental well being includes the use of spiritual, cognitive and affective capacities and social well being refers to an individual's interdependence with his or her social context. Social well being is

influenced by the cultural and social parameters in the context (Christianssen and Baum, 1997). This determines whether individuals are able to challenge ideas valued by society.

### **Health through occupation**

An occupational perspective of health refers to a balance of physical, mental and social well being that is attained through socially-valued and individually meaningful occupations (Wilcock, 1998). Occupational engagement must be balanced with the individual's capacity and a context that offers optimal opportunity for growth and flexibility (Wilcock, 1998). Factors in society may have positive or negative influences on health (Law et al, 1998).

### **Influence of Occupational Institutions**

The underlying factors within society (for example, the influence of the economy, societal values and policy) give rise to particular occupational institutions. These occupational institutions may include employment opportunities and the division of labour, legislation, education and health care systems. These institutions may give rise to negative conditions that do not promote health.

## **1.4 EXPERIENTIAL ORIGIN OF THE STUDY**

### **1.4.1 Interpreting Theory**

My understanding is that the negative conditions within South Africa include ongoing, unresolved stress from poverty and a lack of opportunities to develop potential; occupational imbalance, deprivation and alienation; ecological breakdown; violence and substance abuse. These risk factors impact on the individual and place them at



risk of developing boredom, burnout, depression and decreased fitness. These conditions may eventually lead to disease, disability or death.

As a result of risk factors in the environment (for example, social isolation or a lack of designated resources) domestic workers may experience increased blood pressure or depression (own interpretation of Wilcock's occupational risk factors (1998)). These changes in their physical and emotional state may be the result of, or result in occupational imbalance, deprivation or alienation.

#### **1.4.2 Encounters as an Occupational Therapist**

I became interested in doing a study with domestic workers when I was working as an Occupational Therapist in a psychiatric unit for women. During this time, I encountered young, live-in domestic workers who developed psychiatric diagnoses such as substance-induced psychosis, depression and bipolar mood disorder. These domestic workers were all of rural origin and under the age of thirty-five. During therapy sessions, they shared how stressful it was for them to be away from "home" and how they struggled to adapt to the work environment. I began to think that their difficulty in adapting to their work contributed to them developing psychiatric diagnoses. Their descriptions alerted me to the possibility that much of what they did was work-related, and that they had little access to alternative, more restful occupations.

#### **1.4.3 Personal Experience**

My professional knowledge was supported by personal experiences with domestic workers. Having grown up in a home with a live-in domestic worker, I was aware of the class differences that existed between the worker and employer (and employer's family). I had formed friendships with some of the domestic workers who had been employed in my home and realized the difficulty in dealing with the class difference.

It was difficult to engage with these workers, as their mode of interacting was usually done with the intention to please. I was interested in gaining their perspectives on what it was like to live-in and what they thought about the things they did.

#### **1.4.4 Bracketing**

In order to make my biases explicit; I was interviewed by a psychiatric social worker. The interview required that I reflected on and related my past experiences with domestic workers as well as my motivation for wanting to pursue the topic. This interview process initiated the self-examination that was necessary for a reflexive research approach. The interviewer provided me with valuable feedback at the end of the session (see Appendix One for reflections on my bias).

### **1.5 DEVELOPING A FOCUS**

The insight generated through reviewing the literature and the above experiences resulted in the following problem being formulated: "*Rural women who come to work as live-in domestic workers in urban environments are vulnerable. They experience a change from their familiar environments and this influences their occupational engagement*". This problem statement was based on the assumption that as a consequence of their changed environment, domestic workers' opportunities for occupational engagement was reduced. This in turn places them at risk of developing health disorders.

I began to investigate the feasibility of conducting a study based on the above problem statement. I aimed to focus the study on the live-in domestic workers' experience of adapting from their rural to urban occupations. Through discussion

with supervisors and peers it became apparent that such a study was too broad, given the requirements for completion of the study. I therefore decided to *investigate what the live-in domestic workers of rural origins' experiences of occupational engagement were in their urban environment*. The focus shifted from exploring their adaptation to the urban environment to describing what they did in this environment.

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**SECTION 2**  
**METHOD OF INQUIRY**

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## **2.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Live-in domestic workers are vulnerable in their work environments. This may have an influence on their experience of occupational engagement.

## **2.2 AIM OF THE STUDY**

This study aims to explore the live-in domestic workers experience of occupational engagement.

## **2.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

What is the young, live-in domestic worker's experience of engaging in occupations in her environment?

## **2.4 OBJECTIVES**

- a) To identify the meaning that live-in domestic workers attribute to their occupational engagement.
- b) To describe the purpose they assign to their occupational engagement.
- c) To explore their emotions relating to occupational engagement in their environment.

## 2.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS

**Domestic work** - refers to housework performed by employed domestic workers

**Health** -The World Health Organization defines health as being "*a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity*" (WHO, 1946).

**Occupation** - This term is used interchangeably with human occupation. It refers to "*chunks of activity that are personally meaningful and are named by the lexicon of the culture that humans engage in*" (Clark et al, 1991, p303).

**Occupational engagement**- Individuals use of occupations to fill their time, create circumstances of their everyday existence and create their place in the world (Kielhofner, 1997).

**Occupational Deprivation** - This implies the influence of an external agency that keeps a person from acquiring, using or enjoying something (Wilcock, 1998)

**Occupational Imbalance** - when there is an over-emphasis on one area of a person's occupational engagement. The engagement fails to meet their unique social, physical, mental or rest needs (Wilcock, 1998).

## 2.6 ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnography as a qualitative research method involves learning about people from them. The meaning of phenomena from the cultural perspective of an individual is

explored through this process (Hasselkus, 1995). It enables the researcher to discover what an individual's interpretation and thoughts are regarding a specific experience. It also suggests that individuals attribute meaning and assign purpose to their actions through their experience of interacting with their context (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998).

### **2.6.1 Ethnography as a method of choice**

This study aims to explore live-in domestic workers' experience of engaging in occupations. Cock (1989) described live-in domestic workers' environment (or context) as including South Africa's socio-political, economic and cultural environment, as well as the workers' place of accommodation and work. Similarly, one's experience of occupational engagement is embedded within one's context (Nelson, 1998).

In my attempt to explore the live-in domestic workers' experience of occupational engagement, I realised the need to consider the influence of their environment. Applying the ethnographic method allows one to explore phenomena in relation to its environment. It thus provided the opportunity to investigate their experience of occupational engagement in relation to their environment. Achieving this through asking domestic workers themselves was essential as it acknowledged their worth. The ethnographic method was a sound way of achieving this as it allows one to gain the domestic workers view of their experience. It provided a means of accessing their interpretation of their experience of occupational engagement.

### **2.6.2 Data collection within Ethnography**

Through subscribing to the principles of the ethnographic method the researcher has the opportunity to learn about the phenomenon. A description of the ethnographic

principles (De Poy and Gitlin, 1994) that were applied in order to explore domestic workers' occupational engagement is incorporated into the discussion below.

### **2.6.3 Entering the world of domestic workers**

The researcher has to become actively involved in, and gain familiarity with, the life-situations of those being studied. This emphasizes the necessity for the researcher to be accustomed to the circumstances experienced by the participants (DePoy and Gitlin, 1994). One's attention is drawn to the subjective elements that are inherent in qualitative research (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996). These subjective elements allow the researcher to be sensitive to the issues peculiar to the phenomenon.

I endeavored to become more familiar with the life situations of domestic workers using three actions. These were establishing contact with key informants, attending workers forum meetings, and reading domestic workers' narratives.

### **2.6.4 Contact with Key Informants**

Establishing contact with three key informants (Hester, Florence and Patsy) enabled me to contemplate what being a domestic worker was like and how they were influenced by what they do.

Hester is a proud domestic worker who is actively involved in the South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union. Florence has experience as a domestic worker and currently works at the Sea Point African National Congress constituency office. Patsy recently left her job as a domestic worker and hopes to find an administrative job instead.



I met with each of the key informants to discuss my research ideas and hear their opinions. They affirmed the need for a study on domestic workers. They also highlighted some of the problems (such as, long work hours and low salaries) that they experienced as domestic workers. Through making these contacts, I gained access to the world of domestic work and began to realise how both gender and power issues related to the occupations that domestic workers engaged in. As I engaged in these discussions, my views about domestic work broadened, thus improving sensitivity.

#### **2.6.5 Attendance of workers forum meetings**

These meetings offer domestic workers and those working in the hospitality industry an opportunity to voice their labour-related grievances and to obtain advice or support from one another. The ANC constituency office in Sea Point hosts the meetings.

Attending two of these meetings enabled me to develop sensitivity to the impact that these workers' work and living conditions had on them. It also allowed me to observe the unrestricted but respectful manner in which domestic workers interacted and shared their stories, affirming that rich data could be collected through interviewing.

#### **2.6.6 Reading domestic workers' life stories**

Reading the narratives of domestic workers compiled in "A talent for tomorrow - Life stories of SA servants" (Gordon, 1985) sensitized me to the emotions evoked within domestic workers as a result of their work. This helped me to consider the sensitivity with which I would conduct the interviews.

The sensitivity achieved through these actions carried with it the risk of conducting a study or generating findings that were biased towards the researcher's experiences and interpretations. To avoid this and use the sensitivity as a resource in the study, I engaged in critical reflection (as described by Holloway and Wheeler, 1996).

## **2.7 CRITICAL REFLECTION**

Through the process of self-examination (Mason, 1997), I critically evaluated my perspective to determine how this might have influenced what was learnt during the study. I reviewed my personal assumptions and pre-conceptions through bracketing (see 1.4.4 Bracketing).

Reflexivity was further achieved by engaging in self-reflection and in discussion with colleagues and supervisors throughout the research process. This reflexivity was supported by the techniques used to ensure the credibility of the study (see section 2.12.1).

## **2.8 ENGAGING WITH DOMESTIC WORKERS**

The ethnographic principle, 'Length of engagement', recommends that the researcher engage in the field for a prolonged period so that trust is established with the participants. In this way the researcher gains a better understanding of the participants in the process (De Poy and Gitlin, 1994). I gathered the data over a relatively short period of three months. However, because I was recommended by a key informant who was familiar with all the participants, I was assisted in developing my relationship with each participant.

## **2.9 SAMPLING**

The participants were selected using purposive sampling (Holloway and Wheeler 1996). After explaining the sampling criteria to the key informants, they assisted me in identifying participants.

### **2.9.1 Sampling Criteria**

The participants should be domestic workers who:

- a) Live-in at their place of work
- b) Be between the ages of twenty-two to thirty-five.

I thought that this group of workers were most vulnerable because all of the clients that I saw in the psychiatric unit was in this age category.

- c) Have been working as domestic workers in Cape Town for a maximum of two years.

### **2.9.2 Evolution of sampling criteria**

As a result of the insight gained at the outset of data collection, I decided to make a concession with one of the criteria and discarded two of the initial sampling criteria.

These are discussed below.

#### **Concession made**

The criterion was that *participants must have been able to communicate in English or Afrikaans*. One of the participants was unable to express herself succinctly in English. To enable her to participate more fully, I arranged for an interpreter to assist with the interview.

### **Discarded criteria**

*a) Participants should be of rural origin (rural actually referring to peri-urban towns such as Worcester, De Aar, Kimberley etc.)*

One of the potential participants referred was of local rather than rural origin. When I phoned her to arrange for the interview, this participant did not indicate that she was from a local suburb. Only after I had met her and obtained consent for her participation in the interview did I learn of her urban background. However, I continued to interview her and discovered that she shared many of the difficulties described by previous participants. On reflection, I recognized that it was the experience of being a "live-in" worker that was essential to the sampling and focus of the study and that the origin did not significantly influence this. It was this, which impacted on occupations as a live-in domestic worker. I decided to alter my sample criteria: it did not matter whether the participants were urban or rural residents, as long as they lived-in as domestic workers.

*b) They should have been in their place of employment for at least three months.*

This criterion ensured that the workers would have had sufficient time to become familiar with their settings. This would render them information-rich about the factors in their setting. However, in discussion with a potential participant, I realized that she was able to provide rich information about her experiences despite being in-between jobs. This made it clear that it was the ability to reflect on and coherently describe one's experiences that was important as a criterion.

### **2.9.3 Sample Selection**

Four participants were selected to participate in the study. This sample size allows for a rich description and in-depth understanding of the meaning, purpose and feelings that the participants experience during occupational engagement. The

interview with the fourth participant confirmed this since no new categories emerged from this interview. Thus saturation was obtained (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996). Three of the participants were identified by Florence (the key informant) and the fourth by the researcher's colleague.

## **2.10 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS**

A brief profile of each participant is given below.

### **2.10.1 Emma**

Emma is a bubbly twenty-five year old, Afrikaans-speaking woman from Aberdeen. We met at her employer's luxurious double-storied home in Sea Point. The house was unoccupied as her employers had emigrated to America earlier that month. We sat alongside each other at the kitchen table, our voices echoing through the empty house as the interview proceeded.

Emma proudly related that she had completed a matric and a secretarial diploma course. She indulged me with the stories of triumph and joy that she had experienced during this time. One such story detailed the creative manner in which she had initiated and organized a netball tournament between different hostels whilst at college. Through these stories it became clear to me that Emma was a person who thrived on meeting challenges and had been a leader at both school and college.

After completing her diploma, Emma was unable to find work in Aberdeen. She thus resorted to accepting work as a domestic worker in George. After doing this for one year she returned to her home, hoping to find secretarial work. Unable to secure employment in Aberdeen, she came to work in Cape Town.

Emma had been working in her current place of employment for ten months. She had the responsibility of minding her employers' house until the weekend of the interview, when the house was sold.

Emma was to start a new job on the day after the interview. Her current employer had arranged for Emma to work for her friend. She made it very clear that we had to meet before she started her new job, since she would no longer be allowed any outside contact or visitors. She vividly described the restrictions that she anticipated experiencing in this new job. This alerted me to the reality of "having no choice" when working as a domestic worker.

#### **2.10.2 Victoria**

Victoria is a pleasant, twenty-six year old woman with a four-month-old baby, Temba. Initially, Victoria came to Cape Town to work as a "pamphlet distributor" and "tea-girl" for estate agents. When the company closed down, she started working at a restaurant in Sea Point. Continuous conflict with the patrons and management of the restaurant made this job too stressful and this led to her decision to become a domestic worker.

Victoria sadly described how emotionally painful this time was for her. She had missed her home and had been especially concerned about the welfare of her mother who has since passed away.

Victoria had been working for her current employer for two years. Temba was born at the beginning of this year and lived with her in her room. Her employer had said that she could only have him with her until he was a year old. Victoria was very distressed

about this, as she wants to be with her child. Also, since her mother had died, she did not have anyone at home who could care for her baby.

Victoria made me aware of the price she had paid for having Temba with her. She worked with her baby on her back or by her side. She thus had to fulfil both roles of mother and worker at the same time.

Both Victoria's work circumstances and the fact that she was a mother impacted on our interviews. She did not arrive for our first meeting because her employer had given her extra tasks to do. She was late for the second meeting because she had to use her short time off to meet with me as well as buy nappies for her baby. Our third meeting lasted only a half-an-hour because she had to fetch her employer's shoes from a nearby shoe store. Victoria consistently apologized for being late and seemed genuinely embarrassed. Florence cared for Temba, who accompanied his mother, during the interviews. I observed how Victoria would occasionally check that Temba was happy. This led me to reflect on the impact which the dual roles and the rigid working conditions could have on an individual.

### **2.10.3 Nomfundo**

Nomfundo is a 27 year-old, smartly-groomed woman from Khayelitsha. She was eager to participate in the interview, saying that domestic workers needed to speak out. However, she also needed much reassurance about the way in which the information would be presented. Her concern was about being exposed, for fear that this could lead to her losing her job.

When I initially spoke to her about the study, she said that she was from Transkei. However, during the interview she clarified that she was born in Transkei, but had

been living in Khayelitsha for ten years. In this interview it became clear that the descriptions of her experiences were similar to those of the other participants.

We met at the ANC Advice Office. She explained that she had completed standard nine and had started to do a Nursing Certificate. She stopped when the college could not fund her any longer because of government retrenchments. Nomfundo has three young children who live with her mother in Khayelitsha.

Nomfundo expressed distress about the nature and consequences of her job. She felt that her employers ill-treated her, causing physical symptoms of illness, such as headaches and ulcers. She attributed these symptoms to her experience of stress at work and her concern about her family's welfare. She had to stay however, as she needed the job.

She also related how difficult it was to adapt to living and working in a new area. This was essential information for me, as it challenged my assumption that live-in domestic workers from rural backgrounds had more to adjust to in their new work and living environment.

#### **2.10.4 Eliza**

Eliza is a twenty-six year old woman from Bloemfontein. She was recruited for domestic work by an agent who fetched "girls" (as she refers to domestic workers) in her home suburb.

We met at a shop close to where she worked and went to her acquaintance's home for the interview. She was late for the interview because her employer insisted that



she perform some trivial tasks (in Eliza's opinion) before she left. She expressed immense irritation and resentment about this. This had clearly upset her.

Eliza, who has been at her current place of employment for two years, keenly shared her personal experiences of being a live-in domestic worker. Her frustrations included working long hours, not being given sufficient time off and having to comply with her employer's whims and demands. She expressed her sadness regarding not having had "annual leave" for two years. This meant that she hadn't seen her three-year-old daughter for all this time. Eliza hoped to go home for a week's holiday at the end of July. She was worried that her daughter would not recognize her.

Eliza expressed unhappiness about being a live-in domestic worker. She wished to find another job.

## **2.11 THE DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE**

I telephoned each participant, introducing myself as "a researcher doing a study with domestic workers", having been referred to them by the relevant key informant. I phoned during the day so that I could speak directly to the potential participant. This meant that she could choose whether or not she informed her employer of her participation in the study. This was important as it assisted in setting an interview-context that valued the domestic worker's choice. I arranged to meet the participants at a time and venue that was most convenient for them. DePoy and Gitlin (1994) suggest that setting up this type of context positively impacts on the quality of data collected.

Three of the interviews were conducted at the ANC constituency office. This setting was familiar to the participants. The ANC office is usually abuzz with people, some regular "visitors" who work in the area come to spend time talking and relaxing at the office. This contributed positively to the informal and relaxed tenor of the interview.

At the beginning of each meeting, I explained the purpose of the study to the participant. It was described as a study that would explore *what domestic workers did with their time*. Their permission to participate was confirmed by asking them to complete a consent form (see Appendix 2). Once the participant gave her consent, the interview was initiated.

### **2.11.1 The Interviewing technique**

The ethnographic research technique of interviewing allows the researcher to obtain the specified individual's experience and view of the phenomena being studied (Halloway and Wheeler, 1996). The researcher sets the context for the interview and crafts the relationship with the individual. The use of unstructured interviews allows the researcher to present the area of study and then to use probing questions to obtain more information (De Poy and Gitlin, 1994). For the person being interviewed, the interview may be experienced as being a conversation with a purpose (Mason, 1997). This technique requires that the researcher responds to the participant's cues rather than following set questions (Mason, 1996).

The unstructured interview technique applied in this study is congruent with the open and easy manner in which domestic workers share their experiences. The informal appearance of the interview facilitated sharing (see Appendix 3 for information gathered at the outset of the interview). Despite appearing informal, I actively prepared myself for each interview. I critically reflected on the research aims as well

as the information from the key informants. Through this reflection, I attempted to anticipate what type of information I would want to pursue during the interview. This enabled me to make decisions 'on the spot' during the interview. I was able to gauge where I required more depth from the interview. My ability to relate to the participants was further enhanced by my experience in interviewing as a data-gathering technique within a psychiatric occupational therapy practice.

Following my initial contact with Victoria, I realised that she would find it difficult to succinctly express herself in English. In order to allow her to share her rich experiences, I therefore arranged to have a Xhosa-speaking person as an interpreter in the interview. The interpreter was selected because of her familiarity with the qualitative research methods, particularly the importance of translating a verbatim account of the participant's words. I discussed the aims of the research and the conceptual guide that I was using for the interview with the interpreter beforehand. This ensured that she understood my questions and interpreted them verbatim.

I interviewed each participant for one-and-a-half hours. Owing to her work constraints, I conducted one of the interviews over two sessions.

## **2.12 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND RIGOUR**

### **2.12.1 Credibility**

Lincoln and Guba (1989) propose numerous techniques that can be implemented to improve confidence that the findings of the study are truthful to both subjects and context. In this study, techniques of triangulation, peer review criticism and member checks were utilised to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

## **Triangulation**

Triangulation requires the use of three different sources to verify the data (Holloway and Wheeler, 1996). This was achieved through interviews, literature and discussion with a key informant.

The data gathered during interviews was analysed and the findings were presented to, and verified by, a key informant (see Appendix 4 for her profile). She confirmed the authenticity of the findings. Lastly, the literature concerning domestic workers' lives and experiences of work served as a rich source for triangulation. I found that this literature echoed many of the experiences that were represented in the data.

In addition to the three sources, preliminary findings were presented at a research dissemination seminar organised by the UCT Department of Sociology. Attendants included domestic workers, researchers focusing on domestic work and representatives from the Labour Department and South African Domestic Workers and Allied Service Union. These attendants also confirmed the authenticity of the data.

## **Peer review Criticism**

Peer review criticism refers to the process of presenting the data analysis and conclusions to peers and supervisors for critical evaluation. Different parts of the study were presented to the Occupational Therapy Post-graduate Research Forum for discussion. The presentation of the analysis and conclusions of the study initiated a lively debate within the group. This provided me with new insights into the analysis and confirmed the appropriateness of the conclusions. In addition to this, I engaged in discussions with both my supervisors regarding the data. This further enabled a critical analysis of the data and relevant interpretation of the findings.

### **Member Checking**

The final method of ensuring the credibility of the data was through using member checking. This technique involved examining the data with two of the participants to see if it truly represented their experiences. Through applying this technique the members clarified points that they felt were poorly presented whilst confirming other descriptions and explanations. The initial interpretations and possible conclusions were also discussed with the members. This was achieved by discussing the categories and sub-categories of the analysis with the participants. Participants verified that the analysis and conclusions were legitimate. The discussions with both the key informants and members assisted me in developing and confirming the themes and conclusions.

### **2.12.2 Transferability**

This concept refers to the way findings may be transferred from a representative sample of the population to the whole group (Lincoln and Guba, 1989). The intention of this study is to explore and describe the domestic workers' experience of occupational engagement, not to generalize the findings to the entire domestic worker population. However, the decision trail implemented in this study has been clearly detailed within this report. This detail enables the reader to consider how much of the findings in the study could possibly be true for similar groups.

### **2.12.3 Dependability**

Holloway and Wheeler (1996) suggest that if a study is found to be credible, then it will be dependable as well. The dependability of this study is enhanced by the thick description of the theoretical, methodological and analytical choices made throughout the study. These choices are explicitly detailed throughout this report.

#### **2.12.4 Confirmability**

The dense description of the conceptual development of the study (in the Evolution of the study) and the method of inquiry in this report allows one to follow the manner in which the study was conducted. This enables one to clearly follow the research process to the conclusions that are reached.

### **2.13 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **2.13.1 Informed Consent**

This involves informing the participant of the "*title, purpose and explanation of the research and the procedures to be followed*" (Munhall, 1988, p156). Participants and key informants in this study understood the purpose of the research and how the results would be used. That is, the study would be synthesized into a written report and copies would be handed to the University of Cape Town, the Sea Point ANC Minister of Parliament and the Labour Department.

Key informants and participants were made aware that the personal benefit of their involvement would be limited to self-exploration and possible increased self-awareness. They were reminded of the brevity of their involvement throughout the process. Participants knew beforehand that they could withdraw from the study (at any stage) if they so chose. All this information was included in a consent form (see Appendix 2), which was discussed and signed by each participant.

The key informant contacted each participant to inquire if they would consider participating in the study. I contacted them only if they responded positively to the key informant. This ensured that they had enough time to think about their decision.

Despite this, I requested their permission to participate once again, when I telephoned them or at our initial meeting.

### **2.13.2 Confidentiality**

Holloway and Wheeler (1996) suggest that confidentiality should be guaranteed so that individuals' identities are not revealed. This was discussed with each of the participants. Key informants' and participants' names have therefore been changed in this report in order to ensure this confidentiality. Two of the key informants preferred that their own names be used which is why in their cases I have not made the changes. Furthermore, I explicitly described that the purpose of audio-taping the sessions was only for the purpose of transcription. I negotiated with the participants that these recordings would only be used for the purpose as agreed to by them in the consent form.

### **2.13.3 Sensitive Information**

I was aware of the risk that participants might share experiences that were emotionally painful for them and that they could be left feeling vulnerable. I addressed this ethical obligation towards the participants by being sensitive during the interview and not probing for information that was not related to the objectives of this study. I used their cues to ensure that they did not feel vulnerable or overexposed by the interviewing experience.

**SECTION 3**

**DATA ANALYSIS**

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### **3.1 DATA ANALYSIS**

The following steps were taken in the process of data analysis.

1. Data Management
2. Content Analysis
3. Interpretation: Application of the Dynamic Systems Theory

#### **3.1.1 Data Management**

The interviews were transcribed verbatim. The data was then managed using the QSR NUD\*ST Vivo computer software package. The computer programme was used as a tool with which to manage the coding process.

#### **3.1.2 Content Analysis**

Content analysis refers to the process of identifying, coding and categorizing the primary patterns within the data (Patton, 1990). Through content analysis, the codes emerged from the data inductively. Each of these codes was then labeled.

#### **3.1.3 Interpretation and Synthesis: Using the Dynamic Systems Theory to assist with analysis**

The codes were incorporated into the Dynamic Systems Theory (DST) to initiate the interpretation and synthesis of the data.

The DST suggests that systems change with time. The *"underlying assumption of the theory is that biological organisms are complex, multi-dimensional, co-operative systems that exhibit self organizing properties"* (Gray et al, 1996, p301). The properties of these systems are complexity, randomness and non-linearity. Complexity is elaborated upon as this is the most relevant to this study.

### **3.1.3.1 Complexity**

The complexity of the system refers to the fact that systems are complex because they contain levels of variables that evolve with time. The complexity is represented by degrees of freedom that influence the transition of the system. This refers to the multitude of factors that may influence the system's "behaviour". This behaviour occurs within an irreversible, ordered pattern. The factors influencing the evolution have equal status so that behaviour emerges from the interaction of many sub-systems including the environment (heterarchy). It thus provides a way of examining how the environment interacts with other factors to form patterns of occupational engagement.

### **Self organisation, Phase shifts and Emergent Behaviour**

Self organisation refers to the notion that systems have the potential to re-organize themselves when in a state of disequilibrium (Gray et al, 1996). When systems are far from equilibrium, they undergo abrupt, spontaneous changes in behaviour (that is, phase shifts) so that a new pattern of behaviour (the emergent behaviour) is seen. The emergent behaviour is drawn towards a common state of behaviour termed the 'Attractor State'. This state is not pre-determined, but is preferred by the system because of the co-operativeness of factors within a context. Gray suggests that occupation plays a significant role in self-organisation.

### **Control and Order Parameters**

Variables in the dynamic systems that are involved in phase shifts have been described as order and control parameters (Gray et al, 1996). Order parameters express compression of the degrees of freedom by ordering the disorganised behaviour. The order parameters refer to those conditions that precipitate change. A control parameter is responsible for moving the system through its phases. It is organic or environmental. Changes in the control parameter lead to the emergence of new patterns of behaviour in the entire system.

#### **3.1.3.2 Application of DST**

I chose this theory because of its ability to provide a framework with which to begin to explore the complexity of the human being as an occupational being. The interactional nature of the theory allowed me to represent the dynamic relationships between the codes. Gray et al (1996) provides a strong argument for the way in which this theory could be used when investigating human engagement in occupation. She highlighted similarities between the way that occupational engagement and the DST is conceptualized.

I used the divisions of behaviour pattern formation, (namely, phase shifts, emergent behaviour and control parameters) as a lens with which to group the codes. The codes were placed into the division that they best represented. This allowed me to explore patterns of occupational engagement and create sub-categories. No attempt was made to uncover the conditions that precipitated this pattern. Thus the order parameters were not investigated. Multiple meanings and perceptions of the participants' experience of occupational engagement were uncovered.

Provisional findings were presented to key informants and those participants involved in member checking. They affirmed that this interpretation of the findings was feasible. The essence of each sub-category was explored.

Categories and themes emerged as a result of the interchange between provisional data and the understanding of the participants.

### **3.2 TABLE OF FINDINGS**

The themes, categories and sub-categories are represented in the table one.

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**TABLE 1: FINDINGS OF THE INQUIRY**

<b>THEMES</b>	<b>CATEGORIES</b>	<b>SUBCATEGORIES</b>
<p><b>1. Occupational Restriction: You're just the girl</b></p>	<p>Dictated to by circumstances</p>	<p>Can't be picky It's not nice to be away from home Initiation into domestic works Working hard for little money</p>
	<p>No choice in this work</p>	<p>Experience of working Heavy workload One task to the next Regimented time off No time to socialize Work hours The contract</p>
	<p>Recycled and Disposed of</p>	<p>No value as worker The restricting room Sharing space with a difficult person Eating with employers</p>
	<p>Being in jail</p>	<p>Always available and watched Working bit by bit Mistrust Yes Madam, No Madam Poor communication with employers</p>

<p><b>2. Occupational Reconciliation: Doing my best</b></p>	<p>Interacting with friends</p>	<p>Invitation to visit          Shopping in preparation          Cooking together          Sharing a meal          Inspired to engage          Telling for my family's sake          Learning from each other          Helping me to adapt          They're there for me          Keeping priorities          Watching TV          I trust them          We joke and laugh          They look out for me          We talk          A cultural bond          Feeling accepted</p>
	<p>Time off for pleasure</p>	<p>Drinking and dancing          Ek le die dag om          To the beachfront          Going to church</p>
	<p>Using my room for what I can</p>	<p>Preparing myself for work          Cooking for myself          Being a parent          Nice to have a space          I have friends over          Wishing to rest          Sleeping          Doing my washing</p>

3. Tomorrow...definitely, maybe	What am I doing?	Settling for less Jy is uitgepit Appreciated as a worker Considering giving up
	A different vision	Finishing school Getting more information Reading to improve myself

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**SECTION 4**

**FINDINGS OF THE INQUIRY**

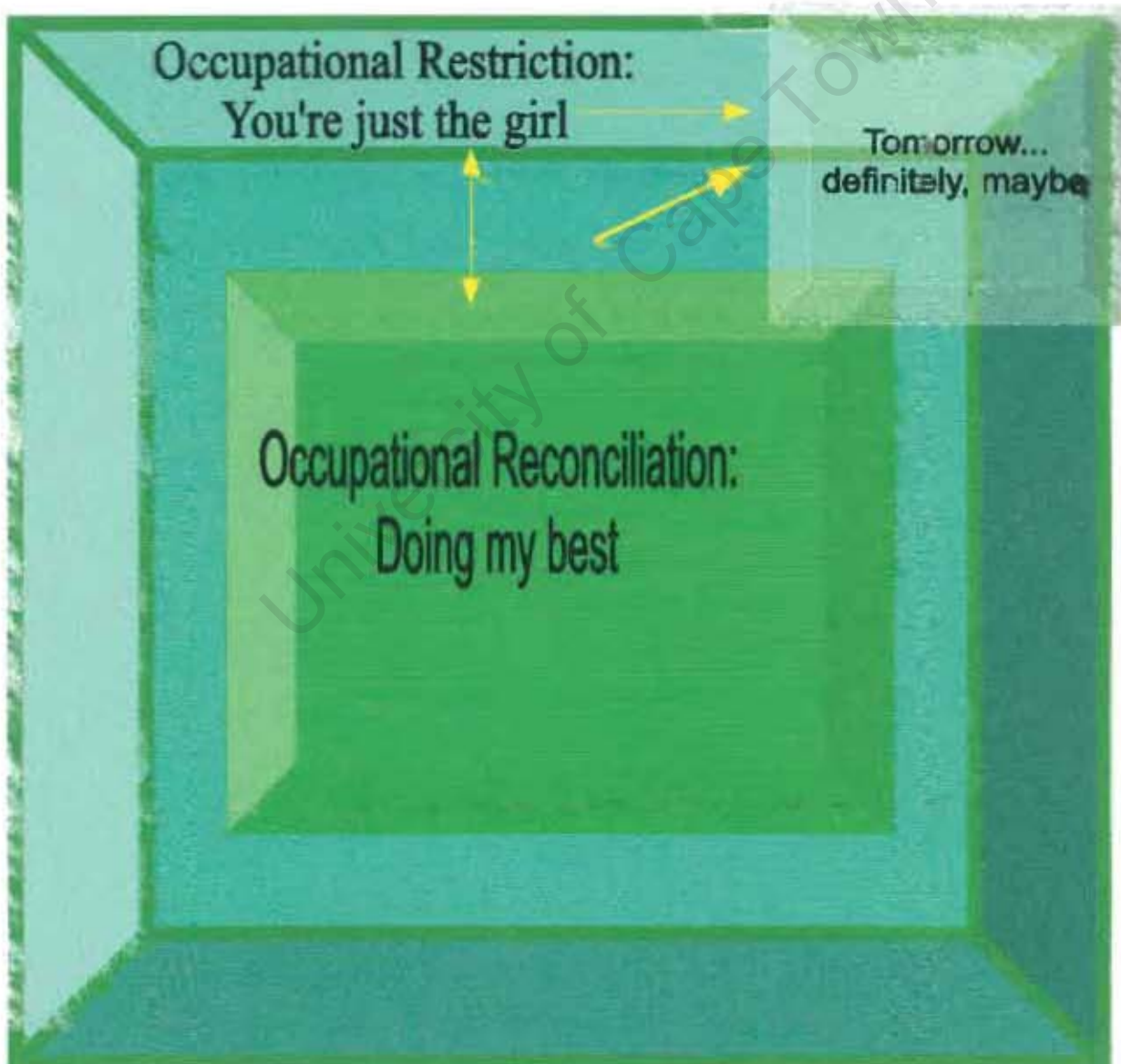
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#### 4. FINDINGS

The themes that emerged from the analysis are discussed in this section. These themes are: **Occupational Restriction: You're just the girl**; **Occupational Reconciliation: Doing my best** and **Tomorrow...definitely maybe**. Each theme is discussed in terms of their categories. The participants' quotes are presented in italics. A model representing the themes is presented in Figure 1.

FIGURE ONE: MODEL REPRESENTING THEMES



The participants were very forthcoming with the information described in the first theme. It seemed that they were at ease with sharing this information. All the participants needed some prompting before they started to speak about the second theme. However, their enthusiasm to share their positive experiences was very noticeable. Sharing this information led them to speak about the final theme. This occurred in the last part of the interview with all the participants. It seemed that they were used to dreaming about the information shared in the final theme.

#### **4.1 THEME 1: OCCUPATIONAL RESTRICTION: YOU'RE JUST THE GIRL**

The categories in this theme describe how the participants experienced being devalued and controlled in their environments. It highlights how this affects the occupations that they engaged in.

##### **4.1.1 Dictated to by circumstances**

This category highlights that these participants entered domestic work on account of the limited options in their circumstances. The decision to be a live-in domestic worker involved a process that evoked negative feelings for all of the participants.

***" I felt bad....it was not nice at all, I feel bad, but it did happen, so I cannot help it and it has passed"***

Emma described her feelings regarding the decision to work away from home:

***"...dit was 'n bietjie vreemde gevoel om so ver van die huis af te werk"***

All of the participants described being aware of the demand for an easy supply of domestic workers when they started their jobs. When they described starting their jobs, all their descriptions showed that they recognized their limited alternatives and their need to be realistic about their lack of financial resources. Emma described her desperation for work:

***"Ek sal enige soort werk doen want ek kan nie so by die huis sit nie. En verneem daar waarons vandaan kom, is dit moeilik om werk te kry"***

Victoria related that ***"It was not nice for me to come to Cape Town because firstly I wanted to go to school, but there was no money to send me to school"***.

The participants' ambivalence to starting this work is illustrated in the sub-category ***"It's not nice to be away from home"***. They reported that the decision was difficult for them.

***"It was not nice for me to make a decision like that because I never knew and thought that one day I would leave my home and go away"***

She was aware that she had few options.

***"Maar wat kan jy doen, ek bedoel om aan die lewe te bly wat kan jy doen?"***

The participants' concerns about the welfare of their families and their ability to provide financially for them were made very clear. Nomfundo was worried that her family may be evicted because they couldn't afford the payments on the house.

***"So I mean it's one of the problems, because one day I can also heard that they have been chased away, you see, or thrown out of the house. So all of that I must also think of, you see"***.

She was also concerned about her mother's health and this left her feeling stressed.

***"Actually my nerves, what cause me to have so much nerves is that my, for instance my mum is having a heart problem, my mum, who looks after my children. So, whatever my mum can seek I must give immediately, you see. I mean all of those things I was thinking because before I was not having this ulcers, well in order for them to come up, arises from the stomach, its only the nerves really".***

In an attempt to alleviate this stress, she would try and make contact with her family by phoning or sending messages.

***"The first place (I phone to) is my home in Khayelitsha, because I am very much interested to hear how my mum is doing and how it is with my family" and "Maybe sometimes, I saw somebody going that side, then I say okay, you must just say hi to my mum and the kids"***

Being away from home was particularly "painful" when the participants were separated from their children for long periods.

***"I feel so painful because I have a baby, mm, one baby, three years old. I feel like I just leave my baby...because I didn't go home December and I didn't go home Easter"***

#### **4.1.2 No choice in this work**

This category draws attention to the way that the participants' general working conditions impact on their work performances.

Participants were expected to work for long hours. Eliza reported that she started early and finished late.

***"Five o' clock I have to wake up, ...then I work till the night, because the time I go to eat also, maybe I'll eat seven or eight"***

Emma outlined the working cycle.

***"Ek werk 'n week, van Maandag tot Sondag en dan weer 'n week van Maandag tot die Vrydag aand. Net die Saterdag en Sondag af. Jy moet vroër mōre opstaan, jy moet 'n volle week, Maandag tot Sondag werk... van die oggend af, tot die aand toe, van vyf uur moet jy weer Inval, dan kom jy nege uur In die aand uit"***

They were expected to work on public holidays and weekends.

***"I don't have the holiday, whatever it is Monday to Sunday".***

The participants pointed out that they did not receive extra payment for working on weekends or on public holidays.

***"So they give me R800 out of that long hours ... working the holidays and also the public holidays. They don't add that. That is not included, but it's like, it's like it's only included in that same salary, its not separated."***

The fact that the participants worked for long hours and were not paid for extra time was aggravated by the factors discussed below.

The participants' work hours depended on the employers' (or families') schedule.

Nomfundo illustrated this, ***"To say maybe for instance if they also do have visitors, so I have to wait until they finish whatever they are doing."***

Eliza explained, **" Maybe they eat now, I go to my room, I shower, and after that I know past eight they finish. Then I go wash the dishes. Then after that I come back to my room again."**

Having your work hours ruled by the employer's schedule meant that you never knew and that you had little control over what time your day would end.

**"I don't like it, I feel like the time I'm finish then I must go to my room, you see, I mustn't go in again".**

None of the participants had a specific time for tea or lunch breaks. They were expected to have tea or lunch when their employers had their meals.

**"So then I don't have a tea or whatever lunch time. Mmm, no, they don't have that. Even if I'm asking them actually, uh, no they say I can use whatever, anytime they are using"**

The participants perceived that their employers wanted them to work all the time.

Eliza described this.

**"You see now, I didn't make the washing today because it's raining. But now we put the white things in the machine. And the children have a lot you know. I put the white things. Then she want me to wash the children's things. I must just, you know. 'I don't know where is my shirt!' I did iron it already also, maar she don't want me to go to my room to rest"**

The participants accepted that this was what live-in domestic work was about, so you had to do it.

**"Well I always take it as I must, because I can't say well I can't do this because when you are working you are working. So I have to do my job"**

Eliza seemed to express that she felt the same obligation: ***"Sometimes I think I say yes 'cause I did say to him I want the job."***

Emma related that the long work hours meant that she could not meet people or have time to be with friends.

***"Ek was nooit by vriende nie want ek kom maar by die aand hier uit. Partykeer as ek hier ingekom het, dan kan ek maar in die aand vyf uur, sewe uur, agt uur se kant hier uit. Ek bedoel nooit uit by vriende"***

The participants also described their heavy workload.

***" Then what I'm doing actually is from six 'o clock I have to prepare the tea and then prepare for the kids. I mean preparing the breakfast let me say and then the kids so that they can go to school. And thereafter I will start doing cleaning the kitchen and then feeding the dogs and then I will go to cleaning the rooms, and then vacuum all the house, it's a very big house, so after I'm doing everything (emphatically says this), I have to clean, uh look after the dogs, clean the yard, whatever, the dogs that mess. I must also cook"***

#### **4.1.3 Recycled and Disposed of**

This category highlights the poor regard that the employers have of the participants.

This is illustrated in the way that the participants adapt their occupations to fit the "employer- orchestrated" environment, without being appreciated for it.

Coming to work as a live-in domestic worker for each of the participants meant that they were allocated a room in the employer's backyard. All of the participants spoke about this space being intruded upon by the employer because they were expected to be available for work when they were there.

***"When I am in my room, my employers would call me and say, "Victoria, do this and this" and***

***"She come to me, just call me, make for me tea or do things and also the children, they call me"***

To adapt to this intrusion, Victoria described choosing an alternative environment to rest in.

***" I don't want to rest there because they will call me and ask me to do them favours and go to the shop. They don't think about me ... so I decided that I will go with Lisa so that when they call me I am not there"***

Participants described that the objects in their rooms did not encourage them to do much besides work, sleep or engage in occupations that were restricted in the amount of rest it allowed. Emma explained this.

***"Dus nogal, ek bedoel, dus nogal baie stil anderste. Vannaam as jy nie 'n TV In jou kamer het, het jy rerig nie iets anders in jou kamer, is dit al stil"***

The consequence of this was that they engaged in limited occupations based on what the room environment had to offer.

***" So het ek maar die meeste van die tyd stil maar gelê en lees of so" and***

***"I listen to music and other programmes" and***

***"...because I don't have a TV, so there's nothing I can do".***

They managed by engaging in the limited available opportunities for occupations.

Emma described that because of being so tired when she finished working, it was not too difficult to cope with the limited opportunities.



**"...maar deur te werk deur die dag en so aan wanneer jy by jou kamer kom, ek bedoel, dan is dit nie so moeilik nie"**

Participants reported that it meant that they spent their time alone in their rooms, ruminating over their problems instead.

**"Nou is dit stil en al daai, dan dink jy baie dinge, 'n probleem en al daardie dinge kom....nou is jy alleen, nou dink jy weer, die geldjies waarvoor ek werk dit moet rekenings toe gaan, hoe gaan dinge by die huis? En al daal dinge. "**

and

**"You know I don't like, for instance, to stay for such a long time in my room. Because sometimes I start to think of all these unuseful things you see"**

It appears that they used their exhaustion as a way of justifying the limited resources for occupational engagement in their rooms.

Eliza explained that she previously had to share a room with another person.

**"Everytime I do tell this people, I don't think I'm gonna come because of this girl...even me she's cross for me sometimes in the bed. You know, she makes a noise with the radio, making noise with the TV you see....it was difficult, difficult"**

This made life in her room unpleasant and made her decide that she would prefer to work elsewhere.

The participants seemed to attach value to having a TV or radio in their rooms. They described how having a TV was like having company.

**"...gesels vir jou. Voel jy nie daardie alleenheid nie en dink jy ook nie tog baie dinge nie. Nou as iemand jou in geselskap hou of daar is iets wat jou aandag trek. Net a bietjie trek of so aan, het dit nie so 'n effek op jou nie." and**

***"Okay, for instance, what I like to watch very much in the TV is the news and the drama. So it's the things I like to watch".***

Having the TV as stimulation in their rooms distracted the participants from their isolation, negative thoughts and the "stress" that this involved.

Having the resources to listen to the radio enabled the participants to fulfill occupations that were not linked to the worker-role nor did it demand that they communicate in English. Victoria related that it linked her to her culture, ***"I play it because it's Xhosa"***.

However, having the TV as company did not help when they could not control what they watched. Nomfundo experienced frustration when she could not control what she watched (even though she was in her room). Her TV was linked and controlled by her employers. Emma described her experience of watching TV with her employer or while babysitting.

***"As die vrou, sy vra my altyd sal ek nou saam met haar kyk, of as hulle nou miskien uit is, as sy miskien uitgaan dal sal ek miskien nou babysitting doen. Dan kyk ek die programme van homs. Dit was nogal, dit was baie frustrerend, want ek bedoel, baie hou mos nou nie van dieselfde goede nie, maar wat kan jy maak, jy het geen keuse nie. Want ek moet saam met hulle kyk, vername met die kind mos, ek moet kyk daai programme van hom"***

It is evident that if the participant's preference was not accommodated, the experience of watching TV became negative.

The participants explained that the employers did not recognize that they had similar needs to their employers, to enjoy spending time with their family or friends.

***"So I mean really it's very sad. It's really sad and bad. Because for them, well it's their place, but they have their friends, family and whatsoever, they visit each other, they always be together. But for me it's very difficult."***

This again illustrates the negative effect that the employers' lack of consideration had on the participants.

Participants perceived that their employers did not attach worth to the occupations that they chose to engage in. This devaluing was communicated through the employers' lack of consideration for participants' plans.

Eliza related how she was expected to work on her day off before she could go out.

***"They sleep late, I can't just say wake up, I want to make the bed, you see. But the first time she say to the children, wake up, wake up, 'cause Eliza have to go to appointment at one o' clock. And then I have to clean first there upstairs before I come back down, you see. Now I can't clean there, where it is dirty, I can't. Now I have to wait till they finish wake up. I'm not so happy there"***

The employers showed blatant disregard for the participants' needs. This complete lack of appreciation was communicated to Victoria when she had a baby.

***" I didn't get the maternity leave. I went to hospital on Sunday and I was back on Thursday and Friday, not counting Saturday and Sundays because they are my offs. And on Monday I worked. "***

In order to continue her role as a mother she had to start working while caring for her child, one week after he was born. She had to engage in her work occupations at the same time as caring for her child. Victoria had to adapt, ***" I was working with him, I put him in a carry-cot"***. She could not negotiate leave nor flexible working hours so that she could care for her child. The consequence of this was that she suffered, ***"I***

***was not feeling nice that time because I was dizzy, I was sick and I was not strong enough***. This suffering continued and the participant's doctor suggested that she take sick leave. Her employer responded with no sympathy.

***"My employer gave me R50 to go to the doctor and when I came back, I gave her a sick leave paper from the doctor, but she said I must come back and work. So, at the month end she take the R50 that she gave me for the doctor from my wages."***

This story depicts the way that the employer completely disregards how the participant adapted her "mothering" occupations so that she could continue to meet the employer's needs and demands.

The employers' lack of consideration for the participants was also evident in their experiences related to eating. Only one of the participants was able to cook in her room, the others received food from their employers. Nomfundo explained ***"I have to eat what they eat"***.

Eliza described her employers as first ensuring that they had enough before giving her food. She also described having to do extra work because she had to get food "inside".

***"If I'm off, I'm not going in, maar sometimes I go, 'cause I eat, that's because I have to go inside to make something to eat. Then I wash the dishes, then I go again to my room"***

Nomfundo bitterly explained that she was given no choice about what or when she ate, despite paying her employers R350 per month for food. She felt that

***"It is too much because I do have a family and my kids and also all of them, they do depend on me... I can't really spend R350 on my own, that money I can also share with my family"*** and

***"The R350, that doesn't mean if for instance they do have their lunch or whatever supper, I must also have mine at the same time, no. I must firstly wait for them until they finish, thereafter when they finish, they can give it to me"***

The above experiences draw one's attention to the employers' complete disregard for the participants' worth. They do not recognise the participants as having human needs and in so doing they are abusive.

#### **4.1.4 Being in jail**

The codes in this category illustrate how the employer's manner of interacting with the participant conveys a message that devalues them. The participants portrayed a very dismal picture of how restricting the work environment could be for them. Their illustrations were similar to people's descriptions of life during imprisonment.

The participants related that the employer might dictate that you cannot go out,

***"Party keer wil die mense ook nie rêrig he dat jy moet uitgaan, sien jy, jy mag ook nie, vernaam daarso. Jy mag ook nie vriende het nie. Hulle soek niemand op hulle perseel nie"***

or that you are not allowed to have visitors.

***"Okay she said to me that, I don't want my girls get a visitor"***

This restriction of not being able to have visitors left the participant with negative feelings.

***"Well I also feel sad."***

It is an example of how her worker-role restricts her role of being a friend or even a mother.

***"Because I used to see maybe some kids with their moms where they are working you see, so then I think, mine can't be with me".***

The participants described different mechanisms in their environments that controlled their choice or ability to engage in occupations. Besides the restrictions of the room (described under **Recycled and Disposed of**), Emma described that the physical structure, like the high walls at the workplace, limited her ability to make contact with the outside world.

***"Jy sien nie 'n mens, jy sien nie 'n kar nie, niks, jy sien net die gedreen, dus al".***

The high walls also meant that they could not come and go as they pleased.

***"En daar kan jy nie uitgaan nie, want dus daai hekke, sien jy die hekke wat jy moet vra om uit te gaan"***

She related that she felt **"glad nie goed nie"** and **"versmoord"** when thinking about living in this restrictive environment.

Emma described the effect of not having access to the workplace (that is, the employer's home). She described what she observed happening to her friend and what she knew she would have to tolerate when she started working at this place.

***"Sy het nie die sleutel nie, sy het nie daai eie reg om die deur oop te maak, om nou in te kom in die huis, om aan te gaan met die huiswerk, sien jy. Jy moet nou wag totdat hulle nou oopmaak. So dus bietjie baie moeilik so man."***

This inaccessibility meant that the participant had to wait for the employer before she could have a break.

***"Of ek moet nou, as hulle nou miskien 'n ete het, en ek wil nou rook, nou moet ek wag tot sy klaar in die badkamer is, sodat sy kan toesluit agter my"***

Not having freedom of movement restricted the occupations that she could engage in.

***"Jy kan nie rêrig uitgaan daarso nie, jy weet mos, hulle het daardie elektroniese hek, hulle kan, miskien ek kom mos nou laat, dan kan ek nie in kom nie, dan is dit weer 'n probleem, sien jy. "*** and

***"Ek bedoel as ek nou enige tyd voel, ek wil gaan bel huls toe, of om nou gou winkel toe te gaan om die koerant te koop verstaan"***

Emma sadly narrated what the limitations of her work environment would mean for her.

***"Ek sal nie die koerant kan koop nie en kompetisies, die uh, Lotto en daal ding. So as ek nou klaar gewerk het, dan gaan ek nou hleraf winkel toe.... maar daar sal ek nie kan nie. "***

She anticipated that it would limit the occupations that she engaged in, when she compared it with her present work environment.

All the participants expressed that they had little control over the tasks that their employers requested them to do. The employers would request that they perform additional tasks and then return to what they were doing.

***"When I am alone, I do my job and finish it, but when she is around I have to chat or sometimes she will ask me to do other things apart from the my work that I usually do. So after I finish what she asked me to do I have to come back to finish and finish my work ... It's not nice because it takes a long time"***

The participants described that they also felt that the employers were critical of their work performance.

***"I feel bad and scared. Most of the time I always feel like there is something that I haven't done. That's one of the things that makes me nervous" and "She then called me and show me a piece of hair and asked me if I have cleaned the kitchen. I said yes and then she started to shout. Like there are a lot of things I have to do, like looking after my baby and cleaning and other things so that is why the kitchen is not clean"***

Their work occupations were constantly being judged and commented on by the employer. As a result of this, participants expressed being pleased when their employers went out.

***"Jy voel 'n bietjie goed as jy hoor, aal, hulle gaan 'n bietjie uit vir die dag. Dan voel jy dit gaan alright. Maar, sodra sy kom, as die vrou nou weer kom, dan wonder jy as ek nou dit reg gemaak het, is dit nou reg, is dit die manier wat sy dit like?"***

When on their own, they spent time speculating whether their employers were pleased with them or what they had in store for them the next day.

***"Mm, as jy na jou kamer toe gaan, en dink jy dan aan, junne, hoe gaan môre se dag dan wees?"***

This sometimes resulted in the participants putting their jobs before themselves.

***"But especially Saturdays, I just make my washing, maar sometimes I maybe, all the washing I must put in. Sometimes I see the washing is so lot and also the washing is too much, now I see I must leave mine and finish (their) washing"***



They would prioritize their work occupations over their personal occupations because of their fear.

Participants described their communication with their employers as being poor.

Emma describes her experience when working for her employers' friend for a few days. She explains how she related this to the domestic worker who works there.

***"Hy weet nie hoe om met my te praat nie. Haar baas praat nie met respek, want as hy nie vir my respek, hoe sal ek vir hom respek"***

Dealing with the disrespectful way in which the employer spoke to them was difficult.

***"And it's not easy for me to be maybe, to be open to them because they are not to me"***

The participants described feeling unhappy about this. Emma explained,

***"Dit maak jou ongelukkig en jy voel binne dleep, dleep binne in jou hart, jy voel seer"***

She further related that she dealt with this by retreating to her room.

***"Toe het ek na my kamer toe gegaan en net gehuil en ... dit het my gepla"***

Despite these feelings, Emma emphasized that you had to continue to work. The employer would not apologize if she was wrong.

***"Die volgende oggend dan moet jy weer daar kom. Dan dink jy weer aan dit wat gebeur het, dan vra sy nie eers om verskoning of sê, nee man Emma, ek dink ek het 'n fout begaan en so aan".***

The participants described a relationship of distrust between themselves and their employers. Eliza described how she experienced being deceived by her employer.

**"Sundays, now he everytime, now he sometimes say, 'I want you to clean Saturdays' (because) Sunday he's going to get visitors, just want me to clean. And after that I go. After their lunch and wash the dishes. The same work also Saturdays and Sundays, the same work. 'Cause I make the same work. Not the washing Saturdays and Sundays, maar I make the same work. Sunday, no visitors come".**

Eliza described regretting choosing to live on her employer's premises instead of renting a room elsewhere. She felt that this way she would have had more control over her work hours.

**"Why I didn't that time I see, I go rent, 'cause maybe if I see (it is) five o' clock, I have to go, you see"**

Nomfundo expressed being devalued through the mistrust that her employers conveyed.

**"For instance, lets say maybe I am alone when they go on holiday, so I can't maybe work because there is nothing much I can do in that time because they lock their rooms. So, they lock their room, the only part that used to be unlock is the kitchen and the food place. So all the house, they lock it."**

This mistrust extended beyond what was expected from Nomfundo as a worker. It intruded on her personal identity. Nomfundo related a story that illustrated this. Her employer attempted to trick her into having an HIV/AIDS test. Fortunately, the doctor negotiated with her regarding informed consent, giving her the opportunity to refuse permission. It was through this that she became aware of her employer's intentions. This violation of personal boundaries left her feeling **"..so shocked really because just imagine, staying in one place, she didn't mention anything to me. "** and

***"It really disappointed me because I was not knowing what this woman was up to. So it's one of the things that are really hurting me."***

This made her realize how vulnerable she was.

***"I don't trust her because she was going to say 'Well, no matter it is negative, just say it is positive.' Because I don't know how did she go to that doctor because that connection to that doctor"***

The employer's response to Nomfundo's refusing to have the test was to restrict her by not allowing her access to the food.

***"So, Saturday, I was there and they lock whatever the rooms that stays the food"***

Her decision to assert her opinion meant that she was subjected to the Madam's wrath and manner of wielding control over her.

## **4.2 REFLECTIONS ON THEME 1:**

### **OCCUPATIONAL RESTRICTION: YOU ARE JUST THE GIRL**

The concepts occupational deprivation, imbalance and restriction are discussed below. This should highlight that the participants experience both occupational imbalance and deprivation. Furthermore, their disempowerment and difficulty in engaging in meaningful occupations leads to a "status" which I have labeled occupational restriction.

#### **4.2.1 Features of occupational deprivation inherent in occupational restriction**

##### **Characteristic of Minority, Disadvantaged groups**

Minority, disadvantaged groups are most at risk of occupational deprivation (Wilcock, 1998). It is widely documented that domestic workers are marginalised. (*Reasons for*

*this were outlined in section 1: introduction*). By virtue of this, one can understand that this group of workers are extremely vulnerable to occupational deprivation or features thereof.

### **Job status**

People may also experience occupational deprivation because of the status of their employment. Although paid employment is valued by society, it is suggested that work is more health-enhancing if it is valued by society (Wilcock, 1998). Domestic work is considered to be of low worth despite the fact that it plays a vital role in contributing to the smooth-functioning of society (Kenyon, 1991). This current study highlights that the domestic workers are devalued. The employers' attitudes and interactions with them are condescending and degrading, reinforcing the experience of occupational deprivation and encouraging the participants to comply.

### **Employer control over choice of occupations**

The findings clearly reveal that the employers exert control over the participants' choice of occupations. Participants cannot freely choose the occupations that they engage in. This imposition of control by an external agency is characteristic of occupational deprivation. The employer and the environment are the external agencies that limit the live-in domestic worker's occupational choices.

### **Limited opportunity to use capacities**

As a result of the experience of occupational deprivation, a person is unable to partake fully in the world around them (Whiteford, 1995). Being unable to partake in the environment reduces the person's opportunities to use their capacities (Wilcock,

1998). The participants were restricted in their opportunities to use the capacities that they choose to.

Through interacting with objects in their environment, people are able to develop their capacities, meet their biological needs and experience satisfaction (Hocking, 1997). Access to objects is a central characteristic of the experience of occupational opportunities offered by the environment (Molineux and Whiteford, 1999). The restriction of objects or opportunities to access objects during occupational deprivation leads to an inability to select health-giving interactions with the environment (Molineux and Whiteford, 1999).

The environment clearly limited the participants' access to objects. They were allowed access to work-related objects in their environment. However, their right to choose the type or amount of exposure to these objects was denied. The range of their choice was significantly curtailed.

#### **4.2.2 Features of Occupational Imbalance Inherent in Occupational Restriction Learning to access opportunities**

The ability to learn to positively influence the environment is a key attribute that enables the individual to achieve occupational balance (Yerxa, 1998). This learning is dependent on the opportunities available in the environment.

The participants' opportunities within the environment were significantly restricted. They experienced occupational deprivation (*discussed under 4.1.2 Features of occupational deprivation inherent in occupational restriction*). The findings indicate that this deprivation would limit their opportunities to act as, or learn to be, agents in their environment. This in turn limits their ability to achieve occupational balance.

### **Maximum Time spent working**

Occupational Imbalance involves an inequity of the length of time spent using varied capacities. People have personal needs to spend their time using their different capacities in specific proportions (Wilcock, 1998). The findings illustrate that the domestic workers' jobs demand that they spend most of their time working. They have very little time for other occupations. They have to spend most of their time using their work- related capacities and so experience occupational imbalance.

### **Overuse of work- related capacities**

Occupational balance and imbalance is unique to each person. However, occupational engagement should be proportioned so that the person experiences a personal balance in the use of their capacities (Wilcock, 1998). The findings illustrate that the participants engage mostly in work-related occupations. They perform work occupations to meet the employer's demands and they have to perform occupations to care for themselves and their environments (for example, cleaning their room). They have almost no time or opportunities for alternative occupational engagement. Little or no consideration or accommodation is made for the domestic workers occupational needs.

Their basic human need to use their capacities to perform occupations and exercise choice is ignored by the employer and severely limited by their compliance to their noxious environment. Their work environment imposes an over-emphasis on the use of their work capacities, restraining the use of their capacities for alternate occupations. Priority is afforded to their work capacities and performance.

### **Too much purpose and not enough meaning**

The imbalance described above results in the participants' over-exercising their work capacities to the possible detriment of other capacities. They perform more work than may be good for their wellbeing. Their inequity and inequality in using their capacities provide an indication of how their wellbeing could influence their health.

Their descriptions of engaging in work occupations reflect little personal meaning. They described their work occupations as fulfilling more of a purpose than meaning for them. Therefore, they spent much of their time engaging in purposeful rather than meaningful occupations. Thus, another feature of the participants' experience of occupational imbalance is that they have an imbalance of purposeful occupations.

### **4.2.3 Occupational Restriction as the consequence**

The manner in which the features, described above, leads to occupational restriction is depicted in Figure 2 and described below.

Figure 2: Occupational Restriction



**Impotence as a result of occupational deprivation and occupational imbalance**

The participant's environment results in them experiencing features of occupational deprivation and imbalance. The interplay between these features causes them to experience impotence in their environment. Their inability to learn how to create or access opportunities in their environment is characteristic of this impotence.

**Disempowerment perpetuates status quo**

Participants' compliance to and disempowerment in their environment perpetuates the features of occupational deprivation and imbalance. Their perpetual submissive



behaviour maintains the existing status within the environment. This is distinct to occupational restriction.

### **Limited meaningful occupations**

Another distinguishing characteristic of the occupational restriction is the imbalance in purposeful occupations and the limited confined access to meaningful occupations.

The participants' inability to create opportunities to access meaningful occupations when they want is indicative of occupational restriction.

The dynamic between these features leads to the experience of occupational restriction described in the theme: **Occupational Restriction: "You're just the girl."**

The submissive behavior described is in contrast to the potential they display, as described in **Theme Two**.

### **4.3 THEME 2: OCCUPATIONAL RECONCILIATION: DOING MY BEST**

This theme reflects the participants' efforts to do their best under challenging circumstances.

#### **4.3.1 Interacting with Friends**

This category draws attention to the participants' positive experiences of interacting with their friends. It alerts one to the important role of friendships in enabling them to manage the challenges they experience.

The participants engaged in occupations with their friends in their rooms, if they were allowed to have visitors. Victoria expressed her feelings regarding this.

***"It's nice because I want them to also come to my room as I also go to theirs"***  
***and "I don't want to be funny and not allow them to come, but I do go to them"***

The participants related how they met their friends. Nomfundo related the typical scenario.

***"I met her one day when I was from my place for the work to the shop. Then she showed me where she stays and she just said because you stayed there and then if maybe we have time we can at least enjoy the day"***

Having the opportunity to interact with other workers or friends provided the participants with the opportunity to express themselves.

***"We used talk about family, maybe thinking of other things or maybe lets say, I did saw something when I was watching the news, then when I meet them I will talk about that"***

The participants related that they were able to share their concerns with their friends.

***"Because I was telling her about this,...what can help me? She said It's okay, to avoid that, you must stop sleeping very early, maybe after eight. You can by that time, maybe if you are allowed you can come to us and then we can talk about some things, maybe useful things whatever. You must do whatever, maybe like she mentioned something about the children because also we have the children. So how can I make a plan for my children and all that."***

Through relating to their friends in this manner, participants experienced a sense of support.

***"But now I feel much better, because before I was just thinking, ever since I met these people that I was telling you, at least now I can see I am also improving myself and getting used to, you see these things. Now, no matter, just I talk about them, they don't hurt me. Because before I was already, always, time and again if I think maybe, start crying, but now, no. Not now" and I feel better because if I have problems I share with them"***

The support that they received through talking to their friends provided the participants with relief. They felt that they could share their problems and get advice from people who might have had similar experiences.

***"I was asking from them, you people at least are also live-in. Just tell me, what are you doing?"***

Some of the advice that Nomfundo's friends offered, assisted her in considering how she could fulfill her role as daughter and mother by effectively managing her salary.

***"Anyway she just advise me that, you know what when you are working you must know that well whatever you are doing it for your own. As somebody who is having children and parents, for instance, my mum" and***

***"You must know whatever the money you earn, you can't do anything. So you must satisfy your mum. So how? For instance, I must take my whole salary and give it to her. So as I said I'll need some pocket money she said that she will be very glad to my mum if I give it to her and then ask from her. And say, 'Mum I don't have money for pocket money, can't you please give me.' So that she can see that really what I'm earning is this salary"***

Following this advice would mean that she would be able to learn from somebody who has had experience with the problem.

***"...Because she is somebody who is at least having more experience on how to use the money than me".***

The participants indicated that the focus of their conversations was also on other aspects of their personal lives, such as boyfriends, or needs.

***"Let's say our conversation is always about the needs. It's always about the needs. Maybe, okay you've got the insurance at Old Mutual, how did you get the insurance? How did you pay it and when and what will be the benefits from them?"***

These needs included helping to orientate them to the unfamiliar environment.

***"Like I don't know the place, because I never worked on this side. So that is why they always maybe talk of whatever. Nomfundo, you have to know where Spar is, things like that... or maybe Nomfundo you want to phone, maybe for the public phone. You can go to Checkers for the coin phones, there is only one card phone next to us by the garage".***

Her friends provided her with opportunities to engage in occupations by enlightening her about the available resources in the environment.

The participants described feeling cared for by their friends. This was helpful when they were sick and alone in their rooms.

***"Of course yes it is very bad because sometimes I am sick and there is nobody that can notice that. They also have to wonder why Nomfundo today is not with us. Sometimes you see I really have that problem. So I used to tell them that maybe if you don't see me for three days, maybe please (she says please emphatically) just try to ask the lady next door if maybe she did see me, Maggie."***

The participants thus created conditions so that they would be provided for when they had problems.

Victoria described what it was like to be cared for in this way.

***"It's very nice, because if I'm not there they are worried because we used to make jokes and laugh"***

It also meant that the participants had people whom they could trust.

***"I have seen that well I can maybe, by all the time I had a problem, I can talk to these people. They always advise me and they won't say no just leave the job whatsoever. No they don't say that." and***

***"... Not maybe they did persuade and manipulate me that ... you must do this and this, no, no"***

The participants described feeling accepted and valued by their friends.

***"You know I used to feel very much happier and then feeling I am really at home. Because the way that they treat me is not like the way, they say, no we never been with this lady before and this is somebody who is still new, so we don't know her properly. So, at least they look at me in that way. I used to really***

***appreciate it because if you can even say that, maybe these people are from the same place or from the same family, only to find out , no, they are not."***

and

***"Let's say maybe I have a bad times, they always there for me"***

They also engaged in conversations that distracted her from her worries.

***"Maybe, okay Nomfundo, let's go out for instance, taking a walk, let me say, let's go out and then we go down to the beachfront. And then, even me I get conversation with them and then I forget about that (problem)"***

The participants described mostly seeing their friends during their time off on weekends or, if they could manage it, in the evenings. They kept contact during the week by telephoning each other (if possible). They related that they did not have to tell the employers where they were going. They could choose. Nomfundo described choosing to inform the employers of their whereabouts sometimes, in case her family tried to contact her while she was out.

***"Well before I was not telling them, I was just waiting until I finish whatever I had to do and thereafter I'll go to them. But I end up saying, it's wise for me to tell these people that they must know when I am not here. Because sometimes at home, they phone and then I'm not there and then they say they don't know where I am, you see. So then I decided that I must tell them"***

Through socializing with friends, the participants could exercise a large degree of control. This could have helped them to compensate for the lack of control that they experience elsewhere.

The participants described how they would watch TV with their friends. Nomfundo told of going to visit her friends on a *"special day"* so that she could watch a Xhosa drama with them. She described what this was like for her.

***" Because sometimes I can also watch it alone, but I don't enjoy it as when I watched it with them...Just because it's the language that we all understand. it's also very nice to me"***

Watching TV together stimulated the participants to share stories about people that they knew or about experiences that they had. They would compare these people to the characters in the TV programme.

***"Because the moment the drama start, maybe someone will say this is not the first time I see that, even me, maybe I know that character, or, or the actor. I know who this is, she is also maybe staying in Guguletu and this one in Khayelitsha. I saw this one, you see, that kind of thing"***

The participants vividly described how they shared meals with their friends. They would take turns, so that they would either eat at their friends or at their own place. Victoria described that if they were meeting in her room, she would prepare for this.

***"Sometimes before I cook, I go to the shops or I go to Pick 'n Pay before, like on Friday. I will go and buy meat and put it in the fridge in the garage"***

She described cooking when her friends were present so that they could comment on what she was doing and state their preferences.

***"I want them to see what I'm cooking, that's why I cook when they are there. Like if the other one doesn't like something I would be able to know in time. They also help me with the cooking"***

Her friends would do the same for her. She described that they relaxed together when performing this occupation of cooking.

***"It's nice...because we cooking, talking and laughing"***

After sharing a meal, the participants reported that they would spend time together, perhaps going to the shops. They could then also have 'desert'.

***" After that we would go out and buy cooldrinks and sweets."***

The participants were clear about the fact that their friends were invaluable.

Nomfundo summarized this, referring to her friends generosity when cooking for her, they did not expect her to always contribute financially.

***"Anyway, I used to appreciate it because in our days it's few people that can do that for you. Maybe somebody else was going to tell me, no, you are working, you must use your money, you see"***

It appears that through this sharing, they communicated that they valued one another. The participants felt positive when they engaged in occupations that they appreciated and with these people.

Interacting with friends motivated the participants to consider engaging in other occupations. Emma described being encouraged by a friend to go to church.

***"Ek het gevoel dat ek wil rêrig 'n bietjie rêrig tyd maak om by die kerk uit te kom, jy sien. En toe ek haar ontmoet, toe ek haar hier een tyd gekry, onder die straat vra sy vir my, maar toe dink ek wat die belangrikste is, mmm. Ek moet dankie gaan sê vir die genade. En die Here nog weer gebring het en nou kan 'n mens nie sonder die krag van die Here. En dan kan 'n mens dankie gaan sê, sien jy"***



This occupation was one that was familiar to her. She described the meaning that it used to hold for her.

**"Ek was baie lief om by die kerk betrokke te wees en te help waar ek kan"**

However she describes herself as not really feeling part of the congregation here in Cape Town. **"Ek is daar, eintlik soos 'n besoeker, daarso"**

Her description highlighted that although the occupation was familiar to her, the context influenced her experience of it.

#### **4.3.2 Time off for pleasure**

This category emphasizes the significance of socializing away from the work place. The positive implication of this is described.

Participants described going out as an occupation that they performed during their time off. Victoria explained.

***"Sometimes I would take my baby in the pram and go to the beachfront"***

Eliza provided another example:

***"I go to the Waterfront with the taxi and just walk and eat there. Spend the time"***

Victoria described that this occupation allowed her to take care of her child and to have time away from work.

***"I was happy my child was getting fresh air and sea breeze (rather) than staying in the room the whole time"***

She described another purpose of engaging in this occupation as being **"because I wanted to cool my nerves"**. It therefore seemed that going out fulfilled more than one function for her.

Victoria described that she had met someone who had invited her to go dancing. She said that this made her feel less stressed, so that she could **"stop thinking about my home"**. She described her experience of going to a nightclub.

**"We had drinks and also dance to the music. My friends used to ask me to taste the drinks and I would enjoy them and that's how I started"**

She made friends who she could identify with at the nightclub.

**"When I arrived there I really enjoyed myself. I made friends with some of the ladies there." ...I met a friend who had the same problem as me"**

Through sharing her grief and sadness about her mother's death with this friend, Victoria obtained advice and support.

**"She would tell me to forget about it and move on with my life. We used to spend time together and phone each other because she was staying in Guguletu. So I was forgetting because I had someone to talk to"**

The above story illustrates that going out, meeting people and engaging in occupations with them allowed the participants to experience a wider range of occupations.

#### **4.3.3 Using my room for what I can**

The codes in this category illustrate the basic occupations that the participants engaged in when they were in their rooms.

All of the participants reported that they spent time in their rooms doing their washing, caring for themselves and cleaning their rooms. They described wanting to use their time in the evenings to get as much rest and sleep as they could. Nomfundo equated her leisure time during the week with sleeping.

***"During my time for instance, I take it as my leisure time, because for instance I can't take a walk or whatsoever. I'm just making an example because I have to sleep in that time. After I have done everything I have to sleep"***

Eliza related a similar sentiment.

***"I go to my room, I just read the books and after that I just get a shower, I sleep because I have to wake up early in the morning to go inside"***

The participants reported that at times they would wish for the time to pass quickly so that they could go to their rooms to rest.

***"Nou voel jy so moeg dat jy eiewensins wens dat dit nou kan omkom, dat jy na jou kamer toe aangaan, dat jy kan rus"***

They also needed to use their time in their rooms to take care of themselves. This included preparing for the next day of work.

***"En aan myself te kyk en sorg dat ek netjies vir môre, maak my hare reg en al daal goed...Dan dink ek junne, dus al laat al, ek sal nou moet gou my wasgoedjies gaan was, en wat dan trek ek vir môre aan? En dan was ek vir my gou lets en dan gaan le ek maar weer want ek is so moeg"***

This made the participant feel pressurised to use her time efficiently.

***"Want dan kom ek in my kamer en gaan sit miskien, dan was ek net vinnig my overall, dan gaan lê ek"***

For Victoria, having a room and having some time off there meant that she could allow her baby to have contact with his father.

***"He comes to my room...it's nice because he must come and see his child"***

Participants also described being very tired and just wanting to rest when they were in their rooms on the weekends.

***"En daal tyd, ek bedoel daal tyd is jy so, sy is graag so bly want dus jou naweek af is, dan dink jy junne, as Saterdag kom, gaan jy jou, jy wil sommer net daal hele dag lê en daal moegheid af te sit en Sondag dan dink jy aal Junne, Maandag is dit al weer 'n geswoeg"***

#### **4.4 REFLECTIONS ON THEME 2: OCCUPATIONAL RECONCILIATION: DOING MY BEST**

The concept of occupational adaptation has received much attention in recent occupational therapy literature. On reviewing the literature, it became apparent that the domestic workers in this study were not adapting to their environment in a true sense, but rather making amends as a result of it.

##### **4.4.1 Occupational Adaptation or Reconciliation?**

###### **Occupational Adaptation**

Schkade and Schultz (1997) suggest that Occupational Adaptation is a response that a person makes when they encounter occupational challenges. The change in behaviour is implemented when the person's usual behaviour does not lead to mastery over the challenge.

Occupational adaptation is understood as both a state and a process. Briefly, the state refers to a level of mastery to which individuals aspire. The process of occupational adaptation refers to a series of actions that are internal to the individual and which unfold when an individual is faced with occupational challenges (Schultz and Schkade, 1997).

Occupational adaptation refers to the way that occupation and adaptation is integrated into a single phenomenon in the person. The concept emphasizes that one must consider the person, the environment and the interaction between the two. This is pivotal to adaptation (Schkade and Schultz, 1997).

The discussion in **Theme One** highlights the way in which the environment restricts the participant's occupations and disempowers them so that they do not dispute their status. They are faced with restrictions and the challenge of achieving mastery in an unsupportive environment (the occupational challenge). The impact of the occupational restriction on the participants curtails their ability to achieve mastery over their unsupportive environment. Therefore, they cannot achieve occupational adaptation.

### **Adaptation vs Reconciliation**

The Oxford English dictionary defines adaptation as *"modifying or making suitable for a purpose."* This is compared to its definition of reconciliation, which is *"to make resigned or submissive."*

If these definitions are applied to occupational engagement, then adaptation involves reshaping occupational engagement for a particular purpose. However, reconciliation would involve relinquishing an aspect of the occupational engagement. This

understanding of reconciliation is different to the popular understanding of reconciliation. It implies that reconciliation involves a "better" outcome and that when this is achieved then change is no longer necessary. However, in this study, change is still required during and after reconciliation.

The findings indicate that the participants give way to their circumstances and engage in limited occupations because of their restricted opportunities. Their response involves reconciliation rather than adaptation. Occupational Reconciliation best describes the participants response to the occupational challenges they face.

#### **Similarities shared with occupational compensation**

The findings of this study show that the domestic workers do not feel that they have acquired a state of occupational adaptation. Instead, they engage in occupations to compensate for their inability to achieve a sense of mastery over their environment. This draws one's attention to the relationship between occupational reconciliation and occupational compensation.

If a person is unable to adapt to occupational challenges, they may choose to compensate for them (Nelson, 1996). Occupational compensation refers to the *"achievement of a successful impact through a substitute occupational performance"* (Nelson, 1996, p 779). The person performs the occupation in an atypical manner in relation to how it is usually performed by most persons in society. An adaptation is often necessary before compensation can occur. This adaptation involves learning (Nelson, 1996).

The findings illustrate that the participants learn successful ways of behaving in their environment from one another. This learning enables them to modify certain

behaviours in order to engage in their chosen occupations within their restrictive environment. This learning is similar to the learning required for compensation to occur. In both instances the person has to learn a different manner of behaving in order to face the challenge in the environment.

### **Limited or no control**

The occupational challenge presented by the environment should match the individual's repertoire of skills in order for them to experience mastery (Yerxa, 1998). The findings in **Theme One** highlight that the domestic workers' occupational environment presents an overwhelming challenge. This hinders the process of occupational adaptation.

In response to this hindrance, the participants try to harmonize their occupational engagement without contesting the unreasonable occupational challenge. Thus, they reconcile their occupations within the constraints of their environment. It follows then that they are unable to exert much choice or control within occupational reconciliation. However, they do exert some choice and control. The choices and control they exert is well-illustrated in Victoria's description of how she cooks and socializes with her friends. The positive outcome of this occupational reconciliation is depicted in the sense of value that the participants described as they engaged in the occupations described.

The above discussion emphasizes that the domestic workers do not experience occupational adaptation, they merely substitute their occupational engagement to the restrictions of the environment. This occupational reconciliation impacts on the environment; it perpetuates the occupational restriction.

The model in **Figure 1** (pg 37) illustrates the relationship between occupational restriction and reconciliation. It also depicts how these lead to the third theme, **Tomorrow...definitely, maybe.**

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## 4.5 THEME 3: TOMORROW...DEFINITELY, MAYBE

In this last theme the participants begin to explore their ideas of their future occupational engagement. This emerged despite the fact that it was not part of the objectives of the study. However it is significant and fits well with the theory regarding occupational storytelling: that is, persons' experiences of occupational engagement are embedded within their life stories (Clark et al, 1996). Through focusing on their occupations in these stories, they are able to construct meaningful futures for themselves. It is therefore inevitable that they begin to speak about their future occupations when describing their current experiences of occupational engagement.

### 4.5.1 What am I doing?

This category reflects the participants' ambivalent thoughts regarding their work circumstances. They related this to what they thought their future would be. It describes some of the contradictions that the participants face in thinking about their futures.

The restrictions experienced by live-in domestic workers and their attempts to make the best of it, left them questioning what they were doing with themselves. Emma related her awareness that this was not what she really wanted.

***“Jy voel nie gelukkig om rêrig ‘n huishulp te wees, jy doen dit omdat jy geld benodig het om ann die lewe te wees, omdat jy weet dat jy geld benodig om aan die lewe te wees”***

She expressed her pessimism about how she would manage when she grew older.

***“...is bale afbreekend regtig waar want as jy 'n sekere ouderdom bereik, ek bedoel dan is jy regtig niks meer goed nie. Dus sal jy nooit kan jy eendag in jou***

***huis kan self iets kan doen nie. Dit wat jy graag wil doen nie. Dan is jy al uit, jy voel uitgepit deur al daai harde werk. Dis nie iets goed nie"***

Emma countered this pessimism when she experienced her employer's appreciation of her.

***"Dan voel jy so binne, ag nee man, die mense doen so baie vir my. Hulle gee so alles vir my en hulle waardeer wat ek doen. Al doen ek nie honderd persent nie, hulle waardeer.....hier sal ek my vestig, hier sal ek my bes probeer, ek sal my lewens, my lewelank vir hulle my bes doen en vir hulle werk"*** and

***"Dan dink jy nee, daai persoon gee ook om. Hulle waardeer dit wat jy doen, dit wat jy doen, dit wat jy probeer, hulle waardeer dit"***

Similarly, Nomfundo related that although she was treated disrespectfully, she knew that her work was important. She described herself as providing her employer with a service that enabled the employer to go to work or do what she liked.

***"Lets say, it's a product, for instance, if I was not here, not doing the work, she could not, could not go to work. So for me, this work is very much necessary"***

She also explained that she thought that domestic work was good because if it were not for this, she would be unable to support her family. She would have had to resort to crime. Nomfundo clearly stated that she thought that the conditions needed to be changed.

#### **4.5.2 A different vision**

This category depicts the participants' indecisiveness about their futures. None of the participants were sure about what they wanted. Participants related that they thought

about other kinds of jobs or under what conditions they would prefer to work. They were vague about what these would be.

Victoria related that she would like to continue working as a domestic worker, but that ***"I would like to have a job, a nice one, not like this one"***

Similarly, Eliza reported that she was not sure whether she wanted to change jobs or if she should try and complete school instead.

***"I found already another job, maar I'm not so sure, 'cause I want my paper from school. It's a security job"***

Nomfundo also wanted to continue with school. She explained how she is working towards that goal.

***"Let me say to continue with my matric, but now just because I'm too desperate, not having enough money to continue with my studies, so I have to work and then make sure that any money that I earn I must always keep a third percent. So that I can know that one day, maybe I go back"***

The participants described occupations that they had engaged in so that they could look for opportunities to support their visions. Emma related that she went to buy the newspaper so that she could look for alternative jobs.

***"...of gaan koop die Burger, sien jy, kyk nou vir my werk of so. Ek wil graag met mense of met kinders werk"***

Nomfundo shared that, ***"So I like to read. I also like reading the Cape Times because that's where I get so many things. To see that well, because from that Cape Times I also learn that I can also continue with my studies during the night."***

She described requesting application forms so that she was aware of what options were available to her.

The participants with children related that they saw themselves as working and persevering now so that their children would have a future and would not experience hardship.

#### **4.6 REFLECTIONS ON THEME 3: TOMORROW...DEFINITELY, MAYBE**

Through our insight into the participants' experiences of occupational restriction and reconciliation we can interpret their descriptions of their future occupations.

The ability to construct a meaningful future is related to a person's past experiences, the sense of value attached to particular occupations or the manner of engagement and feedback that they receive from their environment (Trombly, 1995). The domestic workers highlighted their ambivalence over the value they attached to their work.

This ambivalence resulted from conflicting feelings of personal satisfaction with their choice of work. These feelings were juxtaposed with their experiences of occupational restriction and reconciliation. This left them unable to clearly verbalize their anticipated occupational engagement. Instead, they visualized their future occupations in relation to their offspring.

The consequence of the confounding experiences of occupational restriction is a tentative future. They see themselves remaining captives of their environment rather than challenging the lack of opportunities that their environment affords them.

Townsend (1993) suggests that changing the environment is necessary in order to promote occupational adaptation and to enable people to use their potential.

An important aspect of changing the environment is addressing the policy and legislation that influences the opportunities for occupational engagement (Townsend, 1993). The legislation needs to address the domestic workers basic occupational needs. This includes the need to provide more opportunities for choice of, and within occupational engagement.

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**SECTION FIVE**  
**REFLECTIONS ON THE FINDINGS**

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## **5.1. UNDERSTANDING GLEANED FROM THE STUDY**

The findings highlighted the significant influence of the environment on the participant's occupational engagement. Toch (1996) investigated the influence of the environment on a person's behaviour. This work is used to elucidate the influence of the environment on the domestic worker's experience of occupational engagement.

Toch(1996) interviewed a random sample of prisoners and prison officers in five maximum-security prisons in New York. His research focused on the prisoner's environmental concerns. The study described eight environmental concerns that had the potential to increase or decrease the prisoner's stress. These were privacy, safety, structure, support, emotional feedback, social stimulation, activity and freedom. These environmental concerns may be experienced to different extents by anyone. They are not unique to prisoners (Toch, 1996).

The following discussion highlights that the participants experienced these concerns and are potentially at risk of increased stress.

### **5.1.1 Privacy**

Privacy is a concern about over-stimulation. The person desires to obtain release from what they perceive as harmful stimuli in their environment. Obtaining release allows them to modulate their feelings and thoughts in a peaceful manner. To achieve privacy, the environment has to allow for the modulation of external stimulation (Toch, 1996).

The domestic worker's experience of occupational engagement does not allow them to modulate their environment. Their occupational restriction results in their inability

to regulate their privacy. This restricts the occupations that the domestic workers can engage in.

### **5.1.2 Freedom**

This refers to the concern about circumscription of one's autonomy. It evokes the need to have optimal opportunities to govern one's conduct. The restraint of autonomy and reinforcement of devalue typically leads to resentment (Toch, 1996).

The live-in domestic worker surrenders her autonomy to engage in occupations and is captive to the employer's authority. The unjust treatment and impotence to change their own situation fuels domestic workers' resentment. Their right to fulfil their human need for occupation is denied.

Humans are most true to humanity when engaged in occupations (Yerxa, 1997).

Thus, if they are deprived of their occupations then they are also being deprived of their humanity (Whiteford, 1995). Denying the live-in domestic workers freedom over their occupations is thus a denial of their humanity.

### **5.1.3 Structure**

This refers to a concern about environmental stability and predictability. Structure provides external control. This external control is useful to the individual if it provides stable, reliable guides for action in the environment (Toch, 1996).

The employer dictates the rules that guide the live-in domestic worker's actions.

These rules are unpredictable and not explicit. This creates instability in the structure of the environment. This type of structure results in the worker choosing occupations



based on what the perceived rules are rather than what is known and predictable. The domestic worker is thus in an environment where she is unable to predict how her employer's conduct impinges on hers.

#### **5.1.4 Social Stimulation**

This refers to the concern for congeniality and a partiality towards instances that provide for companionship (Toch, 1996).

Participants expressed the need for social stimulation as part of their occupational engagement. However, their environments restrained them from this, impinging on their experiences of social stimulation. They were restrained in terms of where they socialize and also whom they socialize with.

The participants attempted to meet this need through occupational reconciliation. Their descriptions indicated that they were able to meet this need in some instances, but that the overarching influence of the occupational restriction was ever present.

#### **5.1.5 Activity**

This concern is about under-stimulation and refers to the need for distraction and making the best use of the opportunity to be occupied. It provides a means of enriching experience through providing self-stimulation (Toch, 1996).

The participants pursued the occupational opportunities that were afforded by their environment using occupational reconciliation. They performed sedentary occupations in isolation. The purpose underlying these occupations was that of self-preservation and care. The opportunity to do this was determined by their work

occupations. Although they tried to reconcile their occupations, their activities were still contaminated by their work demands. These work demands resulted in an experience of overstimulation. Therefore they experienced an overstimulation of imposed activities, but were understimulated with others.

#### **5.1.6 Emotional Feedback**

This is a concern about being loved, appreciated and cared for. The person desires relationships that provide empathy, appreciation and care (Toch, 1996).

The participants received emotional feedback from their friends as well as from their employers. The mistrustful, abusive relationships they endured with their employers devalued the participants. Their need to be appreciated was not considered. The positive emotional feedback they received was if and when they had the opportunity to be with friends. Understandably, these opportunities were described as most precious.

#### **5.1.7 Safety**

The concern for safety is a concern for one's physical safety (Toch, 1996).

This is the one factor that did not emerge as a concern for the participants within their environment. However, the participants were concerned about their relatives and children's safety. This was conveyed as equally stressful as would be a concern for their personal safety.

### **5.1.8 Support**

This refers to the need for reliable assistance from the environment in order to facilitate self-improvement (Toch, 1996).

The participants lacked this in their environments. Their work occupations provided them with no opportunities to develop themselves. They had no opportunities for career advancement or skills development within their work. Theme three, **Tomorrow...definitely, maybe**, reflects the lack of future direction that results from the lack of opportunities for self-improvement.

### **5.1.9 Domestic workers' occupational engagement and health**

The applicability of the eight environmental concerns to the domestic workers in this study convinces one of the confining and controlling environments of the live-in domestic worker. Clearly, occupational engagement cannot flourish within this constrained environment. Thus, their experience of occupational restriction and reconciliation places the domestic workers at risk of developing health disorders.

## 5.2 CONCLUSION

This study explored the live-in domestic workers' experience of engaging in occupations. It illustrated that they experience occupational restriction and occupational reconciliation. This made their vision of their prospective occupational engagement unclear.

The term occupational restriction describes the severe limitation in occupational engagement experienced by domestic workers. The two health risk factors, that is, occupational deprivation and occupational imbalance were shown to be inherent within this. Occupational restriction is maintained by the limitations imposed by the domestic workers' environment and their acceptance of these circumstances. It limited their opportunities to achieve optimal occupational engagement.

The domestic workers did not achieve occupational adaptation (which is a means of achieving optimal occupational engagement). Instead they amended their engagement to fit the constraints imposed by their environment. This was referred to as occupational reconciliation.

The experience of occupational restriction and reconciliation left the domestic workers unclear about their future occupational engagement. This meant that they were doubtful about their opportunities or ability to achieve optimal occupational engagement.

It has been illustrated that domestic workers are vulnerable because their work environment compromises their occupational engagement. This leads one to conclude that live-in domestic workers' inferior occupational engagement has the potential of placing them at risk of developing health disorders.

### **5.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY**

#### **5.3.1 Implications for Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy**

Occupational Science is an academic discipline that aims to produce a coherent body of knowledge about occupation (Zemke and Clarke, 1996). It challenges Occupational Therapists to consider humans as occupational beings and apply this to the scope and practice of occupational therapy.

This study sheds light on understanding the interaction between domestic workers' restrictive work environment and their experience of occupational engagement.

During occupational engagement, their environment restricts the optimal use of their physical, mental and social capacities. This limitation could compromise domestic workers' wellbeing (*see section 1.3 for discussion on health*). Since wellbeing is essential for health, it would mean that domestic workers' health is at risk.

The potential health risks associated with this leads one to consider occupational therapy interventions that might decrease such risk. Molineux and Whiteford (1999) proposed that occupational enrichment could be used as a new technique with which to improve environments of occupational deprivation. It involves "*deliberate manipulation of environments to support engagement in a range of occupations.*"

engage in occupations related to their environmental concerns. Examples of such opportunities may be the chance to socialize without the imposition of their work occupations, or creating opportunities for self-improvement.

Occupational Therapists could collaborate with domestic workers so that they insist on legislation that would regulate the work environment so as not to hinder occupational engagement. Occupational Therapists should also recognise that they have an advocacy role within policy. This role may be initiated with creating an awareness of the relationship between domestic workers' occupational needs and their health.

### **5.3.2 Implications for Policy**

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act has only recently been tabled for domestic workers. The focus has included a minimum wage for domestic workers; regulation of their work hours and pay for overtime work; and the provision for the workers with pension or provident funds. This is insufficient without adequate implementation. It is strongly recommended that mechanisms for enforcing existing policy be established. Having established these mechanisms, policy should also address the live-in domestic worker's occupational needs.

The Department of Labour has recently appointed an Employment Conditions Commission to inquire about and make recommendations regarding domestic workers employment conditions. It is recommended that this commission consider the domestic workers occupational needs. The findings of this study may be used as a starting point with which to consider these needs.

Based on these findings, the commission would, for example, have to access the live-in domestic worker's room. Consideration would be given to the impact of this environment on her occupational engagement. Similarly, the inquiry could investigate the domestic worker's opportunities for social interaction with friends as well as her relationship with her employer. Acknowledging and investigating these factors should lead the Commission to make recommendations regarding domestic workers' low status and poorly met occupational needs.

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act could stipulate pre-requisites within the environment to ensure that domestic workers' occupational engagement is facilitated and health promoted. This will also facilitate their empowerment.

### **5.3.3 Implications for Domestic workers**

Despite the potential they reflect during occupational reconciliation, the live-in domestic workers' experiences of occupational engagement reflect their complacency with their disempowering environment. They should be challenged to confront their disempowered status and recognise that they have the power to favourably impact on their environment.

## **5.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

### **5.4.1 Sample Selection**

The selection criteria were limited to participants between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five. In retrospect, it seems that this criterion may not have been truly significant. It is not known whether the experience of occupational engagement is influenced by the person's developmental stage. Future inquiry could include older woman; this would provide a better indication of the applicability of this criterion.

#### **5.4.2 Attendance of the workers forum meetings**

The researcher attended two worker's forum meetings. Four more meetings were conducted during the time that he study was conducted. Had the researcher attended these meetings, they could have been used as a means of gaining more insight into the lives of domestic workers.

#### **5.4.3 Academic Requirements**

This study was performed in partial fulfillment of a Masters in Occupational Therapy course. Thus the size of the study, particularly the sample size was limited when compared to a study for full dissertation or non-academic purposes.

#### **5.4.4 Generalisability**

The concept of generalisability is based within the empirical-analytical research model. This is contrasted with the qualitative research model that reflects "*different epistemologies*" in which generalisability is not always strived for (Oskowitz, 1997, p83).

This study endeavored to explore domestic workers' experiences of occupational engagement. Application of the ethnographic method enabled the researcher to yield rich data. The findings provide insight into issues that may be pursued with domestic workers. A quantitative inquiry would reflect the generalisability of these issues.



## **5.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE INQUIRIES**

It is suggested that future inquiries could:

- 1. Attempt to quantify the experiences of occupational risk factors amongst live-in domestic workers. This could yield powerful results, which could influence policy makers to enforce the basic conditions of employment act.**
- 2. Explore the possibility of occupational enrichment with live-in domestic workers. This would generate insight into mechanisms that could be implemented to improve the domestic workers' sense of self-value and ability to challenge their environment.**
- 3. Explore possibilities for the inclusion of occupational needs and environmental concerns into policy documents. This may produce practical guides, which could be included in these policy documents.**

**APPENDIXES AND REFERENCES**

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## **APPENDIX ONE: BRACKETING- Reflections after interview**

Through being interviewed by Nuruh (a psychiatric social worker), I learnt that my basic assumption was that life as a domestic worker was difficult. I had in my life, developed a feeling of empathy towards this group of people. Coming into contact with such workers while working at Valkenberg Hospital reminded me of what I knew of their experiences and stimulated my interest in this topic.

Describing to Nuruh what the purpose of the study has helped to instill some self-confidence in my ability to pursue a topic that I thought was very important. It also allowed me the opportunity to reflect on my own interactions with domestic workers.

I had to face the reality that at times I was also unfair in the manner in which I interacted with the workers. Facing my own feelings of shame regarding this was an important aspect of the research process. Oskowitz (1997) suggests that engaging with these feelings enhances the researchers' ability to be receptive to the participants in the study. I think that my shame regarding this was relieved and I could be more open in my self-evaluation following this interview.

It also allowed me the space to acknowledge the friendships that I had made with particular domestic workers. It reminded me of the fond memories that I have of my relationships with these workers.

The feedback received from the interviewer was that it seemed that I seem to have been aware of and uncomfortable with the "class" differences that society imposes on domestic workers. This was something that I tried to compensate for in various ways when interacting with workers. This feedback made me realize that it was not just my way of interacting and my responsibility to try and "fix" the problem, rather it

was a much bigger phenomenon. This made me think about the way that I presented myself to the workers. I didn't have to be ashamed of who I was because of the divides that are imposed by our South African society.

My sensitivity and openness to what my misconceptions were would allow me to conduct the investigation in a critical manner, ensuring that these do not interfere with the reliability of the data.

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## APPENDIX TWO: CONSENT FORM

Ek ..... gee hiermee my toestemming om 'n onderhoud te voer met Roshan Galvaan vir die navorsing wat sy in verband met die ervarings van huiswerksters uitvoer. Ek is nie onderhewig aan verpligting nie en mag onttrek van die studie, alhoewel ek die navorser vroegtydig sal verwittig.

Ek is bewus dat my naam en die inhoud van die onderhoud as konfidentieel sal behandel word. Die inligting sal verder verwerk word in dokumente bv. Kongress en seminaar materiaal. Hierdie inligting sal by tye met deelname deur die navorser gekontroleer word.

Datum: .....

Handtekening: .....

Navorser: Roshan Galvaan

.....

I ..... hereby give my consent to participate in an interview related to my experiences as a domestic worker. I may decide to withdraw from the study if I choose to.

I am aware that my name and the content of the interview will be handled confidentially. The information will be used towards a research project. The information will also be used to formulate documents that may be used in seminars or congresses. The accuracy of the information will be checked with participants from time to time.

Date: .....

Signature: .....

Researcher: Roshan Galvaan

## **APPENDIX THREE: INFORMATION COLLECTED AT THE BEGINING OF THE INTERVIEW**

The interview process was initiated by gathering demographic information.

### **Demographic Information**

Name:

Age:

Education:

"Home Town"

Length of time working in CT:

Length of time working with present employers

Previous work experience:

The interview flowed once the participants began to share information about their previous work experience. I then responded to their cues.

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#### **APPENDIX FOUR: BRIEF KEY INFORMANT PROFILE**

Elizabeth is a vibrant, young woman who worked as a live-in domestic worker until a year ago. She now works as a "supervisor cleaner" at a hotel. She progressed from being a cleaner to supervisor and aims to become a manager.

She confirmed the findings and highlighted that domestic workers need to take initiative and be less ashamed of themselves. She compared and contrasted the findings with her knowledge of and experiences in domestic work.

She provided me with much insight into the key elements of being a live-in domestic worker when she compared it to her job as a cleaner.

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