University of Cape Town

CENTRE FOR
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

THE EMPLOYMENT OF DOMESTIC WORKERS BY BLACK URBAN HOUSEHOLDS

Margo Russell

CSSR Working Paper No. 26

Published by the Centre for Social Science Research
University of Cape Town
2002

Copies of this publication may be obtained from:

The Administrative Officer
Centre for Social Science Research
University of Cape Town
Private Bag
Rondebosch, 7701
Tel: (021) 650 4656
Fax: (021) 650 4657
Email: kforbes@cssr.uct.ac.za

Price in Southern Africa (incl. VAT and postage): R 15.00

or it can be downloaded from our website
http://www.uct.ac.za/depts/cssr/pubs.html

ISBN 0 7992 2157 0

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

Social Surveys Unit

THE EMPLOYMENT OF DOMESTIC WORKERS BY BLACK URBAN HOUSEHOLDS

Margo Russell

CSSR Working Paper No. 26

December 2002

Dr Russell was a Visiting Research Fellow in the Centre for Social Science Research and the Sociology Department at the University of Cape Town in 2002 and 2003.

The Employment of Domestic Workers by Black Urban Households

Abstract

Studies of domestic work have generally focused on the inter-racial relationship between white employers ('madams') and black workers ('servants'). At least one-third of the households employing domestic workers are not white, and most of these employers are black or African. This paper reports the findings from an exploratory research project, conducted by students using a very small sample, on domestic work in black residential areas in Cape Town. The probability of a household employing a domestic worker rises if the household is smaller, headed by a man, has members in more skilled occupations, and has no one at home during the day; the probability falls in extended families, multiple-earner households and severely overcrowded houses. The number of children makes little difference. Wages paid are substantially below the minimum wages legislated in 2003.

Introduction: White Employers, Black and Coloured Domestic Workers

Most discussions of domestic workers in South Africa have focused on the exploitative practices of white employers. Whisson and Weil subtitled their study of domestic workers in Cape Town, 'A microcosm of the race problem' (1971). Similarly, Cock's study of domestic work in the Eastern Cape was variously sub-titled 'a study in the politics of exploitation' (1980 edition) and 'domestic workers under apartheid' (1989 edition). Other studies focusing on the racial dimension include those by Gordon (1988) and Preston-Whyte (1970, 1976).

This focus on white employers is not inappropriate, given that the incidence of domestic workers serving this group is high. But it is not as uniformly high as is often claimed. Gordon exaggerates when she says 'even the poorest down and out unemployed [white South African] always have a black employed to do the housework. It seems to be an absolute necessity of life in the white community' (1988: 215). Data from the annual surveys of prices of commodities and services collected between 1966 and 1988[1], based on a rotating national postal

[1] The survey was conducted to help to compute the consumer price index. This interesting

sample of 130 000 white urban houses, show that in the 1980s only half of white urban households employed full-time domestic help (see Table 1) and a surprising thirty-five to forty percent employed no domestic help at all, either full-time or part-time (Table 2).

Table 1: White urban households without paid full-time domestic workers, by percentage.

	Cape Town	*East London*	*Durban*	*Pretoria*	*ALL*
1982	73.6	43.6	33.4	39.7	48.6
1984	79.4	47.7	37.3	39.9	51.8
1986	79.8	52.1	36.2	41.3	52.6
1988	81.2	50.5	39.4	43.3	53.9

Source: CSS, Statistical releases: Survey of houses, flats and domestic servants, 1982-1984; Survey of houses, sectional title and domestic workers, 1986-1988

Table 2: White urban households without any paid domestic help

	Cape Town	*East London*	*Durban*	*Pretoria*	*ALL*
1982	53.3	29.6	23.7	24.7	35.1
1984	56.1	31.9	28.4	24.6	36.8
1986	49.7	31.0	19.5	21.4	32.3
1988	54.6	33.6	23.8	25.4	35.7
1990	51.8	37.5	24.0	25.9	35.1
1992	53.8	37.2	28.4	29.6	39.6
1994	67.9	42.2	44.3	41.3	46.5

Source: CSS Statistical Releases: Survey of houses, flats and domestic servants 1982-1984; Surveys of houses, sectional title and domestic workers 1986-1992

This data indicates wide regional variations. The incidence of employment of domestic workers is much higher Durban and East London, which are close to areas of dense black rural settlement, than in remote Cape Town, where by 1990 less than 20 percent of white households had a full-time domestic worker. Part-time workers were more common in Cape Town, so that almost half of Cape Town's white households employed some domestic help. But in Durban and Pretoria, the proportion employing full- or part-time help was much higher, at over 70 percent.

The recorded drop in domestic workers in the early 1990s looks suspiciously sudden. It might reflect white political anxieties at that time or might simply be an error. Nevertheless, the disaggregated data for different urban areas suggests

statistic was unfortunately discontinued in 1988.

that there was a minor shift from full-time to part-time domestic employment in the 1980s, then an overall decline in domestic employment in the early 1990s.

Data since the mid-1990s (Tables 3 and 4 below) provide a confusing picture of the extent of domestic employment after apartheid. Official data on domestic employees (Table 3) appears to show an increase in domestic employment at the end of the 1990s, both in absolute numbers and as a proportion of all employment. One in twelve people with work in South Africa in 2002 were in domestic service.[2] In 1997, for the first time, statistics listed domestic work as a 'main occupational group'.

Table 3: Domestic employment after apartheid

	Number of domestic workers	*Total number of people in employment*	*Domestic workers as a percentage of all people in employment*
1996	740 000	9 287 000	7.97%
1997	668 000	9 247 000	7.22%
1998	749 000	9 390 000	7.98%
1999	799 000	10 369 000	7.71%
2000 (Feb)	1 001 000	11 880 000	8.53%
2001 (Feb)	914 000	11 837 000	8.46%
2002 (Feb)	972 000	11 393 000	8.53%

Source: Statistics South Africa, Discussion Paper 1; Comparative Labour Statistics; Labour Force Surveys 2000, 2001, 2002.

Two household surveys have included modules focusing explicitly on the employment of domestic workers within the sampled households. The 1998 October Household Survey (OHS) and the 2000 Income and Expenditure Survey (IES) asked how many domestic workers were employed, what work they did and what they were paid, in kind as well as in cash. Table 4 summarises the proportion of households that employed one or more domestic workers, according to the racial classification of the household head. They appear to indicate that employment of domestic workers in white households not only were lower in 1998 than in 1994 (see Table 2), but also continued to decline sharply at the end of the 1990s. It should be noted that there are major problems with the sample used for the 2000 IES. But the general trend is probably robust.

Table 4: Percentage of households employing domestic worker, by race

	white	*coloured*	*Indian*	*African*	*all*
OHS 1998	42.9%	4.9%	23.9%	2.3%	8.1%
IES 2000	53.7%	5.6%	29.7%	2.9%	7.8%

[2] But not the 18% erroneously reported in the Department of Labour (2001).

Source: calculations by Jeremy Seekings. NB: These figures include full- and part-time workers and they cover the whole country, not urban areas only (as in Tables 1 and 2).

Although the great majority of paid domestic workers, nationally, are now black women, this has not always been so. In South Africa, as in the rest of Africa, paid domestic work was initially monopolised by black men. (For a fascinating account of domestic service on Witwatersrand at the turn of the century, see van Onselen, 1982). It was only as more lucrative opportunities in industry opened to them that men moved out of this sector. In less industrialised parts of white-settled Africa, men still monopolise domestic job opportunities. In South Africa by 1985, men comprised 11 percent of all domestic workers (CSS, 1985: Table 1.9), but by 2002 they had shrunk to a mere 3.5 percent (Statistics SA, 2002: Table 3.3).

In the Western Cape, paid domestic work in the twentieth century was initially the exclusive preserve of coloured women but, as early as 1937, parliament noted that black women were competing with coloured women for domestic service jobs (*Hansard*, 1937: 21, 34). In 1953, the government declared its specific intention to protect all coloured workers, including domestic workers, from black competition in the Western Cape (SAIRR, 1954: 41). A series of complex regulations was enacted, making it difficult for black women to obtain such work. As the government's resolve to enforce this policy weakened in the nineteen-eighties, immigrating black women steadily displaced coloureds. In 1984, 59 percent of domestic workers in the Cape Peninsula were coloured (CSS, 1984). By 1991, the proportion had fallen to 38 percent (CSS, 1991).

Contrary to popular belief, African women appear not to have undercut coloured women in domestic service in Cape Town. The average expenditure by white households on black women in domestic work in Cape Town has always been higher than in any other South African city (see Whisson and Weil, 1971: Table 1), exceeded only by expenditure on a small cohort of men in similar positions in Johannesburg. Table 5 shows the relative average cash expenditure by white households in domestic workers of different races and sexes for 1991. Black women may, however, have worked longer hours; the figures are insensitive to wage rates – although, as Table 1 showed, Cape Town had relatively low rates of full-time domestic employment and relatively higher rates of part-time employment. White households did, however, inconsistently reckon their non-cash expenditure (mainly food and accommodation) on coloured workers to exceed that on black workers, perhaps because black workers were not regularly provided with accommodation, being frequently prohibited under apartheid legislation from living on employers' premises.

Table 5: Average cash expenditure on wages to domestic workers in private households, selected urban areas, 1991, Rand/month

	Black women	*Coloured women*	*Black men*
Cape Peninsula	361.14	316.54	Not applicable
East London	227.97	Not applicable	Not applicable
Port Elizabeth	260.69	228.29	Not applicable
Witwatersrand/Gauteng	309.15	Not applicable	364.09
Pretoria	283.08	Not applicable	319.53
Durban Pinetown	271.15	Not applicable	346.19
Bloemfontein	213.03	Not applicable	Not applicable

Source: CSS, 1991.

Nationally, average wages to black domestic workers in 2001 (R599 per month) exceeded those paid to coloured domestic works (R574 per month) (Department of Labour, 2001: 59). Comparing province with province, the Western Cape now pays only average rates to domestic workers. Wages are highest in Mpumalanga and Gauteng and lowest in the Free State (*ibid*.).[3]

Extraordinarily detailed information on the cost to white households of domestic service wages in urban areas is available for the apartheid years, not out of any concern for workers' welfare, but rather to contribute to the calculation of the Consumer Price Index, which was based on white expenditure patterns. Thus, for example, we are told that in October 1989 a black nursemaid in Kimberley cost on average R220 in cash and another R 110 in food and accommodation, compared to a coloured gardener in the Cape Peninsula who cost only R90 in cash and another R60 in food – almost certainly because of the short hours for which a gardener is employed. This was not the issue, however, and therefore not recorded (CSS, 1990a). Information became more obsessively detailed in 1994, with breakdowns by place and type of house occupied by the employer as well as by the type of worker engaged, but the exclusive concern with cost to the employer rather than payment to the worker renders all this information less useful than it might otherwise be.

The Neglect of Black Employers of Domestic Labour

In 1990, black African households in principle urban areas had on average 0.02 fulltime servants each, compared to white urban households which averaged

[3] Data in the report, from several sources, is however inconsistent: Table 16, p67 shows the Western Cape with the highest wages.

0.32 each (CSS, 1990b: Table 6.1). The 1998 OHS and 2000 IES suggest that the proportion of black African households with domestic workers, taking the including rural as well as urban areas, had risen, to between 2 and 3 percent (see Table 4 above). Although this incidence of employment of domestic workers by black people is low, the sheer magnitude of the black African population means that even a low proportion is a big number. The 1998 OHS and 2000 IES suggest that about one quarter of all paid domestic workers is employed by African employers, and a total of between one-third and one half is employed by coloured, Indian and African employers (see Table 6). As far as the domestic workers themselves are concerned, the choice of whether to seek work with a black or a non-black employer is a real one.

Table 6: Race of employers of domestic workers

	white	*Coloured/Indian*	*African*	*all*
OHS 1998	66%	13%	21%	100%
IES 2000	55%	15%	30%	100%

Source: calculations by Jeremy Seekings. NB: These figures include full- and part-time workers and they cover the whole country. The sample used in the 2000 IES is thought to undercount white households; if this criticism is correct, the decline in the proportion of white employers is exaggerated in the IES 2000 data.

While some attention was paid to domestic workers in white South African households between the 1960s and the 1980s, no one considered the practice in black households. The paradigm of inter-racial exploitation was so dominating that the possibility of black employment of black domestic workers was entirely overlooked, both empirically and theoretically. In the 1990s, very little attention was paid to domestic employment at all, leading Budlender to comment in 1996 that there was 'an appalling lack of information'. This lacuna has since been somewhat redressed by the Department of Labour's *Domestic Workers Report* in 2001. The Report noted 'a distinct lack of research and current data on domestic workers in South Africa' (2001: 6). It presented, *inter alia*, new data on conditions of employment from a survey of 2885 domestic workers, interviewed at taxi ranks. But the neglect of the black population as employers of rather than simply suppliers of domestic workers continues, and has led to some distortion in perceptions and conceptions of domestic work as employment in South Africa.

The Research Site: Guguletu, Cape Town

In 1997, a group of third year sociology students from the University of Cape Town surveyed a random sample of 60 houses in Guguletu, a black residential area of Cape Town, in an attempt to begin to fill this gap by establishing the

incidence and, more especially, the characteristics of black households employing domestic workers.

We chose Guguletu arbitrarily, as it is both accessible and sufficiently large (some 8 000 house plots) to present some social diversity. Afterwards, when the incidence of domestic workers was found to be lower than students expected, some of them suggested that Guguletu might be atypical; by choosing Guguletu, with its origins in providing sub-economic housing of the meaner sort, we might have missed the employing classes.

Guguletu was formally proclaimed as a 'Location and Native Village' in November 1958 as an extension to Nyanga, at the time the largest and newest of the segregated black townships established to house and contain Cape Town's black residents. It was initially known as 'Nyanga West location and Native Village', and its purpose was to replace the informal shacks that migrants had already established in the vicinity but which were illegal under the Prevention of Illegal Squatting Act of 1951. Formal settlement, in prefabricated dwellings on serviced sites, was delayed until the railway line had been completed, without which, it was argued, residents would be able to afford the journey to work.

The area became known as Guguletu in 1962, at which time it contained 70 percent of the Peninsula's black 'family housing' (Breytenbach, 1988: 22), as well as a great deal of hostel accommodation for single people. In 1966, a request from the Cape Town City Council to central government to extend the township boundaries was rejected by the Minister as contrary to his government's policy of 'removing Bantu from the Western Cape' (Elias, 1983: 92). This was in line with the Coloured Labour Preference Policy, which sought to replace all black with coloured workers. Instead, another 2 000 new people from Simonstown were uprooted and relocated in already congested Guguletu. Relations between the residents and authorities became increasingly fraught. In 1976, local anger boiled over: administrative offices were razed, along with shops, libraries, classrooms, liquor stores and a post office.

The notion of a special area of black family housing, along with the notion of 'containing' the black population, is now officially a thing of the past. Since the repeal of the Group Areas Act in June 1991, black families, like other families, have been allowed to live wherever they can afford to live. However, with the exception of about a hundred coloureds, some of whom are married to blacks, only blacks have chosen to live in Guguletu, In 1996, about 12 percent of Cape Town's black population of 650 000 lived in Guguletu. One-third of these lived

in shacks[4] which sprang up in every vacant space once building restrictions were relaxed in the nineties.

When the site was first acquired in 1954, the City Engineer described it as 'a series of sand hills up to fifty feet in height' (Elias, 1983: 89). Sand has remained a problem. In 1966, special funds were sought by the authorities to stabilize the sandy road verges (*ibid*: 95). In 1982 sand was clogging the sewerage system 'with dire results for the unfortunate house which is situated in way of the effluent' (*ibid*: 114). In 1988 an observer reported that 'pavements remain unpaved and unplanted, consisting of sand which fills the air when the wind blows. The overall impression of Guguletu is therefore one of uniformity and drabness' (Breytenbach, 1988). In the 1990s, however, streets and pavements were tarred as part of a post-apartheid infrastructural upgrade.

Small enclaves of substantial detached houses for the affluent minority have been part of Guguletu since its inception, but private ownership was not allowed until 1986 when blacks were, for the first time since 1927, allowed to acquire full ownership rights in urban areas.[5] The one student in our group who was familiar with the area, having been brought up there in her grandmother's house, reported that at least one of her interviews took place in 'Malunga Park, an area of well-off black people who afford to pay high bonds for their houses. The houses are built in advanced and expensive material as compared to other streets'.[6]

The Student Interviewers

The twelve student interviewers (two men, ten women) were novices to social research. The survey was their first experience of data collection, the principles of which they had just been taught. Their attachment to the project was optional; they were not paid. As black South Africans, many had friends, neighbours or relatives who worked or had worked in domestic service, which they perceived as demeaning and exploitative. Their attitude towards the project was ambivalent. On the one hand, they welcomed the recognition that there were black households with the means to employ their own domestic workers. They welcomed the undermining of the stereotype *servant* = black, *madam* = white.

[4] Calculated from data kindly supplied by Cape Town Council's Urban Policy Unit, February 2002.
[5] As conferred by the Black Communities' Development Amendment Act in September 1986 (SAIRR, 1986: 349).
[6] Unsourced quotations are all from students' reports of their experience of data collection, April and May 1997.

On the other hand, they were uneasy that the discovery that black people had servants might lead to assumptions that black people, too, were exploiters of this defenceless class, or to an exaggerated notion of black affluence.

There was, however, no resistance to uncovering the possibly poor working conditions of black servants in black households, but rather an understanding that the rewards to domestic service are limited absolutely by the resources of the employing households. The interviewers expected that the material (though not necessarily the social) conditions in less affluent black employer households might well be worse than such conditions in white households. The same theme is nicely captured in the Department of Labour's *Domestic Workers Report*:

> 'In Mmabatho employers referred to the Ubuntu principle. Mainly black employers indicated that domestic workers are usually staying in the home of the employer like a member of the family. The domestic worker shares in the good and the bad that such a household provides. The employer contributes towards schooling, funerals, etc. Therefore wages are relatively lower than in white areas. Black employers in Mmabatho pay an average of R300 per month plus Ubuntu, whilst white employers in Mafikeng pay an average of R500 per month but no Ubuntu' (Department of Labour, 2001: 65).

The Sample

We confined our sample to people living in permanent brick and concrete dwellings rather than in the numerous backyard rooms or other temporary shelters which are now tolerated on the township's periphery. We worked in Guguletu proper (population 56 295, according to the 1996 Census) and not in the informal or hostel areas of Barcelona, Europe, Kanana, Kick, New Rest, Phola Park, Tambo Square and Waterfront (population 22 867).

A grid of 120 squares was drawn onto a detailed map of Guguletu (showing individual plots), and then 12 squares were selected using random numbers. Within each selected square, we sampled five residential plots using a fixed interval based on the number of residential plots per square. Our survey population consisted of the households living in the main house on each plot occurring in the sample.

We presumed that any paid domestic help would be concentrated in housing of this kind – an assumption confounded by Budlender's data (1996) which showed the incidence of such employment to be slightly higher in informal than

formal housing amongst blacks in Cape Town, perhaps because domestic chores are more onerous in informal settlements, perhaps also because, at least in Guguletu, shack areas are characterised by a shortfall of women (0.87 women to each man) compared to formal housing areas (1.2 women to each man). This shortfall is especially marked amongst the more mature women (aged over 35) who typically perform the bulk of domestic work in their own households; they constitute 18 percent of the formally housed population, but less than 10 percent of the informally housed population.[7] The outsiders' assumption that only the poorest of the poor live in shacks misunderstands the politics of urban site acquisition at this chaotically deregulated time of urban expansion, which is not to deny that overall shack dwellers are the more deprived sector. A composite index of deprivation used by the Planning Unit of the City Council, with a range from 3 (most privileged) to 73 (least privileged), assigns to the formal housing sector an index of 49.8, compared to indices from 59-66 for the informally settled parts of Guguletu.[8]

Insufficient time was allowed for return visits in the case of non-responses. Refusals and non-responses were replaced with adjoining houses. Procedures for replacement were inadequately prescribed, and almost certainly led to a sampling bias towards houses with domestic workers; it emerged that some students felt that to do the research properly they each needed to explore at least one instance of the phenomenon under study, and succumbed to helpful suggestions from the community when it came to replacements. The control of this bias is discussed below.

The Interview Schedule

Setting aside the difficult questions of how to conceptualise a household under South African conditions, we assumed each house to contain at least one main set of co-residents whose food was prepared communally, and this was the unit we surveyed and refer to as 'household'. Our interview schedule was addressed to any available adult from each household, and comprised three sets of questions. The first set of questions was about *de facto* household composition: the ages and sexes of residents, and the relationships between them. We anticipated that household size and structure would affect the demand for domestic help: for example, it would be most frequent where there were young children needing continuous care.

[7] From data supplied by Urban Policy Unit, Cape Town City Council.
[8] Space-Time Research: www.str.com.au.

The second set of questions gave us some insight into each household's socio-economic standing by asking educational attainments and occupations of all the members, and about the size of the house. (Gaining harder data, on income levels, was beyond students' skills). We supposed that only the richer households in larger houses would employ help.

The third set of questions focused on the division of labour within the household. We asked which people (including, where appropriate, the domestic worker) contributed to each of a range of household chores.[9] We asked about each person's physical availability for domestic chores as reflected in their daily movements to and from the house, to work or to school.

We distinguished domestic workers (or *helpers)* from other household members by the wages they received for their share of the household work. Other household members are rewarded by being allowed to share unconditionally in the collective bounty of the household. Those who are additionally paid for their specific contribution are thereby marked as 'outsiders'. Their pay rather than their domestic activities set them apart from others in the household. We failed to identify those people in the household who straddle the boundary between these two categories, who undertake a disproportionate share of the domestic work as a condition of household membership, but to whom payment is made only in kind. There is room for argument about whether or not such people are 'really' household members or 'really' servants. The African practice of inviting a distant relative to come and stay, on the understanding that they will contribute labour in exchange for board and lodging, or school fees, is widespread. During hearings before the Department of Labour in 1998-99, for example, 'employers who attended the hearing in Mmabatho indicated that if the minimum wages were going to be unaffordable, they would ask relatives who live in rural areas to come and assist them with their household work' (Department of Labour, 2001: 10). In 1991, the organiser of the South African Domestic Workers Union claimed, on the basis of complaints received by her office, that a third of black families in Soweto (outside Johannesburg) had such helpers. Her claim looks very frail when examined more closely. If there were only one million people in Soweto in 1991, that would mean some 166 000 households (average 6 people per household), of which a third, 55 000, were alleged to have unpaid domestic workers. If only 1 in 20 were brave enough to complain to the Union, as alleged, this would mean the Union receiving 2 750 complaints from this quarter alone.[10]

[9] The analysis of this data is the subject of a separate paper.
[10] *Argus*, 27 April 1991. See also SAIRR, 1992: xliii.

Data Collection

The schedule was prepared in English as a collective task, in the expectation that students, understanding the purpose of the questions which they themselves had helped to frame, would make their own free translations into other languages (chiefly Xhosa), as the need arose.

Only one student interviewer was from Cape Town. Most were Xhosa-speakers from beyond the Western Cape. Four took Xhosa-speaking friends with them as interpreters. They approached their interviews with trepidation.

> 'It was my first time with few other students to go to the township. Most of us who were not Xhosa-speaking people felt very uncomfortable also with fear because of the rumours that Guguletu was a very rough and violent place. We went there with fear and attitudes because of the rumours.'

The locals did not always reassure them. 'After the interview she offered me to wait in her house because it was not safe to stand on the street.

Statistics for Guguletu from the police confirm that these fears are not entirely misplaced. In 1999, Guguletu had higher rates for rape, grievous bodily harm and the illegal possession of fire-arms than any of the three other areas of dense black settlement in Cape Town.[11] The contrast with the predominantly white suburb of Rondebosch, where the students stay, is stark. In 1997, in Guguletu, there were 352 murders and attempted murders, 233 rapes, and 941 cases of grievous bodily harm. The comparable figures for Rondebosch were 8 murders and attempted murders, 7 rapes and 12 cases of grievous bodily harm.[12] Of course, the black neighbourhoods are much more densely settled than the white suburbs; the comparative *rates* are less startling: 15 murders and 9.8 rapes per 10 000 residents in Guguletu compared to 1.1 murders and 3.8 rapes per 10 000 residents in Rondebosch.

Most interviews took place over the weekend and on a public holiday at the end of May 1997. The interview was held with any willing household adult. Students' descriptions of the interviews often foisted on busy people without appointment and conducted in congested rather than private places, do little to

[11] However, Nyanga and Langa had higher rates for murder and attempted murder. In 1999, Khayelitsha was the least crime-ridden of the four black ex-townships.
[12] Figures from *South African Police Service Commission Information Analysis Centre*.

enhance our faith in the detail of the data collected. But they do reassure us that the interviews did indeed take place and that the data was not invented in some student residence – a problem known to beset research procedures of this kind.[13]

> 'The house was a tavern and during our interview there was a lot of disturbance. She refused to sit because she was getting ready for her night shift job. Besides her up and down movements, other customers also disturbed us by coming in to buy beers.'

> 'My first interview was a guy and he was busy washing his car. We conducted the interview outside the house and people passing on the street disturbed in most cases. We also had to be careful not to get wet. The interview went smoothly and I was lucky because he understood English.'

> 'We found a woman cleaning and drinking liquor too. She told us that she was a little bit drunk and some of her answers might not be true'

Several students had difficulty in securing co-operation, especially with older people

> 'We found an old woman in the house and explained to her in Xhosa why we were there and asked for an interview. She asked us to leave her house because she was not going to give her information to strangers and to people of our age.'

> 'One respondent was an old illiterate woman. She didn't understand what a research is and even asked me if there would be no danger resulting from her answers'

Reluctant respondents managed to evade several of the questions.

> 'Some pretended not to know their dates of birth because they did not want to reveal their real ages to us because we are regarded as kids.'

> 'She didn't respond freely, probably because of language difference and my status as a university student. She didn't disclose ages and names of the family members, as well as what they do'

[13] Deception of this kind is common in student projects, but more worrying when results are published and taken seriously. See Mugyenyi and Russell, 1997.

Some students began to see their role as unnecessarily intrusive.

> ‘It was embarrassing to ask things like age and education level.’

Others responded more assertively, modifying their own behaviour and manipulating the situation in order to successfully complete the interviews.

> ‘At my first interview I also see some attitude when they look at me. People from Guguletu they like to undermine people. They look at the way you dress. In my second interview I dress up in a way they will respect me. I try to wear casual but not too casual.’

> ‘I encountered problems of people sympathising with me, looking at me as a pathetic student who is struggling to get people’s co-operation and thus responded in a manner that showed that they just wanted to help me through with my project’

Findings

The Incidence of Paid Domestic Helpers

We found that 9 percent of sampled households (i.e. only five in a random sample of 56) employed domestic helpers. This figure was arrived at with some difficulty, on account of the students’ misguided compulsion to ‘find’ domestic workers rather than not come across any in their allocated sub-sample. Originally we appeared to have nine instances of domestic helpers among 60 households, i.e. an incidence of 15 percent. But, during debriefing (the accounts of their fieldwork experience which students had to write, and which provided a valuable means for post-factum control of data), it emerged that four of these households were not part of the original controlled random sample and were targeted replacements. This is an incidence above the national figure (as might be expected, given that backyard shacks and informal settlements were excluded, as well as rural areas) – but below the 16 percent found by Budlender for a Cape Town sample of black households in 1996. It may be that blacks living in Cape Town are as exceptional in this matter as are whites.

Although these four cases have been excluded from our estimate of the incidence of domestic workers (in which sample size had to be reduced to 56), we have drawn on them in our analysis below. The inclusion of these interviews

compromises the representativeness of our data, but the numbers are too small for this to be a serious obstacle for a very preliminary, exploratory survey of this kind; to have excluded these targeted households would have left us generalising on the basis of only five instances, which we reckoned worse folly.

A Comparison of Households Employing and Not Employing Domestic Workers

By comparing households with and without domestic helpers, we begin to understand what drives the practice of having such workers. Our analysis follows two paths. First, we examine what we think of as the *structural* features of households: their size, the ages and sexes of the household members, the kinds of kin or other relationships between household members. Does the structure of the household exert a pressure to employ a paid helper? Secondly, we consider the *socio-economic* standing of the household as measured by house size and by the occupations and educational levels of household members. Do only the richest and biggest households employ domestic help?

Structural Factors

a. Household Size

We expected household size to have a bearing on domestic service. We expected that larger households would generate more domestic work, and would be in more need of such help than small households which could look after themselves.

Household sizes ranged from two to eleven people. The average household size is 5.8, half the households having at least six people. Contrary to our expectations, the proportion of households with helpers *falls* sharply as size increases. Over a quarter of the very small households have helpers. Only 7 percent of the biggest households have helpers. Our first finding is therefore that *smaller households are much more likely to have helpers than large households.*

Table 7: Employment of domestic help by household size

Household size	*Number in sample*	*Number with helpers*	*Percentage with helpers*
2 or 3	13	4	31%
4 or 5	16	2	13%
6 or 7	17	2	12%
8+	14	1	7%

b. Young Children in the Household

We supposed – wrongly – that childcare would be a major domestic chore shaping the practice of hiring domestic help. Since children are usually in school by the time they are seven years old, we expected households with children under seven years of age to be more likely to hire domestic help than those without young children. To our initial surprise, we found that those *without* young children are, if anything, somewhat *more* likely to have a helper than those with young children. We realised that young children are more likely to be found in larger households where their mothers or other carers do the child care and other domestic work without outside assistance. Our second finding is that *the presence of young children per se is irrelevant to hiring domestic help.*

Table 8: Employment of domestic help by presence of children under 7 years old

	Households without such children	*Households with such children*
Number in sample	28	32
Number with helpers	5	4
Percentage with helpers	18%	13%

c. Sex of Household Head

We did not ask who the household head was. The notion of households having a head is culturally loaded; the locus of authority in the household cannot be identified with one leading survey question. But, given the extent of interest in 'female-headed' households, particularly in Africa, it seemed foolish not to classify households on the basis of the sex of the oldest resident adult. Because African men usually marry women younger than themselves, a preponderance of male 'household heads' might be expected, were it not for the tendency of

women to outlive men. Women were found to 'head' households slightly more often than men: in 33 households (55 percent) the oldest person is a woman. These woman-headed households are less likely to employ a helper than those where the oldest person is a man. Our third finding is that, *when the oldest person in the household is male, the household is more likely to employ domestic help.*

Table 9: Employment of domestic help by sex of oldest adult in household

	Woman	*Man*
Number in sample	33	27
Number with helpers	4	5
Percentage with helpers	12%	18%

d. Household Type

Three categories of household have been distinguished on the basis of the constellation of resident kin comprising them: conjugal (consisting exclusively of a couple and at least some of their own children); extended and/or expanded (either vertically by the inclusion of at least three generations, or laterally by the inclusion of siblings of adult household members, and/or their partners and children); and a residual category, neither of the above, labelled 'other', usually a *de facto* single women and her children, but also, for example, a childless man living with his childless sister, or a man living with his nephew.

Given our decision to list as household members only *de facto* residents, the data is shallow. Because of the volatile, contingent and arbitrary nature of household formation in contemporary black urban communities, the particular composition of any household at any one moment – the survey moment – cannot be taken as definitive. Nor can it be taken as evidence of the prevalence of this or that *kinship system*. Nor do the rules governing co-residence in contemporary black urban areas follow the predictable 'developmental stages' identified by Fortes (1958) in Ghana. Pauw's (1963) suggestion (for East London) of an alternation of two- and three-generation households amongst second generation urbanites is more probable for southern Africa.

However contingent the household type, the fact that a household contains a particular constellation of people exerts an immediate influence on the need to

augment household labour with outside domestic help. The more inclusive and extended households appear best able to meet their own needs for domestic labour. Households with a more limited array of kin are more likely to employ domestic help. The array of kin is, of course, closely correlated with the size of household. Our next finding was thus that *extended families are less likely than the less complex households to have helpers.*

Table 10: Employment of domestic help by household type

	Extended	*Conjugal*	*Other*
Number in sample	34	12	14
Number with helpers	4	2	3
Percentage with helpers	12%	17%	21%

Analysis of households by their generational depth throws up a more striking contrast between two- and three-generational households, the former being much more likely than the latter to employ domestic help. This may be because daughters, upon bearing children, take on an extended domestic role, or because their mothers seize the opportunity to retire from paid work to become domestically- burdened grandmothers.

Table 11: Employment of domestic help by generational depth of household

	Two-generation	*Three-generation*	*Other*
Number in sample	23	34	3
Number with helpers	6	3	0
Percentage with helpers	26%	9%	0%

Laslett and Wall (1972) found a similar relationship in their study of patterns in England and Western Europe, Serbia, Japan and North America across the period from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries:

> ‘For servants were in a sense alternatives to kin and we find that there is a significant correlation (at 0.05) between the proportion of households with them on the one hand, and complexity of household structure on the other, though it is in the negative direction. The more servants there were in these communities, it would appear, the less likely were households to be extended or multiple.’ (Laslett with Wall, 1972: 57)

e. Presence of Adults at Home during the Day

Our analysis so far suggests that larger households have sufficient labour-capacity to manage their domestic chores: it is only in smaller, labour-deficient households that domestic help is likely to be hired. We pursued the idea of 'domestic labour-deficient' households by looking at where the adults in each household spend their days. For each household we asked whether there are adults present and available during the day to do domestic chores.

We ascertained for each adult in the household the timing of their daily movements away from, and back to, the house. Forty percent of households have no adults at home during the day. The remaining 60 percent have at least one adult at home all day. Predictably, the percentage of households employing helpers is twice as high amongst those without available adults at home as those with adults at home during the day. We thus find that *households without adults at home during the day are more likely to employ helpers than those with adults at home during the day.*

Table 12: Employment of helper by presence of adults at home during the day

	No adults at home by day	*Some adults at home by day*
Number in sample	24	36
Number with helpers	5	4
Percentage with helpers	21%	11%

Socio-Economic Factors

Whatever the internal pressures on the household to buy in domestic help, this is simply not possible if the household income makes such practice unaffordable. We made no attempt to collect data on household income, but we did collect three indirect markers of economic standing: educational attainment of the oldest adult in the household, occupations of household members, and size of house, as measured by number of rooms.

f. Educational Attainment of Oldest Adult

There is a high correlation between educational attainment and the employment of domestic help. The chances of having such help increase six-fold where the

oldest adult has matriculated. Where he or she has only primary education or less, less than 6 percent of households have helpers, compared to 37.5 percent of households where he or she has matriculated or has post-matriculation qualifications. We found that *prolonged education sharply increases the likelihood of employing a domestic worker.*

Table 13: Employment of helper by educational attainment of oldest adult in household

	None/Primary only	*Secondary without matriculation*	*Matriculation or post-matriculation*
Number in sample	17	27	16
Number with helpers	1	2	6
Percentage with helpers	6%	7%	38%

g. Occupation of Oldest Adult

A third of households in our sample were 'headed' by retired people whose previous occupations we failed to record. Our figures on the occupation of the oldest adult in the household are thus very paltry. It is nonetheless very clear that the occupation of the oldest person (itself strongly determined by education) affects the likelihood of the employment of a domestic helper. No households headed by a retired person employed a domestic worker. Half of all households in which the oldest person is semi-professional (mostly teachers and nurses) or managerial had domestic helpers, and more than half of all the domestic helpers worked for households headed by people with these occupations. In summary, *the more skilled the occupation of the oldest adult, the greater the likelihood of employing domestic help.*

Table 14: Employment of helper by occupation of oldest adult

	Number in Sample	*Number with Helpers*	*Percentage with Helpers*
Retired	21	0	0%
Semi-professional and managerial	12	6	50%
Informal sector	7	1	14%
Domestic workers	7	1	14%
Clerical/Sales	6	1	17%
Labourers	3	0	0%
Housewives	2	0	0%
Unemployed	1	0	0%

h. Number of Earners in Household

Only three of the sixty households had no resident earner. Most households have more than one resident earner. In a Western context, such dual-earner families would be more likely than others to hire domestic help; not only would they be able to afford it, but, given their commitment to outside work, they would be pressed for time. Guguletu is different. In Guguletu, only three of the 37 households with multiple earners (8 percent of multiple-earner families) have paid domestic help, compared to 30 percent amongst those with one earner. This is in line with earlier observations that in Guguletu smaller households are more likely than others to employ domestic workers. Our finding was that *domestic helpers are more likely in one-earner than in multiple-earner households.*

Table 15: Employment of domestic helper by number of earners per household

	None	*One*	*Two or more*
Number in sample	3	20	37
Number with helpers	0	6	3
Percentage with helpers	0%	30%	8%

i. Size of House

Conventionally, in Europe, paid domestic helpers are associated with big houses and with the wealth and more onerous domestic burden that this implies. However, we already know that in Guguletu bigger households (which require more space) have fewer paid helpers. It is therefore unsurprising that people living in bigger houses are, if anything, somewhat less, rather than more, likely to hire domestic help than people in smaller houses. The *size of house is insignificant for hiring domestic help.*

Table 16: Employment of helpers by size of house

	1 or 2 rooms	*3 or 4 rooms*	*5 or 6 rooms*
Number in sample	13	40	7
Number with helpers	2	6	1
Percentage with helpers	15%	15%	14%

When we turn from house size to house density we find a clearer socio-economic gradient. Those who live in greatest congestion are least likely to employ a helper, but the threshold – two per room – is very low. We found, thus, that *people in severely overcrowded houses are unlikely to employ domestic help*.

Table 17: Employment of helper by congestion of house

	At least 1 room per person	*No more than 2 people per room*	*More than 2 people per room*
Number in sample	17	22	21
Number with helpers	4	4	1
Percentage with helpers	24%	18%	5%

Conclusions

Any conclusions based on this slight evidence can only be very tentative. Our analysis suggests that outside domestic help is likely to be bought in only where the black urban household's own complement of labour is deficient. However, not all labour-deficient households employ domestic helpers. This is a necessary but not a sufficient condition. The household must also have the means to pay for them. Similarly, the better-educated who have secured better-paying jobs are likely to employ domestic helpers only when their own household labour supply is inadequate.

Status

Our data on the occupations of all the 333 people in our sample of sixty households, children and infants as well as adults, allows us to draw another inference about which categories of people (as opposed to households) enjoy the luxury/necessity of paid domestic help. Predictably, a third of people in semi-professional and managerial jobs live in households with a paid helper, as compared with, for example, only 5 percent of those in labouring jobs.

Table 18: Occupations of all people in sampled households, showing percentage in each category living in a household which employs paid domestic help

	Number in sample	*Number in households employing helpers*	*Percentage in households employing helpers*
Children under 7 years of age	37	5	14%
In full-time education	118	21	18%
Unemployed	33	2	6%
Retired	28	4	14%
Semi-professional & managerial	27	9	33%
Clerical and sales workers	26	4	15%
Domestic workers	22	2	9%
Labourers	21	1	5%
Self-employed informal sector workers	13	1	8%
Housewives	8	1	13%

Table 18 seems to confirm the expected relationship between social class and the luxury of having somebody else to do your dirty work. But there is also evidence of a different kind in the table in its suggestion of status and economic diversity *within* households: not that so few labourers have experienced having the services of paid domestic workers but that, although so few households employ domestic workers, those that do contain some labourers. For example, almost a tenth of people working as domestic workers live in households that themselves employ domestic workers. The situation is more like that described for England in the 16th century than the 19th century. By the nineteenth century, the social gap in England between those employing and those supplying domestic workers had widened, and the employment of 'servants' had become a matter of status rather than necessity. There is little evidence that this is the case in Guguletu.

Names and Forms of Address

The words used to describe domestic workers tell us something about the institution. 'Servants' is a case in point. Notoriously, white South Africans have demeaned their black and coloured domestic workers by calling them 'girl' or 'boy'. 'My girl' in white South African speech rarely means 'my daughter'. Officially, 'domestic servants' disappeared from the record in 1986, to be replaced by 'domestic workers' – although the official Income and Expenditure Survey continued to ask about 'servants' up to 1995, switching to 'domestic

workers' only for the 2000 survey. Unofficially, in polite English-speaking society – and often with gross misrepresentation – servants were becoming 'maids'.

Conveniently, the numbers of black men in domestic service was declining rapidly, minimising the problem of what to call 'boys'. In 1982, 14 percent of all domestic servants working in white urban houses were men; by 1991 they had shrunk to 2 percent. Recent national figures from the bi-annual Labour Force Survey suggest a much higher participation of men, with men accounting for 19 percent of all people who 'do any work as a domestic worker for a wage, salary or payment in kind' in 2001 (Statistics South Africa, 2001: Table 2.1) – but this figure probably includes some workers on farms, chauffeurs and gardeners. In the nineties, many 'maids' were giving up full-time contracts to become itinerant 'chars'. The language of local domestic service amongst English-speaking whites was being internationalised as South Africa emerged from its isolation.

In black South African communities, people employed to do domestic work are referred to as 'helper' (*umncedi*), a word with very different connotations from 'servant' or 'worker'. Unlike 'servant', it suggests working alongside household members who are themselves getting on with their own domestic chores; it suggests being included in the household's collective labour. It also suggests reciprocity: we help and are helped in return. Yet a 'helper' is not a kinsman; if she were, a term for her would already exist; there would be no need to describe her as *umncedi*. Helpers are outsiders, brought into the household to fulfil a specific need. They are most often addressed by their first name, a practice in conservative black society bordering on disrespect rather than intimacy. But black children are very unlikely to be allowed to address 'helpers' by name. They call them *sisi* (sister) or *u-anti* (aunt).

The idiom of kinship draws domestic workers into the household, as, at the same time, the term 'helper' suggests that what is being done is less than a proper job. Help is essentially informal, almost altruistic. A contract would be out of place with a helper. Help may be rewarded or reciprocated but it is not paid by the hour.

Payment

The prevailing rates per hour for domestic work in Guguletu are nonetheless easily arrived at. Our small sample yielded a wide range from R1.1 per hour (1997 prices) for somebody working a 45 hour week, to R10 per hour for somebody doing 2 hours of laundry work a week. The fewer the hours worked, the higher the

rate per hour. The average pay for part-timers was R242 a month for a 13 hour week (R4.7 per hour). For full-timers, it was R333 a month for a 40 hour week (R2.1 per hour). Unsurprisingly, wages paid by black households are lower than the national average, which in 2001 were reported by the Department of Labour to be R599 per month for a black woman in full-time domestic service (more than 27 hours a week – Department of Labour, 2001: Table 9). This average is enhanced by a few who pay well. The median wage is only R518; half the black women in full-time domestic work earn less than R18 per day. Lower rates of pay are reported for 2001 and 2002 in the official bi-annual Labour Force Survey. Working with a different sample, they reported that 64 percent of all domestic workers earn less than R500 per month in 2001 and 2002 (Statistics South Africa Labour Force Survey, 2002: Table 3.10).

None of our sample 'lived in', so none enjoyed the considerable payment in kind accorded to this mode of work, but they all received meals during working hours and second-hand clothes passed down from household members. One third – not the same third in each instance – enjoyed paid leave, sometimes received help with medical bills and school fees, and had been able to borrow money from their employers. None had entered into written work contracts. None had the prospect of a pension.

Since paid domestic work, unlike other paid employment, produces only the intangible value of servicing the household (so-called *reproduction of the work force*), its *proper* reward in market terms is difficult to establish, and is always limited by the household's own cash earnings. Some black employer households themselves struggle to meet basic needs. The worst paid domestic worker in our sample worked for a household in which, at the time of the survey, the only cash income came from the pensions of two elderly, incapacitated people and the wages of a woman who was herself employed by whites as a domestic worker (who commented: 'I pay her way less than other people but I also have nothing'). But a university graduate daughter was looking for work, and a second daughter was in higher education: household fortunes, like household membership, can change suddenly.

In 2003, the Department of Labour set minimum wage rates for domestic workers in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997. Cape Town fell under Area A of the sectoral determination, meaning that employers in Guguletu are now legally required to pay at least R4.10 per hour for a full-time domestic worker (i.e. one working for more than 27 hours per week) and R4.51 per hour for a part-time worker – or risk falling foul of the labour inspectors. But it seems likely that, for the moment, *ubuntu* rather than litigation will prevail.

A Broader Perspective

By bringing black householders into focus as employers of domestic service, we see that the white exploitation of black women in South Africa, however topical as an aspect of apartheid, is just one historically specific facet of a much wider sociological issue to which feminist scholars have devoted much attention: how household work is conceptualised, managed and allocated. Practices differ widely in different parts of the world. Some feminists have been concerned with the way such work has been heaped on women in the West in the last 200 years, and then dismissed as non-work (Oakley, 1974). More recently, as women in the West have increasingly been drawn into the labour market, attention has been focussed on their exploitation of powerless women migrants from the developing world to do their domestic work (Ehrenreich, 2002). Outside the West, the employment of *servants* to do domestic work is widespread. It persists wherever social inequalities allow some households to exploit their position by buying in labour so cheaply that its cost can be met from household income, whether in cash or kind. In South Africa, paid domestic work has usually been seen as conferring leisure on undeserving white women at the expense of exploited black women. Our preliminary evidence on black employers of domestic labour helps us to see the institution in a broader perspective.

References

Breytenbach, Y. L. 1988. *A Socio-Spatial Analysis of the Occupancy Patterns of a Typical African Township Plot.* Unpublished Honours dissertation, Centre for African Studies, University of Cape Town.

Budlender, D. 1996. Personal communication.

CSS (Central Statistical Service). 1984. *Prices, Houses and Domestic Servants and Flats, 1984.*

CSS. 1985. *Prices, Houses and Domestic Servants and Flats, 1985.*

CSS. 1990a. *Annual Survey of Houses, Sectional Title Units and Domestic Workers, 1990: Statistical new release.*

CSS. 1990b. *Survey of Household Expenditure, 1990*.

CSS. 1991. *Annual Survey of Houses, Sectional Title Units and Domestic Workers, 1991*.

Cock, J. 1980. *Maids and Madams: A Study in the Politics of Exploitation.* Johannesburg: Ravan Press.

Department of Labour. 2001. *Domestic Workers Report: An Investigation into Minimum Wages and Conditions of Employment of Domestic Workers.*

Elias, C.M. 1983. *A Historical Review of the Supply of Housing for Urban Africans in the Cape Peninsula 1900 – 1982*. Stellenbosch**:** University of Stellenbosch, Research Unit for Development Sociology.

Ehrenreich, B. 2002. *Global Women.* London: Routledge.

Fortes, M. 1958. Introduction. In Goody, J. (ed.) *The Developmental Cycle in Domestic Groups*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gordon, S. 1988. *Under the Harrow: Lives of White South Africans Today*. New Hampshire: Heinemann.

Laslett, P. with R. Wall. 1972. *Household and Family in Past Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Oakley, A. 1974. *Housewife*. York: Allen Lane.

Pauw, B. A. 1963. *The Second Generation***.** Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Preston-Whyte, E.M. 1970. *Between Two Worlds: A Study of the Working Life, Social Ties and Interpersonal Relationships of African Women Migrants in Domestic Service in Durban*. Ph.D. thesis. Durban: University of Natal.

Preston-Whyte, E.M. 1976. Race Attitudes and Behaviour: The Case of Domestic Employment in White South African Homes. *African Studies* 35(2).

Russell, M. & M. Mugyenyi. 1997. Armchair Empiricism: A Reassessment of Data Collection in Survey Research in Africa. *African Sociological Review* 1(1).

SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations. 1954. *Race Relations Survey*. Johannesburg: SAIRR.
SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations. 1986. *Race Relations Survey* Johannesburg: SAIRR.
SAIRR (South African Institute of Race Relations. 1992. *Race Relations Survey*. Johannesburg: SAIRR.
Space Time Research. www.str.com.au.
Statistics South Africa. 1996. *1996 Census*. Report.
Statistics South Africa. 2001. *Labour Force Survey, 2001*.
Statistics South Africa. 2002. *Labour Force Survey, February 2002*.
Van Onselen, C. 1982. The Witches of Suburbia: Domestic Service on the Witwatersrand 1880-1914. *Studies in the Social and Economic History of the Witwatersrand 1886 – 1914, Volume 2: New Nineveh*. London: Longman.
Whisson, M.G. and W. Weil. 1971. *Domestic Servants: A Microcosm of "The Race Problem"*. Johannesburg: South African Institute of Race Relations.

The Centre for Social Science Research
Working Paper Series

RECENT TITLES

16/02	*Popular Attitudes towards the South African Electoral System*	By R. Southall & R. Mattes
17/02	*Are Urban Black Families Nuclear? A Comparataive Study of Black and White South African Family Norms*	By M. Russell
18/02	*AIDS and Human Security in Southern Africa*	By N. Nattrass
19/02	*Public Works as a Response to Labour Market Failure in South Africa*	By A. McCord
20/02	*Race, Inequality and Urbanisation in the Johannesburg Region, 1946-1996*	By O. Crankshaw & S. Parnell
21/02	*The "Status" of Giving in South Africa: An Empirical Investigation into the Behaviour and Attitudes of South Africans towards Redistribution*	By C. Pengelly
22/02	*How Important is Education for Getting Ahead in South Africa?*	By M. Keswell & L. Poswell
23/02	*Missing Links? An Examination of the Contribution made by Social Surveys to our Understanding of Child Well- Being in South Africa*	By R.Bray
24/02	*Unemployment and Distributive Justice in South Africa: Some Inconclusive Evidence from Cape Town*	By J. Seekings
25/02	*Comparing Alternative Measures Of Household Income: Evidence From The Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain Survey*	By J. Skordis & M. Welch

The Centre for Social Science Research

The CSSR is an umbrella organisation comprising five units:

The Aids and Society Research Unit (ASRU) supports quantitative and qualitative research into the social and economic impact of the HIV pandemic in Southern Africa. Focus areas include: the economics of reducing mother to child transmission of HIV, the impact of HIV on firms and households; and psychological aspects of HIV infection and prevention. ASRU operates an outreach programme in Khayelitsha (the Memory Box Project) which provides training and counselling for HIV positive people

The Data First Resource Unit ('Data First') provides training and resources for research. Its main functions are: 1) to provide access to digital data resources and specialised published material; 2) to facilitate the collection, exchange and use of data sets on a collaborative basis; 3) to provide basic and advanced training in data analysis; 4) the ongoing development of a web site to disseminate data and research output.

The Democracy In Africa Research Unit (DARU) supports students and scholars who conduct systematic research in the following three areas: 1) public opinion and political culture in Africa and its role in democratisation and consolidation; 2) elections and voting in Africa; and 3) the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic on democratisation in Southern Africa. DARU has developed close working relationships with projects such as the Afrobarometer (a cross national survey of public opinion in fifteen African countries), the Comparative National Elections Project, and the Health Economics and AIDS Research Unit at the University of Natal.

The Social Surveys Unit (SSU) promotes critical analysis of the methodology, ethics and results of South African social science research. One core activity is the Cape Area Panel Study of young adults in Cape Town. This study follows 4800 young people as they move from school into the labour market and adulthood. The SSU is also planning a survey for 2004 on aspects of social capital, crime, and attitudes toward inequality.

The Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit (SALDRU) was established in 1975 as part of the School of Economics and joined the CSSR in 2002. SALDRU conducted the first national household survey in 1993 (the Project for Statistics on Living Standards and Development). More recently, SALDRU ran the Langeberg Integrated Family survey (1999) and the Khayelitsha/Mitchell's Plain Survey (2000). Current projects include research on public works programmes, poverty and inequality.