The problem that has a name: can 'paid domestic work' be reconciled with feminism?

Lotika Singha

PhD

University of York

Women's Studies

February 2017

Abstract

Paid domestic work endures – with its oldest roots grounded in slavery and servitude, and newer ones in contemporary exploitative capitalism. Feminists the world over have analysed its occupational relations in depth to show how they reproduce race, class and gender inequalities, with many domestic workers experiencing inhumane treatment. But feminists also use domestic help. Should such feminists and paid domestic work be condemned, or can it be reconciled with the overarching feminist goals of equality and liberation that encompass all dimensions of discrimination? My thesis approaches this question through an interrogation of outsourced domestic cleaning in the UK and India. The primary data include 91 semi-structured interviews with White and Indian women working as cleaning service-providers and White and Indian female academics with an interest in feminism/gender and who were outsourcing domestic cleaning (or had outsourced previously), in the UK and India, respectively. My analytical approach, rooted in my particular varifocal diasporic gaze, draws on Mary Douglas's anthropology-based cultural theory, which she used to show how comparative analysis enhances sociological understandings of the workings of the West's own institutions and culture. My cross-cultural analysis thus takes into account similarities and differences between and within the four groups of participating women, as well as silences in the data. My findings reveal that in the modern urban context, outsourced domestic cleaning can be done as *work* (i.e. using mental and manual skills and effort and performed under decent, democratic work conditions) or as *labour* (requiring mainly manual labour, accompanied by exertion of 'natural' emotional/affective labour and performed in undemocratic conditions). The issue at stake for feminism(s) is not just some women doing the demeaning work of other women but the classed evolution of the very meanings of work in contemporary societies.

List of contents

List of tables

List of figures

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to all my respondents. Their willingness to participate, giving generously of their time and sharing their experiences, made it happen. I will remain indebted to them forever, as the thesis became, and the lessons learnt will remain, part of my life journey in several ways: experiencing higher education in a Western feminist centre, opening up social worlds that I knew were out there but had never dared to venture into, and influencing my family's everyday household practices. All this would not have been possible without the guidance of my supervisor Stevi Jackson, who expertly steered my emerging theoretical understandings and cross-cultural data analyses while ensuring that I remained in the driving seat. I am grateful for her patience and attention to detail to ensure my argument came through clearly and consistently as I laboured to bring the many strands of the analysis together into a coherent whole.

I am grateful to Ann Kaloski-Naylor for her seemingly casual remarks that alerted me to think through more deeply on many points regarding daily life, and along with Steph Lawler, for constructive critical perspectives on the chapter drafts presented to them, without which the thesis would have been so much poorer. My thanks also to Harriet Badger for her patience with my queries and encounters with standard university procedures, and dear friends Takako and Jill for their support as we travelled towards the same endpoint on parallel roads in north, south and middle England. A huge thank you also to another dear friend and colleague Christina Thomas for her thorough proof-reading of the main text (chapters and appendices).

Rajeev and Karan, thank you for listening to my arguments and cooperating in implementing changes to our domestic practices based on my learnings through this work. I am also grateful for the many, often unexpected, nuggets of information that came my way on the various occasions when I talked about my work to relatives, friends and chance acquaintances whose lives touched mine ever so briefly.

And dearest Bonnie, a sadly belated thank you for waiting patiently on those many, many evenings as I tarried at the computer, writing, deleting, rewriting, when we should have been walking.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

The following articles from this thesis have been published:

Singha, L. (2017). Feminist policies for outsourced domestic work: whose voice counts? *Discover Society*, Issue 42. [Online]. Available at: http://discoversociety.org/2017/03/01/politics-and-policy-feminist-oriented-policies-for-outsourced-domestic-work/

Singha, L. (2017). Researching dirt and dirty work. *Discover Society*, Issue 45. [Online]. Available at: http://discoversociety.org/2017/06/06/researching-dirt-and-dirty-work/

Lotika Singha

Introduction

As a master's student of women's studies on my return to academia after many years, I was particularly intrigued by Western feminists' politicisation of housework. But there was little research on the division of household labour among diasporic Indian middle-class communities in the UK (the category to which, for statistical purposes, I belong). I decided to explore this limitation in my dissertation, with the understanding that I would research it more thoroughly if I went on to a doctorate. Briefly, I analysed the domestic practices of 17 first-generation migrant Indian heterosexual, middle-class dual-career couples living in the UK. The respondents were mostly doctors, who had been married for 10–30 years and had lived in the UK for 9–24 years. Data collection comprised joint semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire. During the interviews, I was struck by the invisibility of domestic workers in my respondents' accounts of housework in their childhood homes in India. Many said their mothers did most of the housework. Only when I asked if she had had *any* help, did they say, oh yes! of course, there was the sweepress and the dish-washer and so on.

At the same time, I became aware of a particular Western feminist viewpoint: house-cleaning should not be outsourced because it is personal work, it contributes to stalling of the domestic gender revolution and conflicts with the notion of universal sisterhood. Yet I knew British feminists who outsourced cleaning, as I myself did, or who had been cleaners previously. In the Centre for Women's Studies' common-room I often heard harried female colleagues exclaiming 'I need a wife!' This disjuncture between feminist theory and the reality of some feminist lives concerned me. It did not seem very feminist to outsource cleaning and then feel guilty or be reticent about it.

Given my diasporic location, I wondered whether there were links between the Indian situation of invisible servitude and the British moral disproval of outsourcing of domestic work, particularly cleaning, contradicted by guilt-ridden or quiet outsourcing by some. I decided a doctorate would be my opportunity to examine in an informed way the differences and, perhaps, convergences in East and West tensions around unpaid and paid housework, gender equality, sisterhood and Western feminism. Being human means that I embarked on this project with some preconceived notions of my own. But I seem to have grown taller on the research journey as I found my prior understandings being

challenged by my findings. In the rest of this thesis I hope to demonstrate my increasing maturity.

During the research period, whenever someone asked me about my thesis, it invariably led to a conversation about the person's experience, knowledge or ideas around housework and outsourced cleaning. This happened in sitting rooms, on railway platforms, in a lunch-break during a dance practice …. In the same unexpected places, I also found myself observing people's attitudes towards cleanliness, dirt and cleaning. Thus, some chapters begin with an extract from my journal notes, which offer illustrations of how my research is grounded in everyday lived experiences of not just my respondents, but of the social world in which they and I live.

In Chapter 1, 'Feminist approaches to paid domestic work: a critique', I critically review the feminist canon on outsourcing of domestic work. The contribution of this research to the literature on class- and race-based exploitation in historical and contemporary societies is undoubtedly invaluable. However, no work can be exhaustive. Understanding the limitations of previous research can help in the design of future studies, so that shortcomings are not repeated and the knowledge produced every time enhances existing theory. Thus I also pay attention to the gaps and silences that I found in my readings, and which helped me formulate my research questions, with which the chapter ends.

Chapter 2, 'Behind the words', focuses on the methodology, warts and all: the decisions taken, the justifications underpinning them, including reasons for focusing on outsourcing of domestic cleaning to a live-out worker in two contrasting cultural contexts, and the often bumpy research process. The last part of the chapter forms the first part of the analysis, a descriptive as well as critical evaluation of the demographics of the samples. Chapter 3, 'The politics of outsourcing cleaning in (middle-class) households' interrogates the 'need' to outsource, alongside implications for gender equality and relationship quality in the outsourcing household, and middle-class women's bid for liberation.

Chapter 4, 'The imperfect contours of paid domestic work as dirty work', considers the construction of domestic cleaning as dirty work symbolically and the real, physical work of dealing with dirt. This leads on to how my respondents conceptualised paid-for domestic cleaning, which I analyse in Chapter 5, 'Domestic cleaning: just *work* or *labour*?'. This chapter introduces the central argument of my thesis, that cleaning is not inherently debasing or dirty work; it

can be proper work or a chore, depending on the conditions of work. Following on from this, in Chapter 6, 'Meanings of domestic cleaning as *work* and as *labour*', I further analyse the meanings of cleaning work for the cleaning service-providers I interviewed in both cultural contexts. This analysis focuses on the political economy of the work and provides further evidence to substantiate my argument. In Chapter 7, 'Cultural injustices in the occupational relations of domestic cleaning as *work* and as *labour*', I examine the cultural aspects of class/caste reproduction in paid domestic work and show how cultural injustices are integral to reducing the *work* of cleaning to *labour*. Finally in Chapter 8, I reflect on the limitations of my research, and the implications of my argument for a cross-cultural feminist theory of paid domestic work.

Chapter 1   Feminist approaches to paid domestic work: a critique

'I find this a really stupid idea for a thesis.'

'I am a feminist. I employ a cleaner. He is a man. … We also employ a man [to] cut back the ivy that covers our house. I have no idea why you have chosen this subject for a thesis, it makes no sense to me.'

In the early days of this research, I posed a question on Mumsnet*: 'Does having a paid domestic cleaner conflict with feminism?', giving a brief explanation about my project. Twenty-five people contributed to the discussion. Many respondents found my question 'hilarious' – feminism was about 'allowing women to earn money'. Doing cleaning 'as a business' was feminist, 'doing it for free or favours' was not. They pointed out that there is no angst around men using services of other men, car mechanics, plumbers, builders, etc. One respondent had felt guilty 'because the people I've paid to do my cleaning … have all been clever and capable women', implying that 'there's something wrong with having a cleaning job'. Others told me my research methodology reeked of sexism: it was I who was 'making this a feminist issue by assuming that everyone on here is female, that it is their cleaning they are outsourcing, that it is a menial job [and] not one to be proud of, and that all cleaners are female'. Some snorted at outsourced cleaning being worthy of a PhD. The exercise left me somewhat shaken.

*Mumsnet is a popular British online discussion forum (Chapter 3).

Paid domestic work is broadly defined as remunerated 'work performed in or for a household or households', and domestic workers are 'individuals who regularly perform domestic work within an employment relationship' (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2011:2). Paid domestic work is an enduring feature of the civilising process (Hoerder *et al.*, 2015). Its trajectory in Sweden (Platzer, 2006; Sarti, 2005) illustrates how no political or social upheaval, or technological or economic advancement, has made it obsolete. Regardless of the social-cultural-geographical context, paid domestic work is constructed as an extension of unpaid (oppressive) housework: low in status, undervalued, often performed informally (or illegally by migrant workers) with cash-in-hand payment by those with the fewest skills and social, education and economic resources (Cox, 2006; Srinivas, 1995). Workers may live with their employers[1] (live-in workers) or live elsewhere and work for one or many employers (live-out workers) and they are often denied labour rights at both structural and individual levels (ILO, 2016). Feminist research that has exposed how social inequalities are reproduced in domestic work is intellectually compelling but depressing. Regardless of how 'civilised' societies are, people with greater socio-economic capital continue to exploit and abuse their underprivileged counterparts (Huling, 2012; Lalani, 2011). Before proceeding further it is important to clarify three points. First, I acknowledge the tremendous contribution of existing feminist research to our understanding of the historically and socially constructed intricacies of exploitation and oppression in paid domestic work. These injustices were never far from my mind as I wrote my critique of the vast canon, which, while mapping the messy terrain of paid domestic work, also raises questions. My own argument draws heavily on this research and I cite the various works at relevant places in the thesis.

Second, the feminist 'commitment to seeking some kind of better life for women as women' comprises a range of ideologies (Curthoys, 1988:64). For second-wave liberal feminists outsourcing of housework was often a solution to the 'problem with no name' as housework was seen as part of (White middle-class) women's oppression (see Friedan, 1963). Marxist and socialist feminists, who have theorised housework as part of women's exploitation in class terms,

---

[1] Here I use the terms 'employer' and 'employee'/'worker' as used in the reviewed literature. In Chapter 6, however, I dispute the assumption that these terms are applicable to all employment relations in paid domestic work.

often denounce paid domestic work as it seen as the appropriation of one woman's labour by another and rupturing the ideology of 'sisterhood' (Ehrenreich, 2000; Romero, 2002). However, as Ehrenreich (2000) notes, the US National Organization of Women, a largely liberal feminist initiative, was supportive of improving work conditions of domestic workers, even if it was to suit their own purposes. At the same time she herself had outsourced cleaning once, to get her house ready for a 'short-term tenant' and several of her colleagues, 'including some who made important contributions to the early feminist analysis of housework' were employing maids (2003:90). She also admits participating in other types of consumerism linked to exploitation of workers in sweatshops and food processing. Anderson (2000) used paid childcare alongside unpaid help from her mother and friends. Similarly, in my own academic environment, feminist academics outsourcing housework did not all ascribe to one specific feminism. Those against it were just as likely to leave mugs unwashed in the common room, perhaps forgotten in a hurry, but it happens. Moreover, many feminists do not appear to self-identify with a particular feminist ideology. Thus to avoid erroneous generalisations, I use feminism(s) and 'some'/'many' to qualify 'feminist' instead of specific labels, except where I am referring to a particular feminist position.

Third, housework is 'the sum of all physical, mental, emotional and spiritual tasks that are performed for one's own or someone else's household, and that maintain the daily life of those one has responsibility for (Eichler and Albanese, 2007:248). Still, there is an hierarchy of domestic tasks, in which cleaning is at the bottom and 'spiritual' tasks (duties ensuring the moral status of the household) are at the top (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; see also Roberts 1997). In different studies, the housework that is outsourced varies, although it is implicitly understood that the work under scrutiny comprises housework that is 'women's work'. Consequently, it does not include 'male' jobs, for instance, plumbing, and in research that includes both live-in and live-out workers, a wide range of such domestic work might be analysed. Although employers ostensibly outsource only the 'menial', physical aspects of housework, this research shows that the work actually performed by the domestic worker incorporates 'emotional

labour'.[2] (This labour could be considered part of the so-called 'spiritual' aspect of housework (Roberts, 1997) that becomes recast as (invisible) affective labour when performed by the domestic worker.) In research focusing on live-out workers, the work included may be more circumscribed, for example only house-cleaning work. However, the gendered, classed, and racialised exploitation and oppression experienced by these workers as revealed in these studies shows broadly similar patterns, such as being invisible and not recognised as legitimate workers. Hence, in this chapter I have mostly not distinguished between research looking at different aspects or forms of paid domestic work, except when differences between them are clear.

I start by unpacking the reasons behind the concern that paid domestic work might be anti-feminist or a contradiction in terms for feminism(s). This is followed by an appraisal of the evolution of social meanings of work and the Western feminist construction of housework and history of paid domestic work to situate the theorisation of paid domestic work in a wider context. Then I discuss how methodological decisions might shape feminist understandings of paid domestic work, after which I consider tensions and contradictions in published research. Finally, this critique directs the formulation of my research questions.

Feminist concerns with paid domestic work

> Something strange is taking place in my world. My friends are employing servants … lower-middle class teachers, NGO types, trade union organisers … I have to admit that I have a strong reaction to this – a mixture of self-righteous moralism and class rage … (Foreman, 2014)

Scholars agree that today, paid domestic work is mostly a 'crisis of care' (Glenn, 2000) in which middle-class women's entry into paid labour and failure of middle-class men to share domestic work have a significant role (Calleman, 2011; Cox, 2006; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Estévez-Abe, 2015; Flanagan, 2004; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014; Windebank, 2007). Thus, many feminists, including academics, outsource housework (e.g. see Chaney and Garcia Castro, 1989; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Mattila, 2011; Molinier, 2009/2012; Romero, 2002), and some researchers have previously worked as

---

[2] The mental work done 'to produce an emotional state in another person' (Hochschild, 1983:147).

domestics (e.g. Meagher, 1997; Romero, 2002).[3] Some Western feminists argue that commodification of domestic work will eventually encourage gender equality (Bergmann, 1998; Hom, 2008/2010). But others denounce it because it continues to be shaped by its historical associations with (female) slavery and servitude, the undervalued work of (oppressed) housewives, religious/secular fetishes around dirt and cleanliness,[4] structural exploitation of workers, and the controversial 'global care chain'[5] (Calleman, 2011; Cox, 2006; de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Foreman, 2014; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Ostrander, 1987). A few favour its abolition (Cox, 2006; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a), others – some resignedly – propose regularising it as 'just another job' (Anderson, 2001:25; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Romero, 2002) or outsourcing as a social but not as a consumer service (Devetter, 2015). I will attempt to untangle some of these complex positions by focusing on the work of four researchers who have contributed significantly to the literature on paid domestic work in the Western context.

Romero (2002) and Ehrenreich's (2000; 2002/2010; 2003) work is underpinned by the Marxist feminist approach, which takes as its point of departure that the contemporary form of paid domestic work has morphed from a slavery/feudal occupation to a capitalist-style classed (and racialised) transfer of real work between women, because neither does *she*,[6] the worker, own the means of production, nor does, she, the employer take any responsibility for the worker (viz., social security arrangements) (Romero, 2002). The struggles around the social reproductive work of the most-visible group of women, the White middle-class women, are alleviated simply by passing this non-productive work on to another group of less-visible women, who continue doing their own domestic work as well. That is, while 'both women are subject to the imperatives of the market and to sexual domination, their actual experiences reflect their class positions' (Romero, 2002:59; see also Ehrenreich's (1976) exposition of socialist feminism); men remain the beneficiaries of this woman-against-woman conflict. The occupational relations between *her* and her are a site of struggle, as the

---

[3] To my knowledge, no study has specifically included feminist domestic workers.
[4] Clean 'disembodied' beings are accorded high status, while domestic workers remain imprisoned in their 'dirty' bodies, marking them as low in status (Davidoff, 1995).
[5] I explain this term later.
[6] To break the monotony of the text, I often use she/her for the employer and *she/her* for the employee/worker.

latter tries to extract the maximum work from the former for a minimum wage while the former tries to work autonomously with control over the work process, as excellently elaborated by Romero (2002). Race compounds the exploitation as the employer–employee dyad is almost always a White–non-White dyad. In contrast to the factory, where workers can resist their classed, gendered and raced exploitation collectively, individual domestic workers have to deal with it in isolation. Labour rights that other workers have had access to for decades are denied to them on the basis that the workplace is the employer's home. Capitalist exploitation in paid domestic work equally importantly reproduces dominant structural ideologies of gender, class, race (and caste) (Romero, 2002:59; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; also Anderson, 2000; Cox, 2006) (I expand on these points later in the chapter). Cox draws on similar notions but she also points out the importance of the ideologies of pollution: the 'relationship between dirt, cleaning and status' (2006:6). Work involving the removal of dirt is considered low status and most societies assign this work to particular groups of people, whose status then is lowered because of the work they do. The only way to change these social meanings would be by changing perceptions of dirt and pollution, which, Cox argues, can only be done if we all do our own dirty work. When we pay someone else to do it, those ideologies remain in place. Anderson (2000, 2001, 2003) argues that what is being bought in domestic work is not 'labour power' but *her* personhood, because caregiving involves the whole person. The worker's self cannot be divorced from their work. In other words, the means of reproduction (of gender/class/race) become embodied in the domestic worker as the employer buys the ability to 'command' *her* whole person. Thus, paid domestic work remains embedded in ideologies of slavery and assigned to particular racial groups. All these different lenses of analyses persuasively show that householders across societies consistently refuse to see themselves as employers, conveniently constructing the worker as simply 'help' around the house or as 'part of the family' (Anderson, 2000; Cox, 2006).

In sum, all this literature highlights real concerns around power imbalance in the economic, social, legal, psychological and physical aspects of the worker–employer relationship (Anderson, 2000; Cox, 2006; Romero, 2002)[7,8]

---

[7] As well as several other studies from around the world included in the reference list.

Yet, occasionally between the lines of thorough objective analysis is a subjective moral disproval of paid domestic work[9] that goes beyond *her* exploitation in Marxist terms and the cultural oppression of women as a whole and as classed/raced beings (my readings; see also Bowman and Cole, 2009; Meagher, 2002, 2003). This censure sits between the notion of housework, or some aspects of it, as real work (as theorised by Marxist and/or socialist/materialist feminists) and as low-value work.

Cox (2006) sums up the problem as follows: systemic material inequalities at local and global levels, exacerbated by work–life imbalance among the richer sections of society, and lack of state provision of affordable high-quality childcare, alongside persisting ideologies of pollution create servanthood. While she rightly argues that we should challenge social attitudes towards dirt, her solution for the problem that is paid domestic work is not convincing. She proposes that the only way to establish a fair society is for everyone to clean up their dirt themselves. The first step towards achieving this would be establishing state-funded affordable high-quality childcare, in which carers are 'fairly rewarded'. This would ensure work–life balance for everyone, with enough time for own housework. Anderson concurs with this:

> While a couple might have to employ a carer to enable them both to go to work in the productive economy, they do not *have* to employ a cleaner. (Anderson, 2001:27, original emphasis)

This distinction between childcare and cleaning (both aspects of domestic work) is perhaps made because in theory, publicly delivered childcare removes the problems that beset paid domestic work: nursery nurses are recognised as workers while nannies might be considered 'helpers'. In reality, professional childcaring remains a low-paid, exploitative transfer of care between women

---

[8] Consequently, one cannot commend enough those domestic workers, who, despite the limitations offered by the site and ambivalent legal status of their work, are fighting back alongside other social movements challenging racism, sexism, casteism and so on, and have achieved some successes. For instance, the inclusion of domestic work in the ILO agenda on decent work, with some countries having ratified the convention (Pape, 2016; see also Bapat, 2014 as one example of these struggles).

[9] This discomfort is not limited to feminists. Many Westerners feel 'guilty' about outsourcing work as they see it as emblematic of a classed society (Cox, 2006), or because they are not sure how to 'handle' the work relationship (Jones, 2004).

(Department of Education, 2011, 2012, 2014; Eurofound, 2006; Rolfe, 2006),[10] with prescriptive duties and responsibilities, and cleaning up after *other* (often more wealthy) people's children.[11]

As regards other housework, Anderson (2000:142–143; 2001) correctly points out that some people might outsource housework only for status enhancement, as a certain ideal of cleanliness is part of status construction (see also Cox, 2006), and which, in my view, understandably causes feminist discomfort. However, this is not the only reason for Anderson to consider outsourcing anti-feminist. She argues something peculiar happens when domestic work is outsourced: the 'very act of employing a domestic worker weaves [the two women] … into a status relationship' (Anderson 2003:113–114) and 'lowers the status of' the housework done by the worker as the employer fills her time with something better (2003:105–106). Anderson's observation is a defining principle of paid work (Weeks, 2011) so while Anderson rightly states that employers should be invested in improving the conditions of domestic work to make it 'just another job', the subjective elaborations of a real problem weaken her position. Such ambivalence is evident also when Romero (2002) states that the work is not inherently degrading but then finds her respondents' decision to do this work over other more degrading work a contradictory situation. Ehrenreich notes 'liberal-minded employers of maids … all sense that there are ways in which housework is different from other products and services …' (2003:101), but that 'sense' veers on hypocrisy: 'someone who has no qualms about purchasing rugs woven by child slaves in India or coffee picked by impoverished peasants in Guatemala might still hesitate to tell dinner guests that, surprisingly enough, his or her lovely home doubles as a sweatshop during the day'. Here Ehrenreich also makes a 'small' confession – she had outsourced her cleaning once – but she does not dwell on its implications for her theoretical position. Why once is forgivable but not twice or more is not clear. In fact many

---

[10] The crèche at the first women's liberation movement (WLM) conference in the UK in the 1970s was run by husbands/partners (BBC Radio 4, 2010; Kennedy, 2001). But this practice gained little purchase, even within feminism. At the fortieth anniversary WLM conference delegates made their own childcare arrangements due to health and safety regulations (Philips, 2010). Also, Toynbee (2003) discovered that the front-line worker in the 'posh' state-subsidised nursery attached to the UK's Foreign Office, delivering better care than she might have done for her children, was paid less than a live-out cleaner.
[11] Anderson (2000) used paid childcare herself, although she does not say whether her experience is reflected in her line of reasoning.

cleaners and cleaning agencies offer one-off deep cleans as a service and some people do not outsource regularly. Should these situations be viewed differently? Ehrenreich goes on by noting that the employer is also reluctant to confess because the work she has outsourced is the work her employee 'almost certainly never [would] have chosen for herself' had the latter been in the position to make a choice. Ehrenreich's articulate descriptions of dirt found on floors should make many readers conclude 'this is not the kind of relationship that I want to have with another human being' (2003:91). Finally she argues that outsourcing domestic work smacks of 'callousness and solipsism', and children learn to see the domestic worker as a lesser being and carry that feeling into adulthood (2003:103; also Lutz, 2011). I discuss all these points later in the chapter. Here I note that in all the works discussed here the moral discomfort around outsourcing of domestic work is often directed towards *cleaning*, the domestic task of lowest social value (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a):

> The cleaner comes and applies pressure right where it hurts: in the contradiction between theory and practice, between ideals and compromises. (Molinier, 2009/2012:289, comment refers to French feminists)

Moreover, the sociological gaze more generally focuses on adverse aspects of manual work (Lucas, 2011; Rose, 2004/2014; Torlina, 2011) and Meagher has argued that the analytical emphasis on 'negative experiences ... as definitive' has heightened feminist unease surrounding paid domestic work (1997:188). However, some feminists note that even if subordination is inevitable – as obvious feudal forms of oppression are replaced by modern subtle ones – it is not straightforward. Domestic workers are neither always unreflexive victims nor always vociferous protestors (Bujra, 2000; Constable, 2007; Lan, 2006; Lutz, 2011; Saldaña-Tejeda, 2015). My readings also indicate that there are many real concerns in paid domestic work as revealed in the scholarship reviewed here and in the rest of the chapter, but the moral feminist angst around outsourcing of housework appears to be based on assumptions and limited conceptualisations of the work as problem between particular groups of women – a point that is common across different theoretical frameworks. Hence, in the rest of this chapter I will unpack these assumptions as found across a range of literature, starting with the wider social meanings of work.

The social meanings of 'work'

In the West, before the concept of the moneyed wage, work included any activity 'directed at satisfying the human need for survival' or rising above it, and was primarily carried out at household level; with the industrial revolution, productive work moved out of the household, and 'work' became 'synonymous with [male] employment' (Edgell, 2012:1, 28; Jackson, 1992; Kaluzynska, 1980). Since then, the social and transcendent status of waged work has continued to increase, with a sense of satisfaction beyond remuneration (Edgell, 2012). Today, proper work is 'masculine' work that happens in the public space – it has a progressive career trajectory, and involves 'trading' in the marketplace (Benston, 1969/1980; Curthoys, 1988), motivates the worker to do it (and potential workers to acquire skills to do it), and leads to 'self-actualisation' (Oakley, 1974/1977). The 'feminine' work of social reproduction is 'non'-work, thought to require no or few learned skills (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001:xiii). In between is a range of 'uninspiring' waged service work, including domestic work, performed in the shadows and done by both men and women collectively called 'the working poor', and which keeps society's wheels well-oiled and moving (Sassen, 2009; Toynbee, 2003).

The historical basis of these hierarchies lies in the top-down adoption of the 'industrial paradigm' to determine class divisions and the social value and legal definitions of different kinds of work (productive/non-productive) (Albin, 2012; Schwartz, 2014), as well as the disjunction between an increasingly 'egalitarian ethos' (democratisation) and the 'ethos of service' (Sogner, 2004, cited in Sarti, 2005:240). In the UK, housework was omitted from national statistics of work in 1881 (Hakim, 1980, cited in Edgell, 2012:193). Around the same time, Albin (2012) notes the occupational category 'domestic servants' was gradually removed from labour legislation in part because it had become mostly 'women's work' and labour legislation idealised the male industrial worker as 'worker'. In addition, the legal reformers of the day took the view that the servant–master relationship was different, it was 'personal' in nature. These law-makers would have been primarily men, men who would have had domestic servants themselves. Their view of the domestic work relationship was likely shaped by their own interests in the matter as masters. The Domestic Workers' Union of the time tried to show that paid domestic work could be organised like other work relationships, and an analysis of published debates revealed that domestic workers' peculiar exploitation, the stripping away of their 'spiritual and mental'

humanity (Schwartz, 2015:42), was related to how the occupation was structured. But the top-down view prevailed, and the changing legal conceptualisations of 'work' contributed significantly to the increasing public–private divide, which then continues to be the basis for state resistance to change the status quo (Albin, 2012). A bill was tabled by Gordon and colleagues in 1989 to reconsider women's unremunerated work (Hansard, 1989), however, the Office for National Statistics (ONS, 2016) only recently started to perform measurements of unpaid housework. Still, housework is not included in economic measures such as the gross national product or the System of National Accounts (United Nations, 2010), both of which conceptualise economic activity in relation to production of goods. In 1976, Glazer-Malbin argued that '[o]nly the low status of women and the disparagement of housework can explain why economists have found estimating the contribution of housework to economic well-being an "insoluble problem"' (1976:609). Perhaps malestream economic measures (Pilling, 2014) and meanings of work need revising rather than thinking how undervalued housework should fit into established schemes. As regards paid domestic work, few countries have legal frameworks for it (ILO, 2016), with domestic servants being among the last 'groups to gain citizenship either in the form of the franchise or citizen's rights in the form of insurance' (Davidoff, 1974, cited in Sarti, 2005:240; also Magnus, 1934a). At the time of writing, neither the UK nor India[12] are among the few countries that have ratified the 2013 convention on decent work for domestic workers (ILO, n.d.).

There are several other older dualisms in work besides the work–non-work dichotomy. In the pre-industrial period, Cartesian mind–body dualism[13] bestowed higher status on politics and religion, and also on consumption by the leisured classes, compared with manual (productive) work. Greater specialisation in the industrial period, with emphasis on training and development of 'skills', injected dignity and worth into productive work but hierarchically, through stricter divisions of labour and wage differentials. Consequently, some manual work was devalued as 'dirty'[14] work (Davidoff, 1995) or through mechanisation

---

[12] A few Indian states have introduced regulations but their implementation has been irregular (Mattila, 2016; Neetha and Palriwala, 2011).
[13] This view is disputed today (Rose, 2004/2014; Torlina, 2011).
[14] Although the clean–dirty dichotomisation of work (and its many subdivisions) goes back millennia (Douglas, 1966/2002).

and Taylorisation[15] (Edgell, 2012), while the separation of home and work transformed 'gendered assignment of concrete tasks' to 'sexual polarization of the labor force' (Illich, 1983:46, note 31; Game and Pringle, 1983). Also, as housewives across classes became the primary consumers, 'consumption' became lower in status compared with 'production' (Lutz, 2011).

As these culturally constructed dichotomies enable some social groups to garner power (Douglas, 1986/1987) through work, they deflect attention from the fact that all work has multiple dimensions and 'no job, no matter how lowly is truly "unskilled"' (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010:193[16]). For instance, the mental–manual divide often focuses on the end-value of manual work: the thought that goes into the work is overlooked, it becomes just 'cleaning' or just 'waiting on tables' or just something 'even a monkey' could do (Lucas, 2011:369; Rose, 2004/2014). The dualisms also limit academic understandings of work, because when workers articulate positive meanings in jobs generally categorised as low-value, low-skill or dirty, they may be considered as having false-consciousness (Rose, 2004/2014; Torlina, 2011).

The productive (public)–reproductive (private) dualism overlooks that salaried academics also engage in reproductive work, and the Victorian country house functioned similarly to a modern organisation. The 'upstairs/downstairs' separation of masters and servants was part of a larger hierarchy that included secretaries, book-keepers, governesses, gardeners, stable-hands, etc. (Sarti, 2005; Sambrook, 2005/2009). Domestic service in such establishments had its own sub-hierarchical structure with the opportunity to 'progress' (BBC Two, 2012; Sambrook, 2005/2009), similar to the bottom end of a modern organisation. Domestic staff controlled the entry points to the house (Davidoff, 1995) as do security men, receptionists and switchboard operators today.

The skilled–unskilled dichotomy hides the gendered devaluation of some work: the same work can be classed as skilled or unskilled depending solely on the gender of the worker (Cockburn, 1991; Phillips and Taylor, 1980 cited in Edgell, 2012:65). So housework is considered low-skilled work, despite the fact

---

[15] The step-wise fragmentation of work into tasks that are performed by separate workers in a repetitive manner.
[16] Ehrenreich reached this conclusion following her undercover experiences of three 'entry-level' jobs.

that the human 'home' is a product of people's engagement with other people, technology, processes or activities that require knowledge, hard and soft tools, materials and machines (Cockburn, 1997). Many pioneer and second-wave feminists challenged the public–private distinction by politicising the personal and making housework visible as work. However, because of the concurrent belief that women's emancipation necessitates participation in 'productive' work, feminist arguments about the value of housework are often ambivalent (Schwartz, 2014, 2015).

Western feminist theorisation of housework

The feminist unpacking of housework used both theoretical[17] and empirical approaches. Understandings of unpaid housework as part of women's subordination were grounded in the negative attitudes and experiences of housekeeping among primarily White Western middle-class housewives in increasingly nuclear households (Delap, 2011a; Johnson and Lloyd, 2004; VanEvery, 1997). While seeking to destabilise the industrial capitalist notion of 'work equals employment' (Edgell, 2012:17), the ethnocentric feminist rejection of the housewife role entrenched the image of housewife-as-cabbage and the dualisms that demean housework itself (Ahlander and Bahr, 1995; Hand, 1992; Johnson and Lloyd, 2004). My focus here is on this devaluation and not housework's role in the structural gendered subordination of women (with due regard to race/class/caste as factors shaping different women's experiences (Glenn, 1992)). For instance, the institution of marriage and family, or even heterosexual cohabitation, as oppressive for women is grounded in malestream existential thinking that constructed dichotomies such as transcendent versus immanent work[18] in which the housework primarily done by women became 'work directly opposed to the possibility of human self-actualisation' (Oakley,

---

[17] The domestic labour debate constructed housework as proper work through a theoretical argument about its utilitarian value for capitalism. Its narrow economistic focus ignored the historical specificity of the sexual division of labour and the moral homemaking dimension of housework: that is, unpaid housework is done within patriarchal relations regardless of marketisation (Ahlander and Bahr, 1995; Curthoys, 1988; Delphy and Leonard, 1992; Hand, 1992; Jackson, 1992; Kaluzynska, 1980:45; Westwood, 1984) and also in same-sex households.

[18] 'Transcendent activities ... thrust humanity forward ..., enlighten humankind ... Activities of immanence include ... the everyday labors that sustain and repair the body and mind ... [and] bureaucratic paper pushing and biological [reproductive] functions ...' (Veltman, 2004:123, drawing on de Beauvoir, 1948, 1952).

1974/1977:222). To substantiate my interpretation, I revisit Oakley's (1974/1977, 1974/1985) early but still influential sociological analysis of housework in a sample of 20 working-class and 20 middle-class women in the UK.

Oakley's study[19] was followed by a wealth of research documenting links between housework and women's continued public subordination (e.g. see Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, 2010; Treas and Drobnic, 2010). Most analyses, however, focus on the core household tasks of contemporary urban Western households – cleaning, cooking, laundry, washing-up, grocery shopping and childcare (Oakley, 1974/1985). Often, the springboard for analysis is Oakley's conclusion that housework is 'inherently' mundane isolating work, incorporating dulling routines and standards. But Oakley's interview schedule included leading questions such as 'Do you find housework monotonous on the whole?' (1974/1985:210), and loneliness as experienced by her respondents might have been due to their particular circumstances as housewives in London. As Myrdal and Klein argued, the Western housewife 'has been the victim of that middle-class ideology of privacy, which has to-day [*sic*] spread to the vast masses of society and which has made "keeping oneself to oneself" one of the essential virtues in the accepted code of the middle-class and lower middle-class proprieties' (1956/1968:146). In Westwood's (1984) Leicester-based study, the migrant Indian female factory workers did not report isolation as they often lived in joint families.

Oakley's (1974/1977) participants also commented that liking or disliking housework depended on one's mood. Working-class wives were more invested in domesticity and more likely to like housework. Oakley suggested these women had reduced linguistic proficiency due to their lower education status, which limited their justifications to 'common-sense' reasoning and normative gendered discourses. Their 'satisfaction' probably reflected a resigned acceptance of things beyond their control. Oakley's use of negative leading questions and other studies do not lend credence to this thesis. Perceptions of work and its meanings are relational, for instance, working-class women's experiences of little freedom and control in 'immanent' waged work (Pollert, 1981; Walters, 2005) might make

---

[19] Also Lopata's US-based work (Glazer-Malbin, 1976).

their comparative experience of housework more positive, even when rejecting the housewife identity (Spitze and Loscocco, 1999; Westwood, 1984).[20] Fifteen White wife-mothers living in an English market town (just over half were middle-class) in the 1980s did not approach housework as a mindless activity. Instead:

> their choice was not to adopt the modern methods that would lead to … mindlessness. … [They] were aware of the problems of allowing the machine to take over. Having escaped the tyranny of the factory, the women are not going to fall into the trap in the home which their husbands may endure at work … Through beautifying their homes as well as in cooking, the women realise their creativity. (Hand, 1992:149)

Metcalfe's (2013) sample of northern English working-class women ably expressed views on housework similar to Oakley's middle-class respondents. It seems plausible that experiences and meanings of housework vary, depending on life-stage and other aspects of social life. Was Oakley's description of housework as 'inherently deprived' (2005:45) influenced by her own positioning and understandings of it?

Johnson and Lloyd argued that feminists needed to deploy the housewife subject position as the Other in the struggle 'to elaborate a speaking position' for 'the feminist intellectual' (2004:2; also Schwartz, 2015), such that today, liking housework seems socially undesirable. When the *Woman's Hour*[21] presenter Jane Garvey dared to say she enjoyed ironing, her tone was apologetic:

> I hate to mention this in a way because I know people will squeal with indignation but maybe … some women like housework … I'm one of them actually, sometimes I like a bit of ironing … it's about bringing order to disorder isn't it? You know there's pleasure to be gained … It's honest graft isn't it? What's wrong with that? (BBC Radio 4, 2012a)

Two days later, Jane and her guest seemed obliged to use negative descriptors for housework:

---

[20] Working-class men have also described their jobs as drudgery, a means to support their households, their havens away from the workplace (Delphy and Leonard, 1992).
[21] A British Broadcasting Association (BBC) Radio 4 programme that discusses topical issues for and about women.

> Emma: … obviously we're not perfect – but my husband and I do pretty
> much share … uuh … chores …
>
> Jane: The dreary stuff …
>
> Emma: Yes, the dreary stuff exactly … (BBC Radio 4, 2012b)

It is against this problematisation of housework and contemporary understandings about 'work' more generally that feminists have theorised paid domestic work in the past four decades. Before elaborating the contradictions in their approaches, I consider the historical trajectory of paid domestic work.

Historical considerations in paid domestic work

Manual domestic work has historically been and continues to be a site of power and status worldwide (Chin, 1998; Delap, 2007, 2011a,b; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002). At the heart of the well-described domestic master–slave or mistress–maid/servant relationship lies the notion of 'difference', in which the slave/maid/servant and their progeny are constructed as culturally and even biologically inferior, based on class/caste and/or race (Davidoff, 1995; King, 2007; Moosvi, 2004; Rollins, 1985; Srinivas, 1995), fit only for lifetime servitude. However, following the social changes wrought by industrialisation and the world wars (e.g. establishment of welfare states and rise in working-class living standards), in the mid-twentieth century, paid domestic work almost 'disappeared' for a brief period in some Western countries (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Lutz, 2011). These broad notions lend themselves to several widely accepted understandings of Western historical trends in paid domestic work.

- In the late nineteenth/early twentieth centuries there was a sharp drop in supply ('the servant problem') because of the expansion of work opportunities for working-class women, who gladly rejected the drudgery of domestic work (BBC Two, 2012; Cox, 2006).
- After the second world war, demand also reduced; women across classes were exhorted to be housewives (van Walsum, 2011). In Scandinavia, '[t]he choice not to employ domestic workers was widely considered to be important from an equality perspective, and people became accustomed to performing their own household chores' (Calleman, 2011:122).

- From the 1970s onwards, as middle-class women increasingly entered the paid workforce, paid domestic work resurfaced in the West (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a).

- In this post-slavery, post-industrial, post-colonial age, the working conditions of domestic workers are modernising from (live-in) feudalistic servitude to (live-out) capitalist-style exploitative service (Glenn, 1992; Romero, 2002).

- Employers and employees are two separate categories: employers are (often White) women well-endowed with social, racial and economic capital, while employees are women with class/racial backgrounds associated with historical disadvantage (Anderson, 2000; Cox, 2006; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Romero, 2002).

Closer scrutiny of practices in particular temporal and socio-cultural-geographical contexts, however, destabilise the linear 'servitude→service' and 'disappearance→resurgence' trajectories, and the dichotomisation between *her* and her. I will illustrate this through a review of published historical analyses of domestic service in the UK and India.

In the UK, contemporary popular perceptions of domestic service hark back to a sanitised version of the Victorian/Edwardian master–servant relationship dramatised in television series such as *Upstairs, Downstairs* and *Downton Abbey* (see Hinsliff, 2014; Toynbee, 2014). Servanthood existed before the Victorian period, except, instead of lifetime servitude, servants formed part of 'a socially pervasive and culturally broad movement of young people from their parental homes to live and serve in the homes of others', termed 'lifecycle service'[22] (Cooper, 2005:367). In times of late marriages and high mortality, this arrangement ensured orphaned youngsters had a home at all times. Households supplied and used domestic labour regardless of differences in material resources (Laslett, 1988, cited in Cooper, 2005:371), and besides wages, servants received education and training. The arrangement was vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, and thus individual experiences would have varied (Cooper, 2005). Lifecycle service transformed into lifetime servitude for working-class people around the late eighteenth century onwards when class identities and boundaries became more rigid. Display of status, associated with having

---

[22] This practice existed across northern and central European countries (Sarti, 2005). (Similar practices have also been noted historically in Tanzania (Bujra, 2000).)

domestic servant(s) was crucial to the emerging middle-class identity (BBC Two, 2012; Davidoff, 1995; Hill, 1996).[23] This metamorphosis of class structure occurred alongside increased longevity and wages, industrialisation, financialisation of markets, Britain's expanding trade and colonial status, and political reforms such as selective extension of voting rights and evangelical influences on ideas of 'right' conduct of family life among the bourgeoisie (Cooper, 2005; Delap, 2011a; Gunn and Bell, 2002). Hence, 'service→servitude→service' appears a more appropriate representation of the trajectory of domestic service in the UK, where the configuration of 'service' is a product of its times.

The stringent Victorian class boundaries did not reduce servants and employers to monolithic categories. Not all servants lived with their employers or were lifetime servants. Employers included a range of households from small to large, and a servant could also do farm work at times (Branca, 1975; Hill, 1996:251; also Delap, 2011a; Todd, 2009). In eighteenth-century St Martin-in-the-Fields, bricklayers, milliners and plasterers featured among single-servant households (Hill, 1996) while domestic service in late nineteenth-century Lancaster showed 'subtle gradations within a spectrum of shared social, economic, geographical, and educational backgrounds, rather than unbridgeable divides', with the number of servants varying over the life-course (Pooley, 2009:419). In early twentieth-century London, alongside printers and gas workers, 29% of households of clerks and commercial travellers employed domestic help (Booth, 1902, cited in Delap, 2011a:80). Status/religious norms created 'need' even in penurious conditions. East London's immigrant Jewish families regularly employed local Gentile char and washerwomen (White, 1980/2003). A comparison of historical Lancastrian and contemporary UK-wide data reveals similarities in the patterns of outsourcing in relation to class (see Table 1). Furthermore, female mill and factory workers in the nineteenth century 'created opportunities for others [in their class] to gain an income from home-based activities' (Jackson, 1992:158). During the world wars, organised crèches and canteens supported working-class mothers doing other work (Hall, 1973/1980); these likely employed other working-class women. (I consider the history of gendering of domestic work in Chapter 5.)

---

[23] Many middle-class households employed only a maid-of-all-work, one of the most exploited servant positions of that period (Cox, 2006; Delap, 2011a).

Table 1: Some historical and contemporary UK data* on outsourcing of domestic work

Historical Lancaster census data (Pooley, 2009)			Contemporary UK-wide survey (Jones, 2004)	
Social class	Servant-sending households (1881 data)	Servant-employing households (1891 data)	Income	Working households employing paid help
Professional	<1	31	<70K	38
Intermediate	13	34	60–70K	28
Skilled white collar	11	22	42.5–60K	17
Skilled manual	38	7	25–42.5K	10.5
Semi-skilled	20	2	<25K	2.5
Unskilled	17	2		
Class not known	<1	3		

*Data are rounded percentages.
Sources: Table 4, Pooley (2009); Table A, Jones (2004).

Hill explained that the defining factor of domestic service was not the work but 'the duty of complete and unquestioning obedience to their masters and mistresses, the subsuming of their own background, social identity and personality in that of their employers' (1996:252). This 'duty' extended to governesses, apprentices, servants working in husbandry, daily labourers, etc. So was domestic work the worst possible job? The literature is conflicting. Some claim British women left it in droves as factory jobs and shopwork became available (BBC Two, 2012; Horn, 2012), leading to 'the servant problem'. Other research shows shopwork was equally harsh (Cox and Hobley, 2014) and factory work equally stigmatised, with some women preferring domestic service (Branca, 1975; Delap, 2011a) or choosing it as the 'lesser of two evils' (Todd, 2009:187). Indeed, unionising British domestic workers at the turn of the twentieth century 'saw their grievances as extending beyond the individual mistress–maid relationship to connect with wider experiences of workplace exploitation' (Schwartz, 2014:175). (In the USA, Magnus (1934a) argued it was not the work itself that was at the root of the servant problem since domestic service training courses that were not tied to employment continued to attract applicants.)

A common understanding in twentieth-century American research is that live-out work was at the helm of the 'servitude→service' transformation of domestic work, partly triggered by modern housing designed for nuclear-type families and better local transport facilities (Dill, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). In the UK, the 'daily'[24] has featured in census records since Victorian times (Delap, 2011a). Although live-in domestic service noticeably declined after the second world war, the 'daily' was present through most of the twentieth century, including the angel-housewife years (Delap, 2011a; UK census 1951, 1961, 1971 (Census Customer Services, 2014); Gittins, 1993[25]). Mid-twentieth-century middle-class European women did not always appreciate being 'servant-less':

> The housewife did not appear as a settled identity willingly embraced by women in the 1950s and 1960s, but rather as problematic subject position into which women from formerly servant-keeping families had been forced … it was far from being internalized in the subjectivities of privileged and educated women, and was always bolstered in practice by the [unobtrusive] extensive employment of daily domestic workers … often of migrant status' (Delap, 2011b:202–204)

Indeed elite Western feminists of this time, such as the American Betty Friedan (1963/1983), Swedish Alva Myrdal (Myrdal and Klein, 1957, cited in Platzer, 2006:212) and British Virginia Woolf, Vera Brittain and Katharine Whitehorn, like many earlier feminists (Delap, 2011a; Todd, 2009), may not have imagined liberated life as one devoid of domestic help.[26] Popular media representations of middle-class households included chars and cooks (e.g. the Pooters in *Dairy of a Nobody*, *c.*1900, and the Dales on radio and Conovers on television, *c.*1950s (Delap, 2011a:131)). What was live-out work like then? Charring was mostly poorly paid, casual work. It was physically more demanding than domestic work today, even when using appliances, as early incarnations were heavy or cumbersome. Many women worked long hours to earn a living wage (Delap, 2011a).

Elsewhere, including India, a much longer trajectory of live-in 'servitude' has been transforming to varying degrees of live-out 'service' (Bharati and Tandon Mehrotra, 2008; Chaney and Garcia Castro, 1989; de Santana Pinho and

---

24 Or charwoman/charlady/the char.
25 See Mayer-Ahuja (2004) for the German and van Walsum (2011) for the Dutch context.
26 Also Latin American feminists (Chaney and Garcia Castro, 1989).

Silva, 2010; Driscoll, 2011; Estévez-Abe and Hobson, 2015; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Singh, 2007). The Hindu purity–pollution ideology and the associated caste system, slavery[27] and market forces intersected to construct servanthood throughout proto-historical and pre-colonial India (Moosvi, 2004; also Dickey, 2000a). Socio-economic class also mattered as higher-caste servants were known. As in the UK (Davidoff, 1995), symbolic concerns obliged even low-income households to employ servants for 'polluting' tasks (Frøystad, 2003; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010;[28] see also Moosvi, 2004, for the historical context). The colonial period introduced another layer of complexity in the master–servant relationship (Srinivas, 1995). Consequently, independence from Britain did not transform servitude to service. Instead, lifetime servitude exists alongside 'lifecycle servitude' because modern cultural understandings of work continue to be shaped by feudal imaginaries (including purity–pollution and caste ideologies); that is, contemporary demand for servants in India is not linked to women's work status (Raghuram, 1999; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). While only one-fifth of urban women do waged work (Desai *et al.*, 2010), servants are everywhere. Given the persisting work conditions of servitude, domestic workers only enter the occupation in times of economic need and overwhelmingly desire other work for their children (see Chapters 6 and 7). A similar situation exists in Latin America (Chaney and Garcia Castro, 1989).[29] This discussion is not intended to disrupt the Western feminist analysis of the increase in modern supply and demand of paid domestic labour in the West (including the global care chain) in relation to Western White middle-class women's increasing career orientations. More recently, nonetheless, there has been a growing awareness among feminist researchers of the increasing 'proletarisation' of the use of paid domestic labour in the West, that is, outsourcing of domestic labour by an ageing population across classes in a diminishing welfare state (Triandafyllidou and Marchetti, 2015), as well as studies showing outsourcing by women working part-time (de Ruijter and van der Lippe, 2007; Tijdens *et al.*, 2003). These latter works draw attention to the ways in which the demand for paid domestic labour goes beyond

---

[27] For instance, as a consequence of war.
[28] Aspirational Jamaican working-class households also employed domestic workers (Higman, 1989:44).
[29] Smith (1989) noted Peruvian domestic workers readily changed jobs if an opportunity arose.

middle-class women's participation in the modern capitalist workplace and feudalistic forms of outsourcing related primarily to status enhancement.

In sum, historical trajectories of paid domestic work in the UK and India show little evidence of a distinct pattern or relation to public–private and racialised ideologies. In pre-Victorian UK, lifecycle service developed in an essentially White society showing rural-urban migration and little public–private distinction. It changed to lifetime servitude in the same population when the public–private divide became established. When live-in servanthood declined, it transitioned to lifecycle service again, delivered largely by White migrants (e.g. Irish, Austrian), but this time with the public–private division in place. In India, lifetime servitude existed in a slavery- and caste-inflected society prior to introduction of colonial ideologies of private–public division. Lifetime servitude was also present in slave societies such as the USA, based on racial differences, but these have transitioned to lifecycle service despite continued racial discrimination and public–private division (Dill, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002). At this point, it is important to reiterate that employers' and intellectual notions of 'servitude' were not always shared by those doing the work, for instance, the first union of 'servants' formed in Britain in the early 1900s was called 'Domestic Workers' Union' because the women themselves did not perceive themselves as servants but as 'workers' (Schwartz, 2014).

Migrant domestic work has been exhaustively researched (e.g. see Anderson, 2000; Chin, 1998; Constable, 2007; Lutz, 2002, 2008, 2011; Momsen, 1999; Triandafyllidou, 2013). Both in- and out-country migration from poorer (often rural people with 'no' skills) to prosperous (urban) areas for any/better work or wages, including domestic service, is a remarkably constant feature of history (Fauve-Chamoux, 2004; Hoerder *et al.*, 2015; Sarti, 2005). In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century England, women increasingly dominated in-country rural–urban migration (Branca, 1975; Hill, 1996). Many Indian *ayahs* came to Britain with returning colonial mistresses (Visram, 1986/2015), and domestic service also pulled northern European women to the USA, Canada and Australia (Momsen, 1999). Indeed, in the nineteenth century, 'aliens', which included White women, were 'over-represented in the domestic service' in some Western countries (Magnus, 1934a; Moya, 2007). Although 'absolute numbers' of migrant domestic workers are greater today and migratory flows have a greater 'geographical spread', Moya argues the 'new immigration wave has not yet

surpassed the old in relation to the world's population' (2007:569–570). The particular problems of contemporary migration-related domestic work include:

- its transformation into a 'transnational activity' (Momsen, 1999:14) in which educated, skilled mothers migrate to look after other people's children with the aim of ensuring a better life for their own children left behind, often in the care of other women (the 'global care chain' (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003) or 'new world domestic order' (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007)); and

- undocumented immigration status that is sometimes tied to working for a particular employer, which makes the worker more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation (Anderson, 1999; Momsen, 1999).

As my research focuses on local labour markets (which may include in-country migration), I am not considering these issues further. But I note they are not unique to migrant *domestic* workers; in industries such as food processing and construction, others from similar backgrounds are also working in similar exploitative conditions (Anderson, 2007; Lalani and Metcalf, 2012; Potter and Hamilton, 2014).

Clearly, many factors require consideration when planning research on paid domestic work, and I now discuss how the design and conduct of research might affect findings.

Methodological issues in feminist approaches to paid domestic work

Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies have been used to study contemporary domestic outsourcing. Much qualitative research focuses on the micro-politics of paid domestic work (grounded in lifetime servitude related to class inequalities, slavery and caste practices, and its 'continuities' with women's unpaid labour) and issues related to *her* migration. A related strand interrogates contemporary attempts to professionalise domestic work, the organising and unionising efforts of workers, and its regulation by states and the ILO. The primarily Western quantitative literature focuses on the demand side: the associations between the present-day propensity to outsource work and utilitarian variables such as economic resources and time availability. I review this latter work in Chapter 3, where it is particularly relevant. Here I focus on the first two literatures.

Biases in research

Few studies include male domestic workers (e.g. Bartolomei, 2010; Bujra, 2000; Lau, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010), even though worldwide men have done domestic work (*Europe*: Hill, 1996; Romano, 1996, cited in Saptari, 1999:77–81; *Africa*: Bujra, 2000; Hansen, 1990; *Asia*: Constable, 1997/2007; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) and continue to do so, currently numbering over nine million (ILO, 2013, 2016). They also experience exploitation (Bartolomei, 2010; Duffy, 2007; Lau, 2011; Ray, 2000). Due to ethical concerns, few studies include worker–employer dyads (e.g. Driscoll, 2011; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; King, 2007). Some only include workers (e.g. Dill, 1994; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002) and/or their representatives (e.g. agency owners) (e.g. Meagher, 2003; Mendez, 1998). Studies often include both live-in and live-out workers (e.g. Anderson, 2000; Constable, 2007; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) despite differences in working conditions and experiences (abuse of workers' rights are considerably more likely in the live-in situation) (Dill, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Would bad experiences, having a story to tell, increase *her* odds of participation? Live-in workers whose movements are tightly controlled by their employers may not be able to participate. Abusive employers might also refuse, although those who do not consider their actions as exploitative may agree to participate (Mattila, 2011).

Comments made by workers and employers about each other might require corroboration to avoid perception bias. For instance, *she* might be assumed to be just another stereotypical worker by her (Chin, 1998). Romero's (2002) participants conjectured that employers who were housewives were probably reluctant to relinquish control of the work process because they felt guilty about not doing the work themselves. Neither account is sufficiently good basis for understandings of the Other. Also, researchers' own positioning can influence the direction of the analysis (Frost and Rodriguez, 2015). When Lutz engaged in participant observation, she noted in her journal: 'I wonder whether a home help can find it humiliating, having to pick up and fold a little upstart's clothes.' Her findings did not support her musings:

> None of our interviewees described such activity as 'humiliating'. However, there is a widespread view that a child who is not taught to clear things up after himself will never learn to do so later in life and will end up living in … [a] kind of 'de-ranged' home … as an adult. (Lutz, 2011:59)

No references were provided to support the widespread view that if children are not socialised to do certain things in life, they never learn to do them (see also Cox, 2006:4–5). Do widespread views automatically qualify as facts? Research into the domestic practices of middle-class Indian migrants in the UK revealed that most participants had done little housework as children in India. But all the women and most of the men were doing all or at least some of it as adults in the UK (Singha, 2015; also Westwood's (1984) Asian participants). I am not denying children's internalisation of discriminatory (domestic) practices. However, they are not forever bound by them. The human ability to be reflexive means subjectivities are fashioned and refashioned over the lifecycle or even in different situations (Saldaña-Tejeda, 2015). Lutz' argument implies an epistemological position that physical housework, particularly cleaning, is inherently demeaning.

Anderson's (2000, 2001) excellent analysis of the situation of migrant workers sometimes strays into the problematic terrain of unsubstantiated arguments. For instance, she contends that much outsourced housework, such as dusting of artefacts is only about maintaining status as these artefacts are not 'necessary'. Can researchers decree what is necessary and unnecessary in the home? Are mobile phones and bank accounts 'necessary', except in terms of the times we live in? People reproduce class in multiple ways, and in multiple spaces, in the same timeframe (Lawler, 2005). Even if she does not own 'unnecessary' artefacts, she can assert 'status' through participation in 'high culture', while *she* might hold dear some possessions stained by the exploitation of another.

Some findings may not be generalisable. Cox's (1997, 1999, 2000, 2006) analysis of the modern-day 'servant problem' in 'Britain' drew on a survey of advertisements for domestic help in *The Lady*, whose modern incarnation retains its 'genteel' Victorian English character (Wheen, 2012), as well as census data for London and interviews with 15 employers and eight cleaners living/working in affluent Hampstead and cleaning-agency owners catering to top-end employers in London. Is *The Lady* and an analysis of outsourcing in London, particularly Hampstead, sufficient for mapping domestic work across Britain? Moreover, although Cox claimed *The Lady* was the 'single most important source of advertisements for domestic workers in Britain', the employers in Hampstead used various methods to find workers, of which word-of-mouth recommendations were 'very important in the recruitment of cleaners' (1999:134, 142).

Researchers' questions and interpretation of participants' responses also depend on the analytical lens used.

Analytical frameworks applied to paid domestic work

Romero (2002) and Mattila (2011) drew on Marxist theory to show that employment relations in domestic work are representative of capitalist class struggle. This approach naturalises the dichotomy between productive and reproductive work (Weeks, 2011) and is limited by its historical specificity. That is, it enables understanding some forms of paid domestic work or the paid work as a particular form of domestic labour (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a). Gregson and Lowe's (1994a) analysis of paid domestic labour in 1980s' capitalist Britain positioned it as a 'consumer service activity' rooted in post-industrial changes in Britain's occupational class structure.

The 'boundary-making' framework allowed Lan (2006) to discern the role of both structural effects and individual agency in the subjectivities of Filipina workers in Taiwan. The Filipina maids as well as their 'madams' exhibited a 'range of subject positions' because the use of avoidance/contact strategies by both groups determined the relationship boundaries. Lan concluded, 'a flawed dichotomy between "maid" and "madam" blinds us to the multiple positionings of women' (2006:13). Lutz (2011) used the same approach to demonstrate how 'difference' was produced through paid domestic work in Germany. These studies revealed similar complexities in domestic work relationships in two different cultural contexts. However, because of the conviction that domestic work is a distinct form of waged labour, both studies analysed the work relationships only with reference to familial relationships. Thus, these analyses were a missed opportunity for higher-level conceptualisation of domestic work, as acknowledged by Lutz (2011).

Another approach considers domestic labour as 'affective' labour because 'the affective energies attached to the organization and dynamics of unpaid and paid domestic work in private households evolve within the logic of the feminization of labor' (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014:47). The obfuscating language used to present the gynocentric argument fails to convince:

> Affect, … not only unfolds context …, but is also produced in a specific context. Thus, while they are expressions of immediate bodily reactions and sensations, which are neither rationalized through language nor situated in a dominant semantic script, they impact people and places, and are situated

in a social space, such as a private household (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014:47).

Conceptualising domestic work as an affective terrain traversed only by women is contentious as feminisation of domestic and other work is not ahistorical (Hom, 2008/2010; see Chapter 5), and men doing gardening or house-maintenance are also labelled *domestic* workers (Kilkey *et al.*, 2013).

Ray and Qayum (2009/2010) avoided being heterocentric, gynocentric or capitalism-centric in their theoretical exposition of the labour relations of this occupation in Kolkata, India, by locating it in the interstices between traditional feudalistic and modern socialist/capitalist work relations. They showed how 'cultures of servitude' in the domestic sphere are normalised through 'structures of feeling' in daily life.[30] This framework explains why Mattila (2011) took time to understand Jaipuri employers' insouciant attitudes towards employee exploitation. Mattila's Marxist feminist lens failed to uncover the 'normalisation' behind their behaviour. Ray and Qayum also applied their framework in a Western context through two case studies, while de Santana Pinho and Silva (2010) describe a similar situation in Brazil. 'Structures of feeling' are also evident in Glenn (1981) and Romero's (2002) work, which showed how efforts of live-out ethnic minority workers to modernise the work structure were hampered by an asymmetrical employment relationship located in a pre-industrial, feudal imaginary – in other words, present-day 'cultures of servitude'.

Both Anderson and Näre's frameworks included consideration of the impossibility of separating one's labour capability from one's Self. Anderson's (2000) approach frames *her* construction by her, for instance, as a member of 'the family' as always exploitative. Näre (2011), however, argued that moral and political economies are 'part-societies' that exist side by side. Some live-in workers in Näre's sample liked this analogy even when understanding its limitations, because it was still better than, for example, a life of penury in a slum (also du Preez *et al.*, 2010; Delap (2011a) presents a similar argument based on historical data). Näre notes that interpreting this counter-tendency as false-consciousness rather than a genuine explanation is presumptuous,

---

[30] 'Structures of feeling' are the ways in which present-day social meanings and values are produced, felt, lived and structured by past imaginaries (Williams, cited in Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010:5).

especially if the researcher accepts explanations of workers who say they are aware that familial terms are used to dupe them. In a similar vein, Saldaña-Tejeda (2015) pointed out the methodological fallacies of assuming human reflexivity as a product of greater capital: in her research experience, *she* and she were both capable of producing narratives of individualisation shaped by *her* and her subject positions. In other words, positive experiences can be analysed without assuming equality in the contractual relation (Näre, 2011).

In the contrasting cultures of Australia and India, Meagher (1997, 2003) and Chigateri (2007) respectively, drew on Fraser's (1996) framework that interrogates economic and cultural injustices simultaneously but without an onus on morality. This approach allowed both researchers to expose the tension created for one form of injustice by affirmative rectifications proposed for the other. For instance, when Dalit[31] workers in south India demanded recognition of their caste and 'domestic' worker identity concurrently with eradication of sectoral differentiation in work, they risked losing the latter demand (Chigateri, 2007; see also Chapter 7). Meagher (1997:128) illustrated how societal and interpersonal cultural and economic factors play out in tandem in the exploitation related to domestic work, and which require simultaneous resolution. For example:

- societal factors: economic – undervaluation of skills; cultural – low-status job
- interpersonal factors: economic – increasing workload without increasing pay; cultural – unequal treatment (e.g. giving the worker stale food only).

However, despite using different analytical frameworks, the findings of several studies from across the world[32] show striking similarities in the practices that sustain social inequalities through domestic work. There are also some common contradictions in the analyses.

---

[31] The Dalits are the group that historically were known as the 'untouchables', the excluded section of Indian society who were and often still are treated sub-humanely (Roy, 2014b), and forced to perform manual labour in demeaning ways.
[32] For example, *Europe*: Anderson, 2000; Lutz, 2002, 2008, 2011; *North America*: Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002; *Latin America*: De Casanova, 2013; de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010; *Africa*: Du Preez *et al.*, 2010; King, 2007; *Asia*: Constable, 2007; Lan, 2006; Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; *Australasia*: Meagher (1997, 2003); also Momsen (1999) and special issues of *European Journal of Women's Studies* (2007 volume 14, number 3) and *Social Policy and Society* (2010, volume 9, number 3).

Contradictions and tensions in academic understandings of paid domestic work

Contemporary Western middle-class women's outsourcing of domestic work

> It is getting more and more normal and accepted in Norway, at least in my circle of friends. You need to hire help in order to have quality time at home … (Quoted in Seierstad and Kirton, 2015:399)

> 'It is part of the whole Stockholm package,' one woman explained. 'Work a lot, commute, hire under-the-table cleaning help'. (Quoted in Bowman and Cole, 2009:168)

An association has been noted between middle-class women's presence in the paid workforce (alongside increasing social inequalities) and the demand for paid domestic work across Western societies, regardless of their commitment to gender equality (Calleman, 2011; Cox, 2006; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Lutz, 2011; Seierstad and Kirton, 2015; Swan, 2012; van Walsum, 2011). The modern work ethic endorses the dominant twentieth-century male model of work and entrenches men's gendered proclivity to avoid housework (Cox, 2006). In other words, White middle-class women's liberation is happening at the cost of continued oppression of their working-class/migrant counterparts, whose day is spent doing her and *her* housework (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Lutz, 2011; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002). Paid domestic work therefore is in 'fundamental opposition to a feminism that goes beyond a liberal agenda of equal opportunity for women to seek an end to all forms of institutionalized inequality' (Ostrander, 1987:52).

This theorisation is compelling, but it is underpinned by some assumptions. Delap (2011a,b) showed how it overlooks post-war middle-class housewives' 'needs-based' invisibilised dependence on charwomen. The same situation also occurs between men. For instance, contemporary British White middle-class men outsource their housework (e.g. gardening and house-maintenance) to Polish domestic handymen to gain parenting or leisure time, time which the handymen then lose out in their turn (Kilkey *et al.*, 2013). In other countries, the 'culture of servitude' persists in an obvious way (e.g. *India*: Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; *Brazil*: de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010). Moreover, just as research showing housework-as-oppressive for women takes

the Western heterosexual nuclear family as the 'norm' (Eichler and Albanese, 2007; VanEvery, 1997; e.g. see Backett, 1982; Bittman and Pixley, 1997; Gatrell, 2004; Oakley, 1974/1985), much paid housework research assumes that today, the dual-career heterosexual nuclear household is more likely to 'need' this service:

> This study is limited to working women [in dual-earner heterosexual households], because decisions on substituting domestic work are primarily theirs ... because non-working women do not face time constraints from their market work. (Tijdens *et al.*, 2003:5)

Yet all kinds of Western households outsource housework, including single-adult/parents and (retired) older people (see Chapters 2 and 3); these households might also belong to lower-income groups (Triandafyllidou and Marchetti, 2015; see also Hyland, 2017).[33] Egalitarian couples might outsource cleaning to gain 'leisure' time (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a). These contradictions raise two questions:

- Do time constraints related to work commitments qualify as a valid 'need'?
- Does outsourcing improve relationship quality by avoiding confrontations over housework (Anderson, 2000; de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010; Ehrenreich, 2002/2010; Groves and Lui, 2012)?

Work–life balance policies – in liberal market or welfare states – do not encourage greater gender parity in household labour as they side-step work commitment (Collins, 2007). Would better-informed policies make a difference? Or is it the internalised unwillingness to do manual work that makes the middle-class woman (Delap, 2011a,b) feel 'guilty' when outsourcing her (and his) domestic work? As she wrestles with her egalitarian aspirations, she is embarrassed to acknowledge *her* help, sometimes framing herself as a 'no-obligations' consumer, who 'struggles' to provide a clear job description (Flanagan, 2004, n.p.; also Cox, 2006; Jones, 2004; Williams, 2012). Is domestic outsourcing-as-consumption inherently irresponsible? Not necessarily – in many areas householders separate rubbish for recycling. Is it only status-enhancing? It might be, but outsourcing cooking, gardening and household maintenance can also be about status enhancement of the middle-class man. Moreover, the inter(net)-connected twenty-first century

---

[33] Lower-income families also host au-pairs (Cox, 2015b:260).

has become the age of 'the outsourced self': today, a range of personal services are sold and bought (both mainly by women) in a market that incorporates moral economies (Hochschild, 2012). People might justify outsourcing one thing by not outsourcing another, or, to ensure private life is still personal, tell white lies, such as claiming to have cooked a ready-meal (Hochschild, 2012). Even if a middle-class woman considers it inappropriate to hire *her* services, she may still be using other personal services or things made by exploited workers in in/visible public worksites.

Evidence for an association between outsourcing domestic work and reduced relationship conflict is weak (see Chapter 3). Furthermore, she may wield power in her workplace but become powerless in front of her mother-in-law (Lan, 2006) or still face domestic violence (Freeman, 2013). She also has to manage *her*, and relationships may become fractious due to clashes over quality of work or childcare strategies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), or because of unclear boundaries (Orr, 2013). Asking an employee to dress down has been interpreted as her power over *her* (Rollins, 1985), but often she feels threatened by *her* sexuality (Anderson, 2007; Lan, 2006). In India, *her* propensity for taking time off unexpectedly is a constant source of anxiety for her (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Singh, 2007). Indeed, some workers are acutely aware of their employers' dependency on them and might use this knowledge in negotiations (Saldaña-Tejeda, 2015).

In sum, outsourcing domestic work might release time to spend in career- and status-building activities. But these opportunities are not necessarily associated with greater freedoms for her. Assuming such a correlation reduces women's liberation simply to freedom from housework. Feminist unease about outsourcing domestic cleaning, however, is also based on the premise that cleaning is the lowliest of work (Anderson, 2000; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a).

Domestic work as dirty work

Publications on housework per se largely view the work as a chore, as drudgery. When it is outsourced, however, it becomes dirty work (e.g. Anderson, 2000; Glenn, 2000), with the toilet 'instilled [as it is] with people's energies, … impact[ing] on the domestic worker's body and mind' (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014:40). Wider research has challenged historically specific cultural notions about dirt, cleanliness and pollution (Collins, 2007; Cox, 2007/2012a,b, 2011, 2016; Davidoff, 1995; Douglas, 1966/2002). The moral disproval around

outsourcing domestic cleaning goes against the grain of this research, as it naturalises cleaning as low-status women's work. Nor is the link between dirty work, cleanliness and status just a domestic matter:

- Human waste does not disappear into the ether on leaving the household. Rubbish collectors, sewage workers, etc. are mainly men, who sometimes process this waste in inhuman conditions (e.g. see Praxis India/Institute of Participatory Practice, 2014).
- All constructed areas where higher-status people are found appear more clean and shiny, and are cleaned by Others.
- Public toilets are often left much dirtier than a domestic toilet. What energies flow from them to the body and mind of the (often male) commercial cleaner?

I discuss the meanings of working with dirt in detail in Chapter 4. Here I focus on paid domestic work as 'dirty' work that is symbolic of low social status. Despite post-war improvements in Western working-class living standards, many working-class women continued working in a range of low-wage jobs, including live-out charring and childcare (Delap, 2011a; UK census 1951, 1961, 1971 (Census Customer Services, 2014)). Today, however, most West-based research focuses on the migrant woman from a poorer country, doing domestic work for the privileged middle-classes in a richer country:

> As in many parts of the world, foreign workers allow Hong Kong women to take on more prestigious supervisory roles in the household and permit them the freedom to participate in other activities that are considered more interesting, entertaining, or lucrative. (Constable, 2007:22)

What happened to the char?

Domestic work, class and race/ethnicity

The 'racial-gender' axis or the reproduction of racial inequalities through a White–dark colour binary in paid domestic work, rooted in the ideologies and practices of slavery and colonialism (e.g. Chaney and Garcia Castro, 1989; Chin, 1998; Glenn, 1992), is emphasised by several researchers (e.g. Anderson, 2000, 2001; de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Glenn, 1981; Lutz, 2002, 2008, 2011; Pérez and Stallaert, 2016; Rollins, 1985; Scrinzi, 2010; Triandafyllidou, 2013). Yet White women – as indigenous and migrant workers – have done and continue to do paid domestic work (see historical account above; Cox, 1999; Lutz, 2008; Triandafyllidou, 2013).

Milkman *et al.* (1998; also Dill, 1994) showed that the common denominator in various American regions determining the likelihood of outsourcing housework was the level of socio-economic disparity. Recent survey-based research, however, shows Western households more likely outsource domestic work in countries with greater numbers of low-skilled immigrants (Estévez-Abe, 2015). A BBC documentary also claims the job is 'primarily done by the scores of immigrants arriving in the UK' while White (women) cleaners are 'rare' (BBC Two, 2015b). The programme was shot only in London. Of the three major UK studies on contemporary paid domestic work, Anderson's (1993, 2000,[34] 2007) focuses on abuse and exploitation among migrant/undocumented workers in London, and injustices in immigration legislation pertaining to domestic workers. Cox's (1999) description of paid domestic work 'in Britain' is based on surveys and interviews mainly conducted in the affluent London borough of Hampstead. Workers here came from several countries, and nationality was a key factor in the construction of stereotypes. Other London-based studies also focus on migrant domestic workers/commercial cleaners (e.g. Cox and Watt, 2002; Wills *et al.*, 2008). Kilkey *et al.* (2013), who researched male domestic work, note that migrant populations in the UK are concentrated in London and the South-East, but they still write in terms of 'the UK'. In Sykes *et al.*'s (2014:4) study of commercial cleaning in various UK cities, 63/93 participants were migrants. Snowball sampling and strong group identities among workers could have affected the ethnic composition of the sample. Yet, the authors' claim that their sample was representative of the UK was based on statistics that showed migrants make up around 30% of the non-domestic cleaning workforce (Sykes *et al.*, 2014:3). The third, and oldest, major research (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a,b), was conducted in south-west and north-east England (Reading and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, respectively) in the 1980s. These authors identified two domestic labour markets in the UK:

- a high-end national-level market, in which placements are chiefly advertised in *The Lady*; employees move from the regions primarily to London to work; and
- local markets, in which advertisements are placed in local newspapers, post offices, etc., and employees work for local employers.

---

[34] In association with the London-based charity for migrant domestic workers, Kalayaan (see also Lalani, 2011).

The 20 cleaners and 50 nannies interviewed by Gregson and Lowe were all White British women. The nanny was typically a qualified young woman from a lower middle-class background whereas the cleaner was typically an older, married working-class woman trying to supplement a meagre household income. Gregson and Lowe (1994a) commented that migrant domestic workers were evident in London in the 1980s, but in their research sites domestic work showed little association with racialised migration.[35] Although Cox's publications make no mention of such a distinction, Anderson notes that Cox's findings presented at a 1997 conference indicated that 'while migrant labour is readily available to do such work in London, outside of the capital domestic workers are more likely to be "poor English"' (2000:87). Samples in more recent studies of low-wage/low-skilled work (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012; Hebson *et al.*, 2015; Rubery *et al.*, 2011) and 2011 census data (Figure 1 and Table 2) confirm these observations.

Figure 1: People working in low-skilled occupations in England and Wales (UK Census 2011)
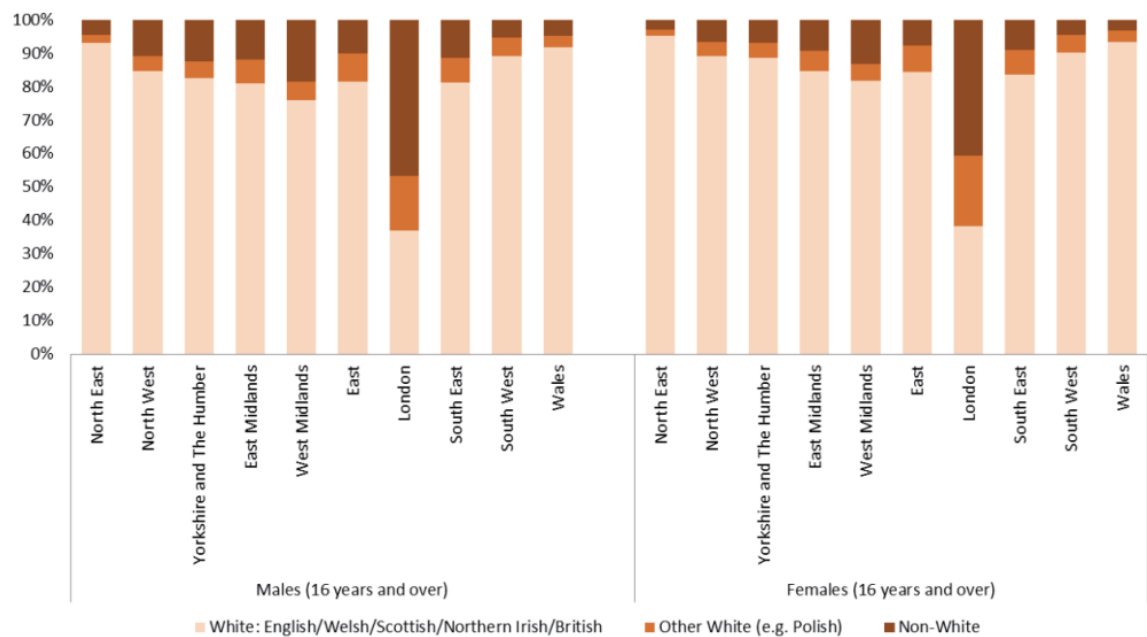
Low-skilled occupations: caring, leisure and other service, sales and customer service, process, plant and machine operatives and elementary occupations.

Data source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2011, Table DC6213EW - Occupation by ethnic group by sex by age, ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [downloaded from Nomis on 14 June 2016].

---

[35] I could not find a similar study in another Western country. Meagher's (1997) Australian sample included White and non-White Australian and migrant cleaners.

Table 2: Passport held by people working in low-skilled occupations in England and Wales (UK Census 2011)

Passport held	Number of people
UK	7,465,815
Ireland	52,437
France	19,635
Germany	16,760
Italy	29,895
Portugal	37,764
Other member countries in March 2001	55,575
Poland	231,223
Other EU accession countries	168,717
Rest of Europe	17,321
African country	98,944
Middle Eastern or Asian country	208,504
Canada	3,320
USA	10,127
Jamaica	11,149
Other American and Caribbean countries	21,129
Antarctica and Oceania (including Australasia)	10,561
No passport held	1,200,317

Data source: Office for National Statistics, Census 2011, Table CT00078 - Occupation by year of arrival in the UK by passports held (national), ONS Crown Copyright Reserved [downloaded from Nomis on 14 June 2016].

Based on Gregson and Lowe's findings and Cox's paper, Anderson (2000) argued that the UK was probably unusual among the developed countries. Post-2000 research evidence, however, indicates the picture is complex elsewhere too. In Sweden, cleaners include retired Swedish women (Rappe and Strannegård, 2004, cited in Bowman and Cole, 2009:176). In the largest Swedish commercial agency, 57% of cleaners were Swedish (Morel, 2015). In the Netherlands, domestic work became racialised only in the past two decades. But away from urban metropolises, indigenous Dutch students, single mothers on welfare and rural housewives might still be the main domestic workers (van Walsum, 2011). Some Portuguese commercial agencies reject foreign applicants (Abrantes, 2014a). In Belgium, just under three-quarters of workers are citizens (Morel, 2015). Most domestic workers in Italy are also Italian (live-in workers are more likely to be foreign; Colombo, 2007). German women in one historical moment were sought as maids in France and USA. They became transformed to German madams with Eastern European maids in the next epoch (Hitler's Germany; Lutz, 2011). In contemporary Germany, Lutz observes that though research shows German women 'also' do domestic work, her team focused on migrant workers because 'we have the impression that the numbers of migrants have been

growing' (2011:34). Official statistics show only 10% of part-time domestic workers in Germany are migrants (Shire, 2015). Such discrepancies between statistics and anecdotal impressions require data triangulation as citizens of the various countries cited here working as cleaners may also be from indigenous White backgrounds. In the first seven rounds of the European Social Survey (2002–2014), the majority of domestic cleaners and helpers sampled in Germany, Denmark, Spain, France and the Netherlands stated they did not belong to an ethnic minority group (see Appendix F, Figure A4 and Table A6). In Meagher's study, 28/50 participants were Australians by birth (ethnic breakdown not given). Despite studies stressing the racialised nature of domestic work (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Mendez, 1998; Parreñas, 2008; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002), the racial/ethnic map of the USA shows concentrations of ethnic minorities in particular regions. So the racialised domestic cleaner differs regionally and Maine is very White (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010). In 2007, 39% of recorded Brazilian domestic workers were White (Tomei, 2011).

A single country may both attract and send workers. Elite households in Europe and North America seek White British workers, such as 'English' butlers and nannies (sometimes from elite backgrounds, as Cox reminds us, Princess Diana was a nursery nurse) (Cox, 1999; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Britain also attracts workers from countries such as Poland (BBC Two, 2015b),[36] while Poland itself attracts Ukrainian workers (Kindler, 2008). Middle/upper-class non-White migrant households in the West also outsource housework to either local or migrant workers (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2007; Singha, 2014).

Many Westerners are reluctant to host au-pairs from another culture (Anderson, 2007), similar to the 1950s, when, on arriving in the 'mother' country, Britain's African Caribbean citizens discovered they were not welcome. Alongside other discriminatory practices, people preferred local charwomen for 'fear' of having a coloured person in the house (Delap, 2011b). The 'equal' White au-pair, however, is often a glorified domestic worker (Cox, 2015a). Moreover, competing hierarchies and group identities exist among migrant domestic workers as elsewhere (Anderson, 1999; Chin, 1998; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Sykes *et al.*, 2014; Potter and Hamilton, 2014). Some domestic workers (e.g. butlers) may be

---

[36] As part of state-endorsed encouragement of 'un/free movement' of low-wage labour from Western Europe's own 'backyard' (Cox, 2015b).

perceived as superior to non-domestic workers (Schwartz, 2014). Domestic workers may also employ others to do their housework at various lifestages (Bujra, 2000; Constable, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Lan, 2006; Meagher, 2003).

In other world regions, many domestic workers are in-country migrants from poorer areas or migrants from even poorer countries (Bharati and Tandon Mehrotra, 2008; Bujra, 2000; Chin, 1998; Constable, 2007; De Casanova, 2013; King, 2007; Lan, 2006; Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). In Latin America, if Brazilian domestic workers are mostly black (de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010), in Ecuador, the privileged lighter-skinned employers prefer someone 'like' themselves, a *mestiza*.[37] Such *mestizos/mestizas* can also 'become' middle-class by adopting middle-class behaviours and attitudes. Hence, Ecuadorian employers adopt embodied practices to distance themselves from their *mestiza* domestic workers, such as demanding *she* wears a uniform (De Casanova, 2013; see Chapter 7). Dickey's research showed that the occupational relations in paid domestic work in Madurai, southern India, were indicative of an 'anxiety about maintaining class' among employers that was separate from caste reproduction and significant in its own right (2000b:481).

In sum, a greater proportion of ethnic minority women in particular Western countries might do domestic work, but this does not seem to mean they represent the majority of domestic workers in those countries. Rather, the majority of people doing domestic work for a living in a particular geographical region in every historical epoch appear to belong to the group(s) relegated to the bottom of the social hierarchy in that region. Workers at the higher end (e.g. butlers and nannies) might have elite racial (and even higher socio-economic) backgrounds. All these patterns indicate that 'race' is a Western construct and hence racialisation neither inheres in paid domestic work (Delap, 2011a) nor is it 'added' to class (Romero, 2002). Rather, class mediates the effect of race (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Milkman *et al.*, 1998) across regions, but this effect appears to be blurred by the stereotyping of domestic workers by both demand and supply sides in terms of race, class, caste education, etc. (Momsen, 1999).

---

[37] As also noted in France by Narula (1999): ligher-skinned Filipinas were perceived to be better workers compared with other migrant workers based on their skin colour, education and behaviours rather than their work.

Regardless of these issues, domestic workers who have worked in other industries compare their present and past work experiences when contextualising the meanings of their work (Pérez and Stallaert, 2016; Romero, 2002). Yet what instantly struck me while reading the feminist canon was its insularity, the ghettoisation of domestic work into a category of its own (Meagher, 1997). Even Gregson and Lowe (1994a) while recognising the work as just another consumer service occupation did not consider comparing it with other such occupations. So how exceptional is domestic work?

'Work like no other, work like any other' (ILO, 2010)

> Each job[*] presents a self-contained social world, with its own personalities, hierarchy, customs, and standards. (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010:194; *domestic cleaning, waitressing, retail work)

Researchers disagree over whether domestic work should be considered as 'work like any other' or 'work like no other' or both. Those favouring 'work like any other' argue it will 'make the skill level required for domestic work more visible' (Blackett, 2011:14) and

> impose on society the need to reconsider the provision of care and the taken-for-granted role of care workers, economically empower them, and incorporate this historically excluded category into the general political clientele of employees' and their generic labour demands, irrespective of the work they do. (Mundlak and Shamir, 2011:307; see also Neetha and Palriwala, 2011)

Those favouring 'work like no other' argue that the nature of the worksite defies regulation (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Lutz, 2011) and unionisation is difficult for unseen, isolated workers (Bailly *et al.*, 2013; Calleman, 2011:132; Magnus, 1934a). The '"structure of feeling" of home and domesticity' is unique (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010:8; also, e.g., Anderson, 2001; Dickey, 2000a; Rollins, 1985). Behind the closed doors of home, social inequalities are 'reproduced and challenged on a daily and intimate basis' through 'the most intense, sustained contact with members of the other classes [and races] that most of its participants encounter' (Dickey, 2000a:32; see also Anderson, 2001; Cox, 2006; Lutz, 2011; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002). Thus, only when domestic work is shared by all physically able adults in an unpaid capacity will equality be achieved (Calleman, 2011). However, the empirical analyses on which these

arguments are based are not always convincing. Lutz makes a case for the distinctiveness of home as a workplace because employees and employers have 'different value systems':

> In general, it becomes clear that domestic employees regard the cleaning of various parts of the private domain as an especially demeaning activity that costs them considerable effort. Although these interviews ... repeatedly refer to the sensitive nature of dealing with intimacy, ... the employer's sex life is not discussed ... no questions were asked about it either, but there were many opportunities to say something about the subject. It can therefore be assumed that the intimate lives of employers are either not perceived as outrageous by domestic employees and/or that they maintain a disciplined silence on this matter in their narratives. ... [or] employers, for their part, make an effort to remove any signs, i.e. traces, of sexual activity. Evidently the taboo on discussion of matters of sexuality operates on both sides.

> From what has been described above, it can be deduced that the home is a terrain of boundary demarcation activities for both parties involved; a place where different value systems are negotiated. (Lutz, 2011:59)

Is it inevitable that thoughts and conversations about employers' sexual activities should influence the conduct of paid domestic work? Sexual is not synonymous with intimate: thoughts and conversations about sexual activities of people can occur in any workplace. Does cleaning of public spaces, particularly toilets, require different effort? And *she* may not see her home as *her* intimate space. Schwartz' (2014:196) analysis of the unionisation struggles of British domestic workers in the early 1900s revealed that unionised workers did not share the perceptions of their middle-class (feminist) employers (and male working-class workers) that 'home' was a distinctive workplace or that their exploitation was 'different' from that of other workers. Indeed, as Weeks argues – in contrast to Dickey – 'the work site [in the public sphere] is where we often experience the most immediate, unambiguous, and tangible relations of power that most of us will encounter on a daily basis' (2011:2; also Glenn, 1992; Hochschild, 2001; Hom, 2008/2010; Meagher, 2003). This often happens behind closed doors of, for example, restaurants (Jayaraman, 2013), hotels (Guerrier and Adib, 2000), online retailers' fulfilment centres (BBC One, 2013), etc.

Moreover, householders who do not outsource domestic work may be implicated in indirect exploitation as consumers. Lutz thinks that this

exploitation can be ignored when theorising paid domestic work because it is happening elsewhere: '[organisations] can make use of advanced technology to offshore their tasks to low-wage workers abroad, unnoticed by the domestic customer base, [but] domestic work cannot be exported' (2011:188). Is this line of reasoning illuminating about the distinctiveness of domestic work or does it reveal epistemological and ontological biases? The lives and working conditions of workers 'abroad', such as the miners of the 'conflict materials' required for any common IT device used in the house makes for equally depressing reading as does those of other foreign and in-country 'invisible' workers who produce the food consumed by the same householders (Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC), 2010; Leonard, 2012; Pai, 2008; Potter and Hamilton, 2014). Countries to which the West outsources low-wage work also have domestic workers. I am not trivialising *her* exploitation, but I am questioning the claim about its 'uniqueness'.

Still, some feminists claim that paid domestic work is not work *any* woman does out of choice (e.g. Anderson, 2000; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Lutz, 2011). Housework *is drudgery* (see Delap (2011a) and Schwartz (2015) for historical feminist perspectives on housework) and a dead-end 'ghetto' occupation (Glenn, 1981; Mattila, 2011). Glenn defines 'ghettoisation' as 'extreme concentration [of a non-white group] in a narrow range of occupations' comprising 'an extension of women's work at home', work that is 'outside the industrial economy' often in 'a family-owned or ethnic enterprise where language difficulties and racial discrimination [do] not constitute barriers to employment'. These occupations have common gendered features: they fit around family life; allow home-working; are low-tech and labour-intensive. Such occupations are 'highly substitutable' and migrant women move between jobs within the ghetto but never outside it (Glenn, 1986:75–95). In contrast, for White domestics of earlier times, it was often a 'bridging occupation' leading on to better life circumstances (Hill, 1996; Romero, 2002). Gregson and Lowe's (1994a) sample of White cleaners, who had previously worked in various low-wage occupations, were primarily doing cleaning as informal work to supplement other household income and/or welfare payments. The White nannies, however, were mostly young, qualified child-carers with either 'traditional identities' who had 'wanted to work with children' before becoming housewives and mothers themselves or going on to other work/qualifications. Their position chimes with the wider Western literature on female occupations, where domestic work is only one of

many 'ghetto' occupations in which a considerable proportion of White women are also 'trapped':

> Ghetto occupations have been classified as those which are female-dominated and of low status, poorly paid, with narrow job content [i.e. including much routine work] and that offer few prospects for promotion … [these include] clerical work, unskilled factory work, low-grade service work, nursing, cleaning, teaching and caring occupations. (Truss *et al.*, 2013:349–350)

Atkinson (2010) illustrates an argument about classed access to educational capital with an example of a plumber turned cleaner turned healthcare assistant who eventually qualified as a nurse when encouraged by his more educated wife. For Atkinson, the plumber was upwardly mobile thanks to the education capital of his wife. Would Truss *et al.* (2013) have agreed, as they consider nursing a ghetto occupation? It appears that whether work qualifies as ghetto/pseudo-domestic work depends on who is looking at it: for Western (including minority-ethnic) feminist researchers of paid domestic work, it is about racial–gender segregation of work; for other Western feminist researchers it is about wider gender segregation in work; and for the Western male researcher it is about more general occupational hierarchies. That is, 'men's work' is also blighted by class injustices and precarious working conditions, such that a range of occupations regardless of their gendered nature, are deemed 'poor' work. In the UK, the characteristics of 'poor-quality' work, as defined by Shildrick and colleagues, are similar to the feminine 'ghetto' occupations: 'often requiring no or low formal skills or qualifications' such work is associated with 'little room for the expression or development of skills', job insecurity, low wages, limited benefits and statutory entitlements and occupational health risks, that is, it is 'often done under poor terms and conditions of employment (e.g. lack of training provision, holiday, maternity and sickness entitlement, 'zero hour' work contracts and so on)' (2012:24; see also Potter and Hamilton, 2014). At the extreme end of poor work is forced labour, which occurs in several industries besides domestic work (Pai, 2008; Skrivankova, 2014). In India, 80% of the 'real' work, the work on which more formalised work and jobs depend, is done within the in/formal sector(s) (National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector (NCEUS), 2009). Wages in this part of the wider service industries and other industries such as construction, traditional weaving and embroidery work, glass-bangle-making, food-processing and garment work vary tremendously but

remain low (Bremen, 2013; Coelho, 2016; Neetha, 2016, Prasad-Aleyamma, 2017; Raju and Jatrana, 2016a). Overall, 74.7% of Indians working in the informal economy are deemed poor, as are 66.7% 'regular' workers (Gill, 2009/2012).

In sum, low pay, poor working conditions and stigmatisation appear to be features of wider cultures of exploitation embedded in waged work, rather than the singular consequence of being a (migrant) female domestic worker (Anderson, 2007; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Shildrick *et al.*, 2012; Weeks, 2011).

Four kinds of cultural injustice have been delineated to explain the unique exploitation in domestic work: personalism, (p)maternalism, deference and emotional/affective labour. How specific are these practices to this work?

Glenn argued that personalism is a characteristic of feudal relationships, where employers are 'concerned with the worker's total person' rather than just the quality of *her* work (1986:154; also Abrantes, 2014a; Anderson, 2007; Gogna, 1989). Personalism incorporates affective labour on *her* part because 'the lower-status person has to be attuned to the feelings and moods of the higher-status person' (Glenn, 1986:158). It reproduces racial inequalities, as employers consider skin colour in deciding whom to employ for particular work, for instance, a White person as an au-pair but a non-White person as a live-out cleaner (Anderson, 2007). But has this to do with the job's *location* or the singular authority vested in a person who can pay for domestic help? Friendships and social networks were significant enterprise-building tools in pre-industrial (male) work (Pooley, 2009). Since then, employers have routinely sought certain people for certain jobs using the language of 'skill':

> the quality of care delivered in both the health and social care sectors is affected by the soft skills of those providing care, with some service users actively expressing a preference for personal qualities over formal qualifications. … A demand for soft skills can easily shade into a demand for employees with specific personal characteristics and behaviour. … The fuzziness of 'skill' is further exacerbated by its application to demeanour, accent, style and even physical appearance, at times being applied to situations where a worker 'looks and sounds right' … (Anderson and Ruhs, 2012:25–26)

Word-of-mouth recommendations introduce personalism into domestic work relations (Glenn, 1986; Romero, 2002). But 'reputation economies' are more generally embedded in freelance hiring practices. In the creative industries, 'soft

judgements of insiders about whether [freelancers] are trustworthy, reliable and good to work with [are crucial]. Networks and contacts are the main means of gaining employment …' (Leung *et al.*, 2015:56). Looks and attitude are important soft skills in the interactive industries; in many customer–employee interactions the 'dark→light' deferential differential seen in paid domestic work incorporates several other shades and influences hiring of employees (Warhurst and Nickson, 2009). Selection interviews were historically designed to assess whether the applicant is 'just like us', 'will fit in' as part of the job competencies, even in academia, banking, law, etc.: even today a White man or Oxbridge candidate may be considered as having greater competence (Archive on 4, 2016; Rivera, 2015). In sum personalism is a key social rule used to avert the 'threat to the "natural" order' (Archive on 4, 2016) of racial or class superiority in every possible space – the workspace, the leisure space, the home.

Thus, when circumstances permit, *she* might assess employers on the basis of the 'kind of people' they appear to be, because these characteristics might assure better material working conditions. Personalism does not intrinsically stop *her* from resisting unfair treatment (Dill, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001) nor does *she* always prefer depersonalisation (Dill, 1994; Lan, 2006; Näre, 2011) because it can make *her* invisible when *she* is working (Molinier, 2009/2012). When *she* works as an employee of a cleaning agency with Taylorist working patterns, *her* ability to negotiate with employers is reduced (Mendez, 1998; Tomei, 2011) because every worker becomes a clone of the stereotype (King, 2007). The Malaysian employers interviewed by Chin (1998) gave sweeping descriptions of Indonesians as dirty, lazy and untrustworthy and Filipinas as better educated, better behaved and hygienic.

Maternalist/paternalist practices in paid domestic work are reported cross-culturally. Rollins insisted that despite paternalistic origins, what's under the microscope today is maternalism: the modern woman-to-woman domestic work relationship needs to be located within the feminine traits of caring and nurturing because 'women's value systems and morality are different from men' (1985:186). In fact, currently a culture of maternalism is noted around the globe (de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010; Parreñas, 2010, cited in Mattila, 2011:337). King (2007) agrees to a point. She argues that 'pseudo-maternalism' is more appropriate because the employer's 'mother' role in this relationship misses the maternal propensity for self-sacrifice. Rather the 'relationship is patterned along paternalistic lines that inverts characteristics of maternalism to enhance the

power and image of self in relation to the "other"' (King, 2007:16). This position dovetails with Anderson's (2000), who argued that maternalism is similar to paternalism except that it reifies patriarchy indirectly: by women acting on women. Yet, historically and even today male servants are often treated in the same way by female employers (Martínez and Lowrie, 2009; Ray, 2000; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). Romero (2002) does not distinguish between maternalism and paternalism, situating both within the capitalist mode of production.

I argue these rhetorical arguments about whether an employer's behaviour is maternalistic or paternalistic contradict feminist efforts to counter reducing women (and men) to femininity and masculinity, respectively. My readings indicate the critical problem here is the pseudo-construction of the worker/servant as 'part of the family', and their continued dependency on the employer. When (p)maternalistic employers construct the servant as infantile[38] (Srinivas, 1995; Tellis-Nayak, 1983), low wages are combined with payment in kind, 'gift'-giving (new or second-hand), help with children's education and so on, such that *she (or he)* can never do these things on *their* own. *They* often resent this dependence (and the associated construction of their condition as 'needy' by employers), compared with the independence gained through other waged work, because by maintaining dependence, employers feel entitled to extract extra work from them (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). But is such dependency specific to *her* work condition?

In the early 1900s, many working-class women in the UK preferred factory and retail work because of comparatively greater freedom and distinct leisure times (BBC Two, 2012). Still these women often lived with family, contributing to household expenses; those living away might have sent home a considerable part of their wage (Branca, 1975). In Peru, domestic workers often moved on, commonly to street vending, but this did not provide greater income or security (Smith, 1989). Vending was preferred because it was done as self-employment; the worker appeared independent while being (in)dependent (see Chapter 3). That is, the phrase 'working poor' is a euphemism that hides similar experiences of dependency across sectors.

---

[38] An extreme version of this ideology was part of the domestic service delivered through slavery (King, 2007). Since my research does not include this form of domestic work, I do not consider it in more detail.

As the twenty-first century arrived, Ehrenreich (2002/2010) and Toynbee (2003) worked undercover in several low-wage jobs in the USA and the UK, respectively. Both concluded they could not live on low-pay jobs. In welfare-shy USA, the working poor live with constant threat of eviction and hunger, with little chance of owning a home, building a nest egg, having a pension. In the UK, they depend on state benefits, variously known as Family Income Supplement, Working Families Tax Credit and Universal Credit. Before embarking on her 'adventure', Toynbee commented: 'The Victorians knew and cared more about poverty than we do' (2002/2010:xiv). She was thinking about philanthropic industrialists such as the Rowntrees and Cadburys who provided good living and working conditions. After her own experience, she realised these material comforts were not entirely *benefits*: the workers' wages were never raised (Toynbee, 2003). They were kept in dependency through kindness – just like 'decent' domestic employers do (Anderson, 2000), and the state does by providing income support rather than exhorting employers to raise wages.

While the adult-as-child persona is thrust on the domestic worker, elsewhere, workers might be compelled to adopt it. During her stint as a retail worker, Ehrenreich recalled a wise applicant responded to questions such as 'There is room in every corporation for a nonconformist' as expected; workers labelled 'lazy' were actually very aware 'that there are few or no rewards for heroic performance' (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010:135,195). Clearly, projecting or creating conditions that compel people to behave in a less-than-themselves manner is wrong, but it may be a wider problem than just in domestic work.

Furthermore, even though Western-style labour relations view paternalism as unfavourable for development, '[m]ost organizations find themselves operating within this understanding of leadership' (Laub, 2013, n.p.; see also Landry, 2011; Pellegrini *et al.*, 2010); today paternalism is also subsumed under the umbrella of 'corporate social responsibility' (Rajak, 2011), wherein an organisation might mould its employees through free courses on 'character' development, etc. (Hochschild, 2001). Organisational management discourses adopt the 'language of family values ... to manufacture consent and adjust individuals to preconceived roles' (Weeks, 2011:158; also Dodson and Zincavage, 2007; Hochschild, 2001; Sturges, 2013). These 'values' and welfare provisions, bonuses, Christmas parties and gifts are used to extract more work through '"function creep" – the requirement to do more with less' (Gregg, 2009, cited in Gill, 2010:237; Westwood, 1984) as in paid domestic work. Workers who resist

'can appear ungrateful and disloyal' (Hom, 2008/2010:34; also Hochschild, 2001). Finally, these various means of exploitation are not wholly rejected by domestic workers. If some desire greater equity in standard employment terms, others prefer 'egalitarian intimacy' (review of research by Blackett, 2011; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Näre, 2011).

Romero (2002) found paid domestic work was denigrating even when women received better wages due to the implicit demands for deference and servility (see also Chin, 1998). Gregson and Lowe (1994a) claimed deference was context-specific to domestic work in USA. In their book, they used first names only for the domestic workers but referred to employers as Mrs So-and-So or 'Ann Bloggs'. They state that this was only to avoid confusion and their decision should not be interpreted otherwise. Still, it is interesting to choose what is usually considered as a show of deference to clarify who is the employer and the employee. Expectations of forelock-tugging may be politically incorrect today in countries where body-piercing transcends class, but in a democratic country with a royal family, institutionalised deference remains (Smith, 2016). Toynbee (2003:185) described how 'their-wish-is-your-command' played out in a 'genteel' nursing home with substantial fees. However frequently residents rang the bell, the carer had to respond.

At the structural level, categorisations that underpin social inequalities still start with traditionally more privileged groups at the top/left side (for instance, in quantitative sociological analyses, male by default is 1 and female is 2 while White is the top racial category, etc.). Horizontal working often 'hides' hierarchies (Toynbee, 2003). In the USA, strategies used by modern organisations to keep low-wage workers 'in their place' (a phrase that regularly appears in titles of articles/books on domestic servants) include cult-like induction programmes and unexpected changes to schedules or work plans. 'In fact often it was often hard to see what the function of management was, other than to exact obeisance' noted Ehrenreich (2002/2010:209–212; see also Hochschild, 2001). Other societies such as India are overtly hierarchical. The very manner of greeting any person, folding one's hands and bowing the head, is deferential. My readings indicate deference and (p)maternalism are interlinked, pervasive practices that keep everyone 'in their place' in public *and* private. But shows of deference do not always imply unidirectional flow of power. People are not blind to their oppression and many resist it as best they can (Constable, 2007; Dill, 1994; Rollins, 1985; Saldaña-Tejeda, 2015).

Finally, domestic work includes emotional or affective labour, which cannot be captured in a contract (Anderson, 2001; Lutz, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Romero, 2002). For instance, the detailed description of 'carers' and 'cleaners and domestics' in the UK's Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) only provides information on the common physical tasks involved (ONS, 2010a; see Figure 13, Chapter 5). Many domestic workers, and others whose work more obviously involves emotional/affective labour, such as airline cabin crew, consider it integral for meaningful (professionalised) service work (Curley and Royle, 2013; Meagher, 2003). Anderson questioned reducing emotional labour to money even if it was appropriately remunerated – it would 'bring with it no mutual obligations, no entry into a community, and no real human relations' (2001:31). More recently, however, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez proposed that all labour 'needs to be conceived in relation to … feelings, emotions, sensations … that drive' it (2014:51). Although Gutiérrez-Rodríguez' broader argument is flawed owing to its gynocentric focus, a feminist researcher's acknowledgement of continuities between domestic work and other paid work is encouraging. Other research reveals that most work relations have 'instrumental' and 'affective' components (affectivelabor.org (n.d.); Meagher, 1997; Rose, 2004/2014; Weeks, 2011), they are only articulated differently, for instance, in terms of 'passion' for one's work (Gill, 2010). Perhaps work-related 'masculine' concepts such as 'labour relations' and 'labour power' are the problem rather than paid domestic work?

In sum, I am not convinced by the usefulness of the Western-centric, gynocentric analytical concept of 'ghettoisation' of low-wage occupations with greater female presence. Evidence from outwith the core domestic work literature shows that the essential features of paid domestic work are also present in other work. How does this matter? To answer this question I consider how concepts of professionalisation and regulation have been applied to paid domestic work.

The professionalisation and regulation of domestic work

Historically, a 'well-trained servant' was greatly valued; Victorian publications and manuals detailed technical domestic knowledge as well as appropriate deportment for servants. Many early feminists[39] were critical of such training

---

[39] Some feminists were supportive of training (Magnus, 1934a,b; Schwartz, 2015).

(Schwartz, 2015). Romero (2002) and Skeggs (1997/2002) pointed out that early twentieth-century middle-class attempts at training working-class women through further education domestic science courses were an institutionalised ploy. The courses aimed to transfer the soul-destroying hard graft of 'caring for' middle-class homes, children and dependent adults to working-class/racialised women, while reserving the 'spiritual' housework (Roberts, 1997), the 'caring about', for White middle-class women while leaving them time to pursue more satisfying interests. Anderson (2000) noted professionalisation does not reduce the gendered and racial hierarchies in domestic work. As professionalisation includes specialisation, an 'unskilled' migrant worker doing housework and childcare would earn less for more work than, for instance, a White nanny or cook. It seems the problem is how housework is perceived and professionalisation is generally conceived.

Today, commercial cleaning requires training in a variety of aspects, such as safe use of chemicals and handling of heavy equipment, as well as such soft skills as teamwork and efficient use of time; however, training might be cursorily delivered because of assumptions around cleaning as unskilled work (Smith, 2009; Sykes *et al.*, 2014). Commercial domestic cleaning agencies across cultures still draw on feudal definitions of a good worker in terms of racial, personality and behavioural stereotypes, their person rather than their work. This 'professionalisation' of domestic work is in reality an exercise in Victorian-style servant-making (Abrantes, 2014a; Constable, 2007; Lan, 2006; Mendez, 1998, Mirchandani *et al.*, 2016). Scrinzi (2010) observed that the training offered by French cleaning agencies aimed to 'denaturalise' housework as women's work by 'framing' it as different from unpaid housework. Migrant women, the main recipients of the training, were expected to put aside their prior knowledge of housework and adopt a 'reflexive' approach. That is, to clean according to various employers' wishes rather than following a 'standardised' approach. Scrinzi deemed this practice racist because migrants had to 'forget' 'traditional' ways of doing housework and learn 'modern' French ones instead. The 'relational' training incorporated deference and emotional labour: the migrant workers had to smilingly submit to their employers' cultural notions of housework. Most workers, wrote Scrinzi (2010), many of whom had experienced downward mobility on migration, were dismissive of the training. Although I agree with the concerns about commercial agencies bringing back the Victorian servant, Scrinzi's analysis raises questions.

Was her participants' attitude affected by the trajectory of social mobility? Some migrants thought the training helped them to do the work with more dignity and in a 'more satisfactory way', but Scrinzi did not explore this further. We do not know if the women who appreciated training had different backgrounds from those who did not. Is housework always done the same way in households sharing the same wider cultural context? Is there no need for a 'reflexive' approach when a White woman cleans for a White woman or an Indian woman cleans for another Indian woman? The cleaners in Gregson and Lowe's (1994a) study were mostly in control of the work process. Did this require being more or less reflexive? Bujra, who investigated domestic service in Tanzania, where it is less gender-segregated, concluded that the notion that women always-already 'know' domestic work because of early socialisation is an assumption because household skills vary by culture and class, so 'what is learnt at home in one class [or culture] is not always the most useful knowledge for the work place' (2000:74; see also Chapter 5). Magnus pointed out that in the USA, employers preferred an experienced worker, and a single live-in domestic worker who performed a variety of tasks 'required considerable intelligence and initiative' and needed to be responsible and reliable (1934a:198). Indeed, contemporary independent live-out workers in the West have been transforming their role from providers of 'labour power' to providers of 'labour services' by emphasising competencies, having a work ethic incorporating efficient time management and a sense of responsibility, and learning to avoid role diffusion by maintaining the boundaries between themselves and their employers (Glenn, 1986; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Lutz, 2011; Romero, 2002; Salzinger, 1991; see also Chapter 6).

When workers report being scolded or belittled by their employers for 'unsatisfactory' work, the interactions may be interpreted as symbolic acts that 'reinforce employers' higher social status' (Chin, 1998:141). In many instances no doubt this is the case. But perhaps while everyone can do some cleaning (like taking photographs), perhaps not everyone can do it well (like taking quality photographs to earn a living from photography). In the unpaid context, Oakley (1974/1985) found a range of cleaning standards among both working- and middle-class women, from being obsessive to being inattentive towards dust and dirt under beds and in crevices. Some Portuguese companies take stock of 'body attributes' bearing in mind the physical nature of domestic work (Abrantes, 2014a). Some French agency managers who emphasised the need for training (because paid domestic work is not the same as its unpaid equivalent) noted

reduction in service quality when working time is tightly controlled (Bailly *et al.*, 2013). An Australian government report mentions that almost 40% of commercial agency managers surveyed were 'unhappy' with their employees. One in every 2.2 applicants was deemed not suitable, most commonly because of a lack of obvious interest or technical skills (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 2006). Yet the report concluded recruitment could be boosted by simply targeting 'hard-to-place' groups such as single mothers, older workers or those with disabilities. More recently, Tomei notes that there has been a noticeable fall in the quality of state-subsidised cleaning services in Belgium and that:

> training programs for domestic workers are necessary to challenge the entrenched view that domestic work is work that anyone can do and, thus, that workers must be unskilled and not worth much (2011:204).

These concerns echo some early feminist arguments that a degree course would aid greater recognition of reproductive work as proper work (Meyer, 1911, cited in Schwartz, 2015:38).

Many workers might be dismissive of their work in the first instance, it is 'just' cleaning (Scrinzi, 2010; Smith, 2009), with women more likely to see it as 'an extension of housework' (Sykes *et al.*, 2014:33; also Bailly *et al.*, 2013). Persistent questioning by Smith (2009) revealed agency cleaners as knowledgeable about a range of cleaning-related information, such as health and safety issues related to complex cleaning materials and handling of industry vacuum cleaners. The training was frequently not valued because it was not the training the workers had actively sought (also Sykes *et al.*, 2014). Elsewhere, people have pointed out differences in quality of outcomes of low-wage work – from flipping a burger to collecting rubbish (Lucas, 2011). It seems the question is not about whether training per se is a problem but how the training, and the content of training, is conceptualised. Perhaps the problem is assuming malestream 'scientific' segmentation of work through standardisation and deskilling as the suitable training method? Finally, Anderson argues professionalisation will make 'non-exploitative and non-degrading forms of domestic work inaccessible to undocumented migrants' (2001:32), that is, owing to their non-citizen status, they will be left to the mercy of employers, doing socially unnecessary work (e.g. dusting expensive artefacts). I argue that this line of reasoning is neither helpful for domestic work nor for citizenship concerns. It might be more useful to question the phenomenon of undocumented migration.

As regards regulation, Lutz (2011:76–77) contended that the 'logic' of paid domestic work was different, it can never be a proper job because:

- the household 'defies workplace supervision' – even though this is not unknown[40] and is recommended by the ILO (2011, 2016); alternatively, workplace supervision may fall short or be considered undesirable by the supervisee;

- the household is the site of core identity formation – although others argue occupation also has a key role in shaping our classed identities (Hebson, 2009);

- professionalisation cannot obliterate the 'hierarchical differences' of the private space – but neither does it do so in the 'formal' workspace (see Chapter 7);

- it remains a stigmatised job – but so do rubbish collection (Perry, 1998) and retail work (Smith and Elliot, 2012), etc.; and

- it can switch from being a job to being 'non'-work in a moment since domestic workers can be hired or fired on a whim – this point naturalises the work of cleaning because at least in India, many workers in the informal economy work without contract agreements and are at the mercy of their contractor/employer (Bremen, 2013; Raju and Bose, 2016) and many creative professions are also hobbies, such as photography, pottery.

Furthermore, argues Lutz, while domestic work is 'technically and physically demanding', it is too 'highly emotionally charged':

> Household work is linked to negative emotions such as disgust, shame and pain as well as to positive ones like pride, sensuality (e.g. the smell of a clean apartment or ironed laundry), delight and satisfaction (2008:49).

Is it the character of household work that makes it emotionally charged as Lutz claims? Or the social relationships it is done under: for instance in a heterosexual couple, is the tension created by housework itself or by efforts to establish gendered equity in its performance? Finally, Lutz claims, it is different

---

[40] For instance, in 2010, the pro-socialist Ecuadorian government carried out inspections to ensure employers of live-in domestic workers were fulfilling their legal obligations and honouring workers' rights (De Casanova, 2013).

because trust is the basis of the work rather than a written contract. If *she* is 'accepted' by a household, *she* is:

> expected to share, respect and honour the emotions that the members of the household associate with their belongings, their items and the other of things. In other words domestic workers have to accept the 'habitus' of the household, its genderisms and its hierarchical order. It can be argued therefore, that domestic workers have to be adaptable … [and the work] requires many skills like a talent for management, accuracy, diligence, psychological knowledge, empathy, intuition and patience, endurance, the ability to endure frustrations, discipline, the capacity to put oneself in perspective, self-reflexivity, emotional intelligence and a good memory (2008:50)

These assertions were made without comparisons with other work. When the wider occupational literature is taken into account, the characteristics listed above appear thin grounds to consider domestic work different. Personal, familial values, practices and ideologies are as evident in the 'regulated' workplace as in the 'unregulated' home (e.g. see Hochschild, 2001). Romero argued that the main stumbling block for workers' efforts to redefine their work was employers' refusal to see the work as proper work. Lutz' analysis is more revealing of how domestic work is constructed to appear different rather than being inherently different. Regulation is resisted not because the home cannot be a 'regular' workplace, but probably because it would mean paying more for the service: that is, upper-class notions that service work is not amenable to regulation appears to be part of the exploitation of domestic workers rather than a cause of it.

Despite being isolated and invisible, many workers worldwide have been involved in collective struggles demanding regulation (Bapat, 2014; Bernardino-Costa, 2014; Blackett, 2011; Bujra, 2000; Chaney and Garcia Castro, 1989; Lai, 2007; Lalani, 2011; Magnus, 1934b; Neetha and Palriwala, 2011), struggles that go back to the late nineteenth century (Schwartz, 2014). Today these struggles also have to consider:

- the occupation's devaluation related to supply exceeding demand – newcomers often undercut established workers' hard-fought wages and labour rights (Bharati and Tandon Mehrotra, 2008; Bujra, 2000; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001); and
- the general weakening of labour protections – Potter and Hamilton's (2014) account of exploitation of mushroom-pickers in Ireland reads similarly to

accounts of migrant paid domestic workers: the issues raised are practically the same, including difficulty in organising because of high turnover and isolation of the workforce.

Deregulation rather than regulation is the buzzword of neoliberal marketisation in the digitised knowledge age, in which many occupations are undergoing 'feminised' or 'ghetto' restructuring, regardless of the gender of the worker (Hom, 2008/2010. Cox (2015b) highlights the down-grading deregulation of au-pair employment by the UK government, which has meant that 'au-pair' is practically synonymous with 'domestic worker'.

Yet, some years ago, a New York-based domestic workers' organisation declined to take part in collective action against generally worsening conditions of work. The South-Asian workers refused to ascribe to their employers (White and Asian) the same worker identity as themselves (Varghese, 2006), because of differences in the work content of the two groups (Das Gupta, 2008). Nor are workers interested in a universal 'sisterhood', they only desire just rewards for their efforts and sacrifices (Anderson, 2007; see also Chaney and Garcia Castro, 1989). These worker attitudes might legitimise Lutz' argument that domestic work is exceptional. Varghese, however, saw this as a lost opportunity for 'an expanded workers' identity on which to base a mass movement against capitalism' (Das Gupta, 2008:536).

It is not difficult to appreciate domestic workers' grievances, which are rooted in a long and problematic history of servitude. Taking the example of the UK, where historical legal changes led to a shift from domestic workers' enjoying 'sectoral advantage' to suffering 'sectoral disadvantage',[41] Albin proposes that a detailed sectoral approach as the first step *is* preferable and necessary because labour law 'has never dealt with' this kind of work (2012:247). She cites Freedland's (2003) research as an example of how a united approach to contractual employment across industry sectors in 1960s Britain failed to improve domestic work conditions (Albin, 2012:241). But others such as Varghese argue that the 'unique' job approach risks introducing false distinctions in waged work, reducing the ability to deal with the social and legal issues that cross occupational categories or classes of workers/employees (Hatton, 2015;

---

[41] When 'the rules of a specific sector – its structure and culture – impact' (Albin, 2012:231) negatively on the worker.

Hom, 2008/2010). The historical trajectory of black Brazilian domestic workers' activism showed that joining forces with wider black and feminist movements and unions was key to making race, class and gender 'empowering' instead of 'disempowering' characteristics for these workers (Bernardino-Costa, 2014). Unionisation of early twentieth-century British domestic workers had its roots in the suffragette feminist movement (Schwartz, 2014). At the World Trade Organization's sixth ministerial conference, the Hong Kong Coalition of Indonesian Migrant Workers Organizations' experience of protesting alongside other marginalised groups, such as Korean peasants and Filipino fishermen, made them aware of the similarities in the issues plaguing them and these other groups (Lai, 2007). It is likely that the British experiment failed because of continued cultural injustices (see also Chapter 7). For instance, as Chigateri's (2007) Indian research into the demands of Dalit domestic workers showed, retaining 'domestic worker' as a separate worker identity or categorising the work as 'work like no other' makes it difficult for workers and the work to lose the subordinating label (see also Bergmann, 1998; Fraser, 2013; Mundlak and Shamir, 2011).

These theoretical arguments are substantiated by historical evidence of continuities between domestic and other work. Mayer-Ahuja (2004) showed that the current increase in precarious low-wage employment in various industries in the West can be understood by studying the development of the precarious working conditions of German commercial and domestic cleaners in the late twentieth century. These changes were the result of Taylorised/neoliberal privatisation of public cleaning services with standard employment conditions (that is, income/job/pension security). In the same vein, following their review of the challenges facing regulatory possibilities for domestic workers in India, Neetha and Palriwala concluded that '[t]he complexity of work organization, wage rates, poor working conditions, poverty, illiteracy, caste, migrant status, lack of alternative work, and the exigencies of the life of domestic workers are similar to that of the vast numbers of informal workers' in India, and the 'success of social policy depends on the extent to which these workers' rights are recognized rather than through piecemeal welfare measures' (2011:118; see also NCEUS 2008, 2009; Raju and Bose, 2016). Perhaps this is also the reason why, in Europe, the specially designed public–private voucher/tax-credit service models of paid domestic work have not altered labour conditions remarkably (Bailly *et al.*, 2013; ILO, 2016; Morel, 2015; Pérez and Stallaert, 2016; Shire, 2015). Rather, these

models appear to represent states' abrogation of welfare responsibilities; they legitimise the work as part-time, low-wage, low-value work (e.g. a 'bit' of cleaning), as the primary aim is to make outsourcing of domestic work more affordable for the knowledge-economy worker. Class divisions are re-entrenched between women because while the employing woman is promoted as the independent adult worker, the rights of the shadow-economy, part-time 'mini-job' worker are systematically eroded (Morel, 2015; Shire, 2015). This piecemeal regularisation also does not eradicate stigma or the gendered myths (dirty work, women are better suited to this work, etc.) that continue to disempower the worker (Abrantes, 2014a; Blackett, 2011; Pérez and Stallaert, 2016) and aid commercial agencies' re-'servantisation' of the work (Constable, 2007; Ehrenreich, 2002/2010; Lan, 2006; Mendez, 1998). Nor does it dispel the assumption that anyone can do domestic work. In this situation, what meanings does the work have for workers themselves?

Meanings of paid domestic work

It appears the single live-in worker is more likely to experience domestic work as 'work like no other' while the live-out worker is more likely to experience it as 'work like any other'. Workers who have experienced both situations seem to prefer the latter (Dill, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Narula, 1999), and my research focuses on this work. Thus here I mostly draw on accounts of live-out work.

In conditions of extreme social inequalities and entrenched racial, gender and social/religious norms around purity/pollution, the meanings of the work become intricately bound to experiences of wider cultural injustices. Similar to experiences of Black domestic workers in the USA (Dill, 1994) and Brazil (Bernardino-Costa, 2014), Chigateri (2007) reported how Tamilian Dalit women resented societal inscription of domestic work on *their* bodies. In Bartolomei's (2010) research on Keralan male migrant workers in Italy, one man preferred domestic service because it offered him autonomy and an adequate income to support his family while factory work offered neither. But he had escaped the stigma of being a failed patriarch through doing domestic work at a distance from his own people. He would not have done this work in Kerala. Obviously, domestic work was a means to an end for this man, as it might be for women who do not migrate with the *intention* of doing domestic work (Abrantes, 2012).

The experiences of local White (and non-White citizen) workers in Anglophone Western countries are more complex. In Gregson and Lowe's (1994a) study, the primary reason for doing undeclared cleaning work was to supplement a meagre household income (state pension, disability support or husband's low wage). The cleaners also appreciated having control over their working conditions. Sometimes the work itself was framed as 'helping' the dual-career couple to have quality time at home, rather than privileging the income it provided. This created problems for negotiating wage increases within a 'friendly' relationship. Dill detected two kinds of attitude among her respondents, Black American women who had done domestic work for an average of 37 years. Five of the 26 women found the experience unpleasant, the work was mundane compared with other work they had done. The remaining women were invested in their work and tried to 'create opportunities for self-satisfaction'. Their ambivalent accounts gave Dill a better 'understanding of the rewards and detractions of the occupation' and she likened their experiences to a generalised experience of work (1994:99). In other studies (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Meagher, 1997, 2003; Romero, 2002), many live-out cleaners preferred domestic work because it offered greater autonomy, possibility of casual work, better wages and even greater job stability compared with other work available to them, such as factory work, residential care work, hospital housekeeping, hairdressing and agricultural work (see also Cox, 2006; Jones, 2004; Rollins, 1985). Romero commented that the 'challenge [for the workers] was to find a job outside domestic service' (2002:174); their preference for this degrading work over other de-humanising work was the '*paradox* of domestic service' (2002:42, my emphasis). Yet, over half of Romero's sample worked for the same employer for more than two-thirds of their working life as a domestic worker. This indicates that the women were probably more satisfied not just with the work but also with their employers' attitudes towards them than is implied by Romero's tone. Obviously the women only had access to particular jobs, but this issue is common to a whole class of women (and men). In Meagher's (2003) Australian study, some workers (who included both migrant and local workers) said they liked cleaning, creating 'order' out of other people's mess, and did not see the work as inherently degrading. Meagher listed five distinct kinds of work orientation towards domestic cleaning: stop-gap work (e.g. students, including feminists); stepping stone for other work (e.g. because of learning transferrable skills); filler work (doing this work as a reasonable source of income while waiting

for an appropriate opportunity for work of choice); career (doing this work with the aim of opening a domestic service agency); and dead-end (doing this work on a permanent basis). Toynbee's brief experience left her ruminating that:

> [t]here are plenty of satisfactions in manual work as I found myself. If well-managed and decently timed and equipped, manual work is not of itself unpleasant. There is meaning in cleaning. It is only the low pay and thus the contemptible status that makes these necessary jobs demeaning. (2003:224)

Romero's (2002) findings corroborate Toynbee's observation. Rather than the actual house-cleaning, her respondents' objections appeared to be about being expected to 'pick up after others' (see Chapters 3 and 4), to being closely monitored and shown the 'right' way to clean and behave (see Chapters 5–7). In other studies some workers have expressed dislike around cleaning toilets (Anderson, 2000; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014; Meagher, 2003). But others have said that the nightmare job is cleaning shared housing (e.g. student accommodation) or just very dirty and messy houses (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Meagher, 2003). Gutiérrez-Rodríguez (2014) proposed that the social construction of the work as 'banal' means that thinking of and doing domestic work elicited not just physical but also mental weariness in *her* and her. Yet Meagher's (2003) 'stop-gap' respondents found the physicality 'invigorating', and they often worked to music or with the television on to relieve any monotony. Elsewhere, as in care work, investment in the work itself appears to make exploitative conditions endurable, or better working conditions make unbearable work seem interesting or worth doing (Rolfe, 2006; Stacey, 2005; Toynbee, 2003). In these situations, workers have resented being stigmatised for doing 'honest' work – thieving and prostitution are 'dirty' work (Anderson, 2000; Constable, 2007; Meagher, 2003). Thus the meanings of domestic work appear to be shaped by several factors:

- the work itself;
- previous work experiences;
- the conditions under which it is done (as a raced, classed woman or man; citizen or non-citizen; live-out or live-in work);
- relationship with the employer(s); and
- what the worker hopes to achieve from the whole experience in terms of their wider life circumstances.

In sum, feminist analyses have clearly provided invaluable insights into the reproduction of social inequalities through paid domestic work. However, my critique shows that gaps remain in its theorisation, adding to the challenges facing those interested in the 'extrication of housework and care work from the private sphere' (Lutz, 2011:10).

The research questions

Prevailing theories of paid domestic work are located within a Western 'gendered conception of the domestic realm' (Bowman and Cole, 2009:160; also Meagher, 2003), and a restricted conception of classed labour relations, the relations of 'production' in a manufacturing unit (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). In part this is because it was useful for making the case for (educated middle-class) women's participation in 'men's work' (Schwartz, 2015:39; also Johnson and Lloyd, 2004). My readings show exploitation more likely depends on the 'configuration of the circumstances' of the worker and employer rather than the site where the work is carried out (Meagher, 1997:81; also Schwartz, 2014). This is because, first, practices of class constitution, such as personalism, paternalism, maternalism and deference, historically precede and cut across the private–public divide. Second, the 'wife' role is ubiquitous: from one partner in a couple (could be a man in a homosexual couple) to personal support staff in universities, personal assistants and low-wage supervisors in organisations, secretaries of constituted bodies, etc. Affect and emotion may be constructed as feminine, but they are as intrinsic to any other work as they are to paid domestic work (Mundlak and Shamir, 2011). As Schwartz (2015:44–45) concluded, perhaps it is how we understand 'emancipation' (and 'independence') that requires rethinking: across societies, 'cultures of servitude' linger on to varying degrees, sometimes more obviously (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) and sometimes surreptitiously (Glenn, 1981), undermining domestic workers' efforts to work under a 'contract *for* service' rather than under a 'contract *of* service' (Meagher, 2003:149; my emphasis). My critique also shows that the contemporary racialised employee–employer dichotomy in paid domestic work is complex and closely intertwined with class inequality (Dill, 1994; Milkman *et al.*, 1998), but the mediating role of class requires further attention.

Finally, while the analytical lens of 'exposure of oppression by women of women' grounded in the 'continuities' of this work with the housewife's unpaid work (Meagher, 1997:196) has been useful in revealing how inequalities are

reproduced, it mires finding an effective solution. The feminist discomfort around domestic work and the accompanying moral anxieties around commodification of the 'home' play into the hands of the economic interests of the market and the continued resistance to its regulation by the people who benefit most from it (Bowman and Cole, 2009; Neetha and Palriwala, 2011; Pérez and Stallaert, 2016; Schwartz, 2015). People are not encouraged to recognise domestic work as proper work or pay a reasonable fee while expecting quality service for something they assume they can do themselves. These conclusions resonate with the Mumsnetters' responses to my question. They may have questioned cleaning as women's work, but cleaning was 'only a bit of cleaning' and hence not worth researching. My readings helped dissipate the doubts that the exercise had raised. There appears to be much still left to understand, especially in the (Western) situation where racial differences might be absent. Thus, with regards to the workers, I aimed to focus on local and/or in-country migrant workers. Also, this review changed my original intention to focus on the occupational relationship between the workers and employers from the point of view of answering the question 'Can employing a cleaner be a feminist act?' by examining how feminist employers negotiated their feminist ideologies around their domestic practices. While feminist researchers are sympathetic to women who do cleaning work, the gendered theorisation reinforces the work they do as low-value 'women's' work, which then keeps the work in the shadows instead of what Ehrenreich rightly demands, 'to make the work visible', a project started by second-wave feminists but left incomplete (2000, n.d.). To understand whether feminism(s) can be reconciled with paid domestic work, I required interrogating the meanings of domestic work (through the lens of cleaning, see Chapter 2) for both sides. Thus my research questions are:

> 1. In the UK and India, how do White and Indian women who provide cleaning services and White and Indian academic women who use these services (and have an interest in feminism/gender), respectively, conceptualise cleaning work?

> 2. How does paid-for domestic cleaning fit in current understandings of work and 'paid' work?

In the next chapter I describe the methodology used to address these questions.

Chapter 2   Behind the words

Research findings are the end product of a dialogue between that which is found 'out' there and that which is already 'in' the researcher (Letherby, 2003:71). Hence the imperative to first confess the 'in'. I start by clarifying my positioning(s) in relation to my research. Then I reflectively chart my research journey, which typically followed a non-linear course. For the sake of coherence the account is divided into pre-field, in-the-field and post-field. Finally, a descriptive analysis of the demographic data introduces the main actors in this work – my respondents – and situates my samples in the wider socio-cultural-geographical contexts from which they were drawn. So, who is 'I'?

The 'I' in this research

I am a 51-year-old woman, 'ethnically'[42] categorised as British-Indian or Indian-British (ONS, 2015a). I was born in and lived in India for 28 years. For the past 23 years I have lived in the UK, and in my diasporic space[43] I am constantly reminded that we are not born *with* but *into* a 'culture'.

My father, a police officer, had a working-class background and my mother was a housewife. Besides four children, my father's income also supported three siblings and his mother for several years. Our middle-class status derived from my father's occupation, thus even though money was tight, we had domestic help (see Chapter 3). As a woman, I have twice used live-out cleaning services: for the first two years of my married life in India, and for eight years in the UK. In the remaining time, my husband and I have shared cleaning as part of our wider sharing/division of domestic matters.[44]

Many feminist researchers give some indication of their own experience. Romero's mother was a cleaner and Romero (2002) also did the work in her younger days, as did Meagher (1997). Rollins (1985) worked for a few months as a cleaner before her research for a first-hand experience, although she did not try

---

[42] I did not belong to an 'ethnic' group before I came to the UK.

[43] There is no typical diasporic identity. My experiences may not mirror those of other diasporic researchers because of differences in positionalities in diasporic and non-diasporic spaces due to, for example, being a first- or later-generation diasporic person (Henry, 2007).

[44] He cleans the kitchen, I clean the bathrooms and dust, we both do vacuuming.

being an employer. Anderson (2000) drew on friends and family for childcare during her research. When Constable arrived in Hong Kong to research paid domestic work, she discovered that the apartment rent included payment for the services of a live-out domestic worker. She wrote: 'given the topic of my research, I felt uncomfortable at the idea that I had – even indirectly – hired a domestic worker' (Constable, 2007:xiv). Lan (2006) expressed similar sentiments when living in an American colleague's apartment while writing up her research. Mattila (2011) used cleaning services in Finland and in India, where she conducted her research (see also Dickey, 2000a). She defended her researcher identity by mentioning working previously as an au-pair and dish-washer. I have not done housework for a living, like Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001). Nor do I object to it on moral grounds. But the cultural devaluation of service work, and the living and working conditions of those who provide services concern me as much as they concern all the researchers cited here.

Drawing on Haraway's (1988) principles of accountability, partiality and positioning, Bhavnani (1993:96–97) stipulated that feminist objectivity in a research project hinges on avoiding 'reinscription' of common stereotypical understandings about the researched group; unpacking macro- as well as micro-level power differentials in the research process; and engaging clearly with 'difference' in the process and the product. In other words, any analysis of 'culture' and 'cultural difference' should be mindful of historical specificity to avoid 'set[ting] up sharp [false] binaries between "Western" and various "Non-western" cultures' and making 'essentialist' generalisations (Narayan, 1998:101). Thus the legitimacy of my analysis is contingent on its grounding in feminist objectivity as defined above, rather than on my moral stance on and positioning as a user of house-cleaning services. I now illustrate this through a critical reflection of my research journey.

An invitation to speak: unpacking the research design

My research aimed to focus on outsourced domestic work in particular contexts of demand and supply in two contrasting cultural settings: outsourcing of house-cleaning by contemporary urban households, and cleaning service provision by a

live-out service-provider[45] who works for one or several households. Although a myriad housework tasks can be and are outsourced, a notion prevails in many present-day Western societies and feminist spaces that it is wrong to pay someone else (read: a woman) to clean your personal living space (see Chapter 1; Meagher, 2002; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; also Mumsnet, 2013a and personal observations). Nobody cleans out of choice (Anderson, 2000; Ehrenreich, 2003; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a), and cleaning lies at the heart of the 'gendered inequalities that shape responsibilities for domestic chores and childcare' (Gabb and Fink, 2015:111; Grose, 2013). Cleaning is thus said to be emblematic of women's oppression, and sharing of this household task is the last bastion of egalitarianism (Bowman and Cole, 2009; Davis, 2013). Yet, the practice of outsourcing cleaning endures (see Chapter 1).

Although cleaning is done by live-in and live-out service-providers, the conditions of live-out work as reported in previous research appeared more favourable; it is also increasingly the preferred mode of outsourcing[46] (e.g. Dill, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Raghuram, 1999:216). This deepened my anecdotal conviction that a clearer understanding of the meanings of outsourced domestic cleaning required researching the live-out form of work separately (e.g. see Gregson and Lowe, 1994a,b; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Romero, 2002; Salzinger, 1991).

There are cultural and geographical[47] differences in cleaning work in different country contexts, and most published research focuses on a single country context. However, this risks introducing cultural (and gender) essentialisms into analyses (Narayan, 1998; see Chapters 1 and 4). When Ray and Qayum tested their 'cultures of servitude' framework developed in Kolkata on two case studies in New York, they found that many of the 'constitutive elements of Kolkata's culture of servitude' were present in New York (2009/2010:27).

---

[45] With respect to my UK samples I use 'indigenous' more or less synonymously with 'White British', that is a person of White European heritage who is not a first or second-generation migrant. See Chapter 6 for my reasons for using the terms 'service-user' and 'service-provider' in preference to 'employee' and 'employer'.

[46] For the service-provider, live-out work offers clearer boundaries between paid work and private life. On the demand side, contemporary house designs increasingly do not incorporate living space for a domestic worker.

[47] For example, in dusty tropical locations, whole houses are cleaned daily, whereas in temperate regions, some rooms may be cleaned more often than others (Raghuram, 1999; also personal observations).

Furthermore, my own experience of using services of local White British and Indian service-providers in India and the UK, and the similarity in exploitative practices reported in different parts of the world (see Chapter 1) convinced me that a cross-cultural design was a *sine qua non* for addressing some gaps in Western feminist concerns around paid domestic work. As Douglas (1986/1987, 2002) notes, to understand what is happening or not happening in a social space it is useful to look at similar situations in another social space that appears 'different' on the surface. My decision to focus on particular regions of the UK and India[48] was partly logical, given I had lived for almost equivalent periods in those areas. Also, although both countries reflect the current trend in rising (gendered) social inequalities associated with neoliberal capitalism (Fraser, 2013; Raju and Jatrana, 2016b), they show differences in historical trajectories (see Chapter 1) and in contemporary structural conditions of paid domestic work (see Chapter 5). I limited the research to several small- to mid-sized urban areas in the mid and northern regions of England,[49] areas where I have lived, worked and studied. In India I chose two mid-sized urban areas in the north.[50]

I also aimed to focus on the experiences of local White British and Indian and/or in-country migrant service-providers and service-users. Although feminist research should interrogate 'race', difference and diversity in a balanced way (Bhavnani, 1993; Letherby, 2003:56), with a few exceptions, the major excellent research on paid domestic work in the West includes White employers and non-White (often migrant) domestic workers. Thus, this body of work is not representative of the full situation in Western countries (see Chapter 1), and, consequently, the mediation of racialised exploitation by class (Dill, 1994; Milkman *et al.*, 1998; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) remains under-explored and elucidations of the meanings of outsourcing and doing outsourced cleaning remain partial (see Chapter 1).

I planned to include 15 respondents in both groups in each country to gather sufficient data per group (total 60 respondents). I did not consider

---

[48] When I differentiate between my samples by referring to them as 'the UK respondents' and 'the Indian respondents' note that I am referring to my research sites in particular and not providing a generalised description of paid domestic work in both cultures.
[49] Two service-providers lived in southern England.
[50] Detailed geographical description of the research sites is not provided due to risk of disclosure for my service-user samples.

including dyads for ethical reasons (Dickey, 2000a; Lan, 2006; Mattila, 2011); it can also be more difficult to find dyads willing to participate (Lutz, 2011). Besides using 'race'/ethnicity as a selection criterion,[51] I focused on women as both users and providers because the increased presence of women in this work is a key feminist concern around it (see Chapters 1 and 5). Moreover, to obtain sufficient data on differences/similarities in gendered experiences, I would have required a larger sample, which was impractical for a PhD project. Men figure in my analysis though: to understand women's lives and work fully requires taking into consideration the people they live with (Letherby, 2003:6) and their work.

To explore how lived feminism(s) negotiate paid housework, I limited my service-user groups to senior women academics with an interest in feminism/gender,[52] who currently outsourced or had previously outsourced cleaning. Lay understandings of feminism centre on gender equality,[53] and I conjectured that academic interest in feminism/gender might be associated with wider reflexivity around social inequalities. Also, to unpack the tension between paid domestic work and a particular Western feminist viewpoint (i.e. it is morally wrong and politically self-defeating to outsource cleaning to another woman), I preferred to study the work conditions of 'independent' service-providers (often called private cleaners). Anecdotal evidence, previous Western research (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Mendez, 1998; Romero, 2002) and internet discussions on cleaning charges (Mumsnet and Netmums, see later) consistently showed that independent service-providers had greater autonomy and often commanded higher fees than the wages of agency cleaners. I did not set age limits but I expected service-users to be middle-aged because of their academic faculty status. I excluded service-providers younger than 18 years.

Given the nature of my research questions (see Chapter 1), methods such as participant observation and ethnography might have resulted in richer data but they require significant immersion in the field. My PhD timeframe meant I

---

[51] Sub-regional and caste identities influence work prospects in India (NCEUS, 2009); however, the PhD timeframe did not allow further sample stratification.
[52] Pilot work revealed that the label 'feminist' is contentious in India, often because of 'its unavoidable association' with a particular kind of feminism – 'Western' feminism (Chaudhuri, 2004/2011:xi). A term commonly used is 'gender sensitisation'. Thus, I used the phrase 'interest in gender' in my email/verbal introduction for soliciting participants in India. In the study information sheet, I used the phrase 'feminism and being sensitised to women/gender' (Appendix A).
[53] Pilot interview data and general personal observations.

had limited time for fieldwork, thus I opted to collect data through semi-structured interviews. These conversations-with-a-purpose allow adapting lines of enquiry depending on respondents' answers, while not losing sight of one's research aims (Bryman, 2008). While aiming to start with non-directive questions, I prepared some direct probes to ensure I obtained information on particular concepts relevant to my research questions (Dohrenwend and Richardson, 1963). Pre-field focus groups would have been useful to refine draft interview schedules. But co-ordinated contact with sufficient numbers of women in both countries proved difficult and I conducted pilot interviews instead.

I also devised a questionnaire to capture a detailed snapshot of the division of household labour and material aspects of the user–provider employment relationship. Because time spent on housework remains an impediment to women's participation in the public sphere (Crompton and Lyonette, 2007, 2011; Gatrell, 2004; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, 2010; Treas and Drobnic, 2010), would a one-week time-use dairy have been more appropriate? I would not volunteer for such a study, as I find keeping such records tedious. The pilot interviews revealed that people sometimes do tasks on a fortnightly rather than weekly basis, which would have confounded time estimates, and precise time calculations were worthwhile only if complemented by similar calculations for other household members. There also was a high likelihood of illiteracy among the Indian service-providers (NCEUS, 2008, 2009). Furthermore, in retrospect, a sense of 'busyness' pervaded the communication between many women and myself. So much seemed to be happening in the space of day, and taking out time to speak to me was not a straightforward matter. I stand by my decision to use questionnaires.

Social researchers need to be cognisant of social desirability in people's responses (Joinson, 1999; Press and Townsley, 1998),[54] and I prepared for this as follows:

- *Not interviewing dyads.* By including service-users and service-providers who did not know each other, I could corroborate in general terms the accounts given by service-users against those of the service-providers and vice versa.

---

[54] Even ethnographers and participant observers are vulnerable to staged performances (Lutz, 2011).

- *Being open about my position.* My status as a service-user appeared on my university webpage, and the study information sheet clearly indicated that my study was feminism-related. I intended answering any questions posed to me honestly.

- *Not revealing the questions to respondents ahead of the interview.* In my view, some questions would be less vulnerable to socially desirable responses if answered off-the-cuff (Gabb, 2002).

- *Trying to establish trust.* I intended to take my time while gaining consent and explaining about confidentiality. In retrospect, two UK service-providers who did not declare this income were worried at one point about whether I was going to share my findings with the 'taxman'. I took care to reassure them that the data would remain confidential, and both interviews proceeded without further concerns on that matter.

- *Filling the questionnaire prior to the interview.* Based on my previous experience (Singha, 2012), I decided to start with the questionnaire to help break the ice between two strangers who were going to converse about domestic practices.

- *Breaking down housework into 28 tasks.* I anticipated that many respondents would be part of a couple. Individual perceptions vary as regards how much time is spent on housework by people themselves and others, although women's reports are said to be more accurate (Crompton and Lyonette, 2008; Lee and Waite, 2005; Press and Townsley, 1998). To further minimise bias, I broke down each broad housework category into components, e.g. cleaning was divided into vacuuming (and sweeping and mopping in the Indian questionnaire), dusting, general tidying up, cleaning of kitchen, cleaning of toilets/bathrooms. I also planned to obtain only a proportional estimate of the times the respondent or another person were likely to do a task, and limit the descriptive analysis to trends.

- *Asking non-threatening questions first.* I aimed to ask more general questions on feminism and exploitation to service-users after they had described their relationships with their service-providers.

I decided to use secondary data for 'data triangulation' to corroborate my primary findings and to situate my research in the broader sociology of gender and work. In the UK, I accessed census data, the Labour Force Survey (LFS; the UK's official quarterly employment survey (ONS, 2015b)), and Understanding

Society (n.d.), an academically rigorous longitudinal survey of contemporary life in the UK. I also drew on television documentaries, radio programmes and broadsheet reports, websites of cleaning agencies/franchises operating in my target research sites, and internet forums with discussion threads on paid domestic work. Internet data are increasingly used in research. The relative anonymity provided by the medium allows greater freedom of expression and thus 'relatively authentic natural data' (Holtz *et al.*, 2012:56; also Joinson, 1999), although fictional accounts cannot be ruled out (Seale *et al.*, 2010). I focused on two websites with a wealth of discussion on outsourced cleaning, Mumsnet and Netmums. Originally aimed at mothers, both websites now have a wider scope and UK-wide membership (with a southern bias). Mumsnet is more representative of 'middle-class values' in line with its demographic.[55] Netmums has a 'working-class' orientation (Pedersen and Smithson, 2013), with 30–40% of users from lower-income groups (Russell, 2006; Womenology, 2012). Service-users as well as service-providers contribute to the discussions on both sites. I sought permission to quote from these websites as internet research ethics remains a grey area (Markham *et al.*, 2012; Seale *et al.*, 2010). For India, the sober findings of the national report, *The Challenge of Employment in India: an Informal Economy Perspective* (NCEUS, 2008, 2009) and the Indian Human Development Survey (Desai *et al.*, 2010) provided robust statistical evidence. I also used media reports, but, to my knowledge, there are no Indian internet forums where both service-users and service-providers participate in discussions about outsourcing housework.

The relevant sub-committee of the University of York's Ethics Committee approved the research project. But then, as expected in any research, unexpected challenges awaited in the field, which would affect the analysis and final product (Henry, 2007; Letherby, 2003).

Grappling with power in multi-site research

Consensual research is possible when different identities are understood and accepted, not assuming that there is equality across all researcher and research participants involved ... (Sultana, 2007:382)

---

[55] 74% users have above-average incomes; 84% are White (Mumsnet Census, 2009).

Feminist research requires recognising and breaking down power differentials between the researcher and researched (Letherby, 2003; Oakley, 2000; Reinharz, 1992). But the research encounter is an intrusion, an intervention (Stacey, 1991, cited in Thapar-Björkert, 1999:60) and feminist attempts to change manipulative malestream research processes can themselves be implicated in exploitation (Addison and McGee, 1999, cited in Kirsch, 2005:2163). For instance, relationship boundaries are often set by researchers. Letherby felt 'irritation and anger' towards some of her respondents when they tried to overstep her understandings of an empathetic relationship (2003:111). Conversely, respondents who do not share the researcher's interests and commitments may not want a 'friendly' purposive conversation to develop into greater intimacy (Cotterill, 1992). Sultana's (2007) respondents laughed off her overtures of friendship because of the social-economic gap and her passing presence in their lives. In a project involving four different groups of women, with me – the diasporic researcher – in the space in between, Otherness was bound to be multi-dimensional (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996; Sultana, 2007; Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004). Also, I was sceptical about incorporating 60 new long-term relationships into my already full life. Alternative feminist arguments appeared more insightful: power is not embodied in me the researcher, but instead 'constituted in the relationship' between my respondents and me (Henry, 2007:71); and the intention to do non-exploitative feminist research may be undermined by a (unidirectional) temporary allegiance to sisterhood (Reinharz, 1992) as direct benefit to the respondents cannot be guaranteed. A less exploitative stance would include recognising beforehand my (malleable) position in relation to my respondents (Kirsch, 2005). Thus, I decided a courteous demeanour would suffice, unless a respondent suggested keeping in touch, and that I would not prevaricate when I was asked questions. And so my tussle with power commenced on Day 1 in the field:[56] I decided whom to invite to speak, but who took up the invitation was not up to me. From this moment on, I also swung like a pendulum between 'insider' and 'outsider', never quite fully making it either way (Mullings, 1999; Sultana, 2007; Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004).

---

[56] The Indian data collection took nearly two months over three visits. The UK data collection took three and half months.

Given my social location, arranging interviews was most straightforward with the UK academics, despite my readings of racial politics. I searched humanities and health and social sciences staff lists on websites of universities located in my target areas, and emailed (Appendix A) over several weeks, 82 senior faculty members with feminism/gender-related research interests. The academics and I were at ease with this method of initial communication. A moment of panic occurred early on, when one academic seemed uncertain about my finding enough participants:

> Thank you for your email and your invitation to take part in your fieldwork. I haven't ever used the services of a paid domestic cleaner, so am not able to help you, I'm afraid. I wish you well with your research and hope you manage to find a sample of academics who fit your criteria.

Eventually this doubt was unfounded. Sixty-two women replied, of whom 24 did not outsource cleaning and 21 of those who did outsource agreed to participate, most commonly because they found the topic interesting. For instance, when Bridget[57] replied to say she did not have time to be interviewed, she also wrote about her experience of outsourcing and her views on the issue:

> Hi Lotika … It's a great idea for a project. … I have, in the past employed a cleaner (two times, 2 hrs a week), a nanny (shared) and currently employ a gardener (male, 4 hrs a month) …

Otherwise, in the pre- and post-interview communications and the interview itself, I did not feel an outsider any more than I did in India because of my diasporic identity. All the academics were courteous, appeared to answer my questions thoughtfully, and only one failed to turn up. But she apologised and I met her on another day. Two contacted me well in time to change interview times, sparing me inconvenience.

Contacting academics in India was harder as details of research interests and email addresses were often not available on institutional websites. I obtained some contact details via friends of friends and family members and emailed 15 academics (Appendix A) before my field visit; worryingly, only two women

---

[57] All respondent names are psuedonyms (English Christian names for the UK respondents and Indian Hindu first names for the Indian respondents). The service-users name are in roman and service-providers' names are in italics.

responded before I left the UK. I later learned that university-linked email was not their preferred form of communication. Phone numbers were freely exchanged, and I had to do some cold-calling, which I find uncomfortable. Meetings could not be booked well in advance, because these senior academics often had to attend institutional meetings at short notice. Sometimes arranging a meeting took several calls/texts, making me edgy throughout my (limited) time in India. However, the much higher reliance on paid domestic help in India meant I needed to contact fewer academics.[58] Finally, 20[59] of the 38 women I contacted agreed to participate (again, many found my topic interesting), though one eventually declined as family issues arose all three times we arranged to meet.

Gaining access to the UK service-providers was also challenging. Gregson and Lowe (1994a) struggled to find cleaners because they work alone and are not 'visible'. I did not have difficulty *finding* cleaning service-providers. But contrary to expectations (Letherby, 2003; Tatano Beck, 2005), women labelled as marginalised are not always willing to talk. Several women ignored my initial attempt to contact them. Others prevaricated, while some refused bluntly: 'I'd rather clean for my mother than get interviewed!' Eventually, I interviewed 26 of the 67 women I had in various ways contacted. Two women were known to me previously. Five were working for service-users known to me or to colleagues. Here the snowballing stalled and I had to look elsewhere. Two women (one ex-agency worker[60]) responded to my post on a feminist network webpage. I found 17 women by searching Google for domestic cleaners' websites and adverts on Gumtree and Yell.com.[61] Further snowballing led to the last two respondents. Working arrangements varied, from undeclared work to running a quasi-agency,[62] thus I interviewed[63] more respondents than I had planned for adequate data for each type of working arrangement. I emailed (Appendix A), texted or cold-called to make contact and I was never comfortable making the first call.

---

[58] Domestic outsourcing is generally more common in non-Western countries (ILO, 2013).
[59] One respondent was a Sri Lankan national but had been living and working in the target region for many years.
[60] I interviewed *Georgia* as everyone I talked to about my research had a view on it, and these general conversations added to my understanding of the structure of paid domestic work.
[61] Gumtree is an international online space for classifieds with country-specific websites. Yell.com is a search engine for local businesses.
[62] See Appendix E.
[63] *Gloria* was unable to find time for an interview and answered my questions by email.

Some respondents were motivated by my offer of a cash gift.[64] A few were intrigued by my topic:

I've just read through your email... wow how interesting!! I would be more than happy to meet you for an interview and help you in any way I can. (*Sheila*)

As I had expected, the Indian service-providers lacked access to e-communication/texting and I had three options. I could hang around in public parks in middle-class residential areas, where these women often congregated during their afternoon break; or visit their homes with an informant (Arun[65]); or make contact through service-users known to family and friends. Due to time constraints I ruled out the first option. I approached 20 workers through Arun and service-users, and nine via snowballing. The higher positive response rate in this group (24/29 contacted women were interviewed) may be due to the culture of reciprocity embedded in many work relationships in India. *Kalpana*, whom I met through a service-user, bought her cooking-gas cylinder on the black market. Whenever she chanced upon a vendor, she arranged to have a cylinder delivered to this service-user's residence. It is likely *Kalpana* agreed to talk to me because I approached her through this service-user. But later she herself asked me to talk to her sister, whereas some others approached through service-users were unable to find time to meet me. Hence, I do not think the women were coerced to meet me, although deference could have played a part.

The young domestic workers Mattila approached may have consented to talk because they were 'used to obeying their parents, their employers' (2011:83). So might have *Asha*, the first woman I talked to in a slum.[66] I approached *Asha* through Arun, a well-respected 'elder' of the slum, and even in my simplest Indian attire, my middle-classness stood out (Letherby, 2003) in a part of town where everything appeared dull and faded in the dust and heat of high summer. I indicated to *Asha* that she did not have to be deferential: I introduced myself by my first name and sat next to her on her bed. But ingrained cultural practices

---

[64] I discuss this point later.
[65] A gardener known to me.
[66] Slum: 'a cluster of closely packed [poorly built tenements mostly of a temporary nature] ... marked by the absence of almost all basic amenities ... [in] unhygienic conditions, and [with] inadequate sanitary and safe drinking water facilities' (Duggal, 2010:11).

cannot be wished away with a snap of a finger. *Asha*'s sister-in-law and another neighbour came and sat down on the floor next to us within a few minutes of starting the interview. Later, I asked them if they would talk to me now that they had heard *Asha*'s interview, and they agreed. A few other women introduced by Arun asked me to talk to other women they knew. The monetary gift at the end of the interview may have been a reason for the interest, but it is fair to say I am only conjecturing here.[67] One woman I directly approached in the slum refused outright, saying that talking about her life and problems made her tense, she preferred not to think about it. Raghuram (1999) reported some Indian female domestic workers refused to be interviewed because they were not happy to reveal they were working as such whereas a few others (Raghuram, 2001) refused because they were too busy. Thus, I believe my conscious attempt to be respectful reduced the influence of deference on consent to a level that is not necessarily absent in individualist cultures like the UK. Watts (2006) used senior management as gatekeepers in her research on experiences of women civil engineers and noted that a degree of coercion in finding participants could not be ruled out.

The issue then arises of proving consent. My consent forms (Appendix A) were a product of Western feminist understandings of ethical research, and offered respondents the option to read/amend transcripts and a summary of the research findings. These practices assume a certain level of literacy and open channels of communication. All the academics and UK service-providers (except one) had access to email. A few in all three groups requested the transcript and everyone asked for the summary. I had planned to ask those Indian service-providers who were illiterate to put their thumbprint on the consent form. But two Indian researchers told me that unfortunately people have been cheated of their legal rights in this way so I might encounter reluctance, and I did. Consequently, I gained verbal consent but I did not offer a transcript copy and the summary. Some women were living in temporary accommodation, some moved frequently, and posting transcripts did not seem a secure option in a place where the public–private divide was more ideological than real. Also most of them were illiterate, so someone else would have read the transcript to them. I

---

[67] I discuss this point later.

did not mention the summary because of the risk of raising their expectations as to how the research might benefit them.

My previous research had shown similarities in housework across ethnically distinct higher-educated socio-economic groups (Singha, 2015). Therefore, there were few differences in the final questionnaires and the (evolving) interview schedule for the two service-user groups (Appendix B) except for some culture-specific direct probes. I intended to gather similar data for the service-providers to examine similarities and differences between their own housework and the housework they did for a living. So I used the same list of housework tasks for the UK service-providers and some questions in the (evolving) topic schedule mirrored the questions for the service-users (Appendix B; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). But my pilot work showed that the living and work conditions of the Indian service-providers differed markedly from the other three groups, which meant their understandings of their work were intricately bound with their 'broader lives', as also noted in Jaipur by Mattila (2016). Thus I had to modify my approach to a life-history-style interview, asking the women where they were born, why they migrated, etc. before asking them about their work.[68] The consistent disinvestment in the work per se also meant I had to approach the topic differently (see Appendix B). For logistical reasons, I interviewed service-providers and service-users within the same time period in both countries.

I soon discovered that when and where the interview happened was often not in my hands. The time and place convenient for the respondent (or what they thought would be convenient for me!) was often not best for me. Most academics met me in their office. In India, doors could be open, and the interviews were frequently interrupted by staff and students with queries. I felt more in control of the interview in the UK, where the door was usually closed. Thapar-Björkert, (1999) also noted cross-cultural differences in notions of privacy disrupting the Western-style research process. Eight UK service-users and service-providers were interviewed in cafés. Background noise makes transcription harder and I was hyper-alert to noise during these interviews, which could be distracting. One UK service-provider and one service-user were interviewed over Skype. The sound fluctuated, which was frustrating, especially because I had wanted to meet the

---

[68] Lutz (2011) had the same experience in her research among migrant domestic workers in Germany.

service-provider in her house. But she had (kindly) dismissed my suggestion as she lived several miles away.

Noise and privacy were particular problems in the Indian service-providers' interviews. Five interviews conducted in service-users' properties had no interruptions, but in the slum dwellings, doorways were often only loosely covered with cloth in the day, and people and children simply walked in, sometimes out of curiosity (see also Dickey, 2000a). Noise from outside could drown voices inside. Some women were interviewed sitting on a *charpoy* (Indian bed) in a service-alley.[69] Passers-by occasionally stopped to listen. Inside, the rattle of cheap electric fans/coolers significantly interfered with the audio-recording. I had to make a choice between the ethics of turning off fans in the sweltering heat and inconveniencing the respondents for a longer time (with hand-written notes) or doing the interview elsewhere. The latter option would not have been convenient for women with little spare time and whose mode of transport was either walking or cycling (many UK service-providers had cars (Appendix C), see also Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Also, spending time in that environment aided my understanding of some key issues in these women's lives. Thus, turning fans off was the least exploitative option in the circumstances.

Service-user contacts sometimes acted as gatekeepers, deciding beforehand where I should meet their service-provider. Other diasporic researchers have mentioned how informants form their own ideas of the researcher's positionality and expect their point of view to be respected (Soni-Sinha, 2008; Sultana, 2007; Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004). On four occasions I interviewed a service-provider with the service-user present in the house. While this situation could adversely influence the validity of the responses, I did not find the arrangement wholly disadvantageous. Two respondents interviewed in this situation were among the most self-assured women I met. Their body language and manner of conversation indicated that they were able to hold their own in the vicinity of their service-users. Both were late and non-apologetic about it. Their interaction with the service-users was also useful to observe. For example *Neena* explained that she had stopped working for the two sisters living next door because one of them had increased her workload

---

[69] Described later in the chapter.

but without raising her wage. The service-user intervened and said 'Well yes, but now you earn less, you could have talked to her nicely [and maybe she would have increased your pay]'. But *Neena* stuck to her guns and refused to accept that her actions had disadvantaged her. I am confident that I established some trust, as I heard a range of experiences regardless of the method of contact or place of interview.

In contrast, although the UK service-providers were also socio-economically underprivileged compared with me, only one woman's service-user communicated with me on her behalf. The final interview arrangements with the rest were made by the providers and myself, and I communicated with them in a similar way (emails, calls, texts), in essentially the same language (English) as with the academics. Also, I met some in the same cafés in which I met the UK academics (e.g. Costa Coffee). When I interviewed in homes, I sat in similarly designated rooms (living or dining room). All these interviews lasted an hour on average. Interviews with the Indian service-providers, however, were conducted in Hindi and averaged forty minutes, in part because I did not use written questionnaires and in part because some women were not as forthcoming as others. Some had a self-effacing attitude about themselves and their work, a point noted by other researchers in different Indian contexts (Thapar-Björkert, 1999). My obvious 'outsider' status as a service-user may also have been a factor, despite my reassurances of confidentiality (see also Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004). People may be reserved at first and open up on meeting again (Mattila, 2011), but the women I talked to had little time for leisure/rest between their paid work and own housework. It made me uncomfortable to ask them for more time and on the two occasions I did do so, I could see it was not easy for them. However, some UK service-providers also gave clipped answers. In contrast, both the UK and Indian service-users, women who inhabited social spaces comparatively similar to mine, and were invested in feminism/gender issues, all gave fairly detailed answers. It is thus possible that what I am calling 'self-effacing' might simply have been a difference in the levels of commitment of the service-providers to my research compared with mine and the service-users, which instead shifted the mantle of vulnerability during those interviews from them onto me (Cotterill, 1992). Fortunately, I talked to more women than I had initially planned and some women talked at length, so I was able to gather sufficient data.

There were few instances where a UK academic 'reminded' me of possible differences in her and my cultures. Despite racial differences and the socio-economic distance between most UK service-providers and me, they also mostly did not offer cultural explanations for their views. Only one Northern phrase 'bottoming'[70] was new to me although I understood the context. One reason might have been that, in the West, Western culture is often not perceived as 'a' culture (Moreton-Robinson, 2000:147). The Indian academics often said 'You know in India ...', but they also threw in Hindi words and phrases, which I was expected to understand. Generally, all these respondents assumed I knew housework as they knew it, and in the main this was correct.

The Indian service-providers, however, often explained 'this is how it is in our community', as their awareness of the social distance between us overshadowed any likely bonds due to shared origins and gender. But what struck me most were the differences in our housework. Housework as I knew it, and also the other three groups of women, and which is the subject of most empirical inquiries and forms the bone of contention in feminism,[71] is carried out in *houses*. The Indian service-providers mostly lived in single-room dwellings (see also Bharati and Tandon Mehrotra, 2008; Singh, 2001; and Rani and Kaul, 1986 – conditions have not changed much since then). Sometimes the 'cooker' was fabricated of mud and sat just outside the room, in the alleyway. It required driftwood and gathering this in the countryside took time. Housework could also mean escorting a young daughter to the communal toilet due to safety issues. Indeed, in the slum, my list of housework tasks seemed pretentious. For example, using a communal toilet meant that in my questionnaire the respondent would have noted that 'their' toilet was cleaned by a paid worker, hardly implying a life of privilege. Many of these dwellings had no windows, so gender differences in who cleans the windows from inside/outside did not arise. This realisation embarrassed me. Given their long list of oppressions, my questions on aspects of their work that were important for me suddenly seemed trivial to ask. Questions about feminism and 'having it all' had to be left out even

---

[70] A thorough job, like emptying the cupboards, scrubbing everything down.
[71] In most questionnaire-based studies on the division of household labour, housework is categorised as cleaning, cooking, washing-up, laundry and ironing, childcare and grocery shopping, tasks that in the West are understood broadly as 'women's work'. This broad categorisation, however, overlooks the cross-cultural and class variation in gender roles as well as housework (Eichler and Albanese, 2007).

though these formed a key part of my data collection. Thus, I could not simply use an appropriately translated version of my interview schedule with this group. This decision had implications for subsequent analysis and who gains what from the interview.

Feminist and university ethical frameworks stipulate that research such as mine should somewhat benefit the respondents. I went into the field to find data to help understand the complex relation between some (Western) feminist standpoints and lived realities. At this point I could only conjecture that my research would make a positive contribution to the existing literature. Some service-users said 'Oh I never thought about this before', so I hope the interview might have made them more aware of their practices. But, the lack of direct benefit to the underprivileged respondents (Mattila, 2011:79) concerned me, especially since I was asking them to give up precious time. Therefore I offered a monetary gift for sharing their life and work experiences with me (see also Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), based on my notions of suitable rates of pay for cleaning work. Ethical guidelines state that information on payment should be included in the information sheet and consent form, and withdrawal from the study should not affect this offer. My UK pilot work showed that this was condescending. Therefore, I usually mentioned it verbally or in my introductory email. Eventually, 17 of the 24 UK respondents accepted it. In India, I offered the money at the end of the interview as mentioning it beforehand is akin to offering a bribe. Although it was flatly refused only once, several women were happier to take it when I suggested they buy something for the children. The issue of who benefits from research can also be complicated by reciprocity (Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004). One Indian service-provider wanted to talk to me because she hoped I would help her son find a job. A gatekeeper wanted me to recommend to others his newly published book. All in-field conundrums cannot be covered in institutional guidelines. Researchers often have to make snap judgements (Sultana, 2007), and I believe that by remaining conscious about exploitation and agonising over my decisions night after night, my research process counts as feminist.

Finally, the information provided in an interview may be 'constructed' in response to specific questions (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996), that is, people, being human, may under-report or exaggerate oppressive experiences or 'good' practices. Respondents' perceptions of the researcher's positionality also

influences what is said or not said (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996; Soni-Sinha, 2008; Tatano Beck, 2005; Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004). Despite my efforts to limit social desirability in responses, I cannot claim to have conquered it. On the whole, despite my advantage of 'intellectual privilege' in the equation of power between the researcher and researched (Letherby, 2003:77), I entered the post-field phase feeling more humbled than powerful.

Producing situated knowledge

Most sociological research aims to extract interconnecting themes and patterns from empirical data to generate broad concepts and macro-level theories about social life (Hodkinson, 2009; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). My analysis followed these general understandings. Transcription was the first post-field task, and typically, on hearing the recordings, I realised more discussion would have helped at some points. I followed up a few by email, but mostly I worked only with the interview material, information that will never be complete. With regard to the Hindi interviews, some loss of information during translation was also inevitable due to the lack of equivalence of some terms between languages (Birbili, 2000; Chun, 1997; Soni-Sinha, 2008). Therefore I only translated those Hindi conversations that I quote here (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001:xvi); first 'at speed', without regard for grammar or logic, followed by revision (Spivak, 2000:406). All personally identifiable data were anonymised and pseudonyms given to all respondents (see footnote 57).

Hierarchies within English were also a concern during and after transcription, arising from differences in education, class and country context (Anzaldúa, 1987; Spivak, 2000). For instance, UK service-providers from established middle-class backgrounds had little trace of local accents, while H- and G-dropping was common among working-class service-providers. There were differences in fluency among the Indian service-users. Some word usage was obviously incorrect, for example when describing how people addressed each other in the workplace, Sarika said, 'We don't use miss, mister, or doctor, it's not very famous here.' While '[w]e do not speak as we write... and this should be reflected, where possible, in direct quotes used' (O'Dwyer, 2007:403), an imaginary persona may be created while reading quoted text (Corden and Sainsbury, 2006). Even as I am conscious that my respondents' voices should come through as their own, linguistic differences could compromise my intention to keep all voices within the same critical analytical plane (Lutz (2011) reached

the same conclusion). Thus I edited the quoted material slightly (e.g. writing 'had' instead of 'ad, and replacing Sarika's 'famous' with 'common'). My decision does not reduce the very real social and economic hierarchies between the service-users and service-providers, of which my analysis takes full heed. I have also used some quotes from the Mumsnet and Netmums websites. These have not been edited and are reproduced verbatim.

Sociological data are 'real' data affected by a multitude of factors. In the case of housework 'who does what' is influenced by socio-geographical-cultural and personal variations in the tasks that make up broad categories; whether a task *is* a task at all in a household; differences in the amount of work involved in doing a task in different households; how many times in a day or week the task is done; how thoroughly it is done; and what is used to do it (see Appendix D for detailed discussion of these points). Thus rather than conducting a descriptive quantitative analysis of the questionnaire data, I used the findings to make the qualitative analysis more nuanced.

Qualitative data analysis is a process of 'inductive reasoning, thinking, and theorizing'; two principal analytical strategies are analytical induction and grounded theory (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998:140; see also Bryman, 2008). My thematic analysis began in-field, and the pilot interview schedules and the questionnaires continually evolved into the final forms reproduced in Appendix B. Thus my analysis adopted aspects of both strategies. For instance, I used the constant comparison method from grounded theory to refine common themes/concepts,[72] and I used analytical induction to look for discordant patterns amongst the selected themes. This is not unusual – strict application of either strategy is nigh impossible because both may be variously interpreted (Bryman, 2008).

I first analysed each dataset separately, reading the text and subtext of the conversations, as well as the silences due to 'structures of feeling' (see Chapter 1). Bearing in mind Charmaz's questions[73] (2003, cited in Taylor and Gibbs,

---

[72] Every time I inserted a new code, I went back over the data to check whether I had applied the code consistently and whether any similar-seeming codes could be merged.
[73] 'What is going on?'; 'What are the people doing?'; 'What is the person saying?'; and 'What do these actions and statements take for granted?'

2010, n.p.) and Ryan and Bernard's lists of items to look for[74] (2003, cited in Bryman, 2008:555), I developed themes and did descriptive coding (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Then I combined the descriptive codes into broader focused codes (Bryman, 2008). Next was writing-as-analysis and I merged the two service-user analyses (see Chapter 3), followed by the two service-provider analyses (see Chapter 6). Finally, I merged all four analyses (see Chapters 5 and 7). At each stage I searched for thematically similar and contrasting data segments (Fielding and Thomas, 2009) and those negating a previously selected theme. I also tested how themes might be reinforced or problematised by another cultural context to develop a more rigorous analytical framework that avoided making 'essentialist contrasts between "Western" and "Third World" cultures' (Narayan, 1998:86). Themes in an Indian dataset sometimes provided the missing link between themes in the corresponding UK dataset. Given my familiarity with Microsoft Word's document map feature, I coded the e-transcripts in Word by using heading styles to apply descriptive and focused codes, switching between different heading levels as necessary when combining or recombining codes, which was aided by viewing the analytical coding framework in the navigation pane.

Several issues related to my writing-as-analysis require elaboration. First, since it was not my intention to describe a distinct form of domestic work in a particular cultural context I do not use one theoretical framework to explain all my findings. Different aspects of the analysis required drawing on different concepts, which are introduced in respective chapters. I also did not aim to compare forms of paid domestic work in two different cultures. Instead, I used all the data together to understand this work more generally. This is reflected in my use of the word 'merge' instead of 'compare' to describe my treatment of the various thematic analyses. This analytical approach is in part a product of my particular diasporic gaze, which I describe as seeing the social through a varifocal rather than bifocal lens (see Narayan, 1998). In part, I was guided by Douglas's (1986/1987:96) anthropology-derived cultural theory analytical framework, through which she showed how simultaneous non-essentialist

---

[74] Repetitions, metaphors, similarities and differences, existing theory-related material, etc.

comparative analysis enhances sociological understandings of the workings of the West's own institutions and culture:

> It is amazing how institutions fall into stable types that we can recognize in different times and circumstances. The fact that we can talk of a bureaucracy of Byzantine complexity ... (Douglas, 1986/1987:111)

In her analysis of perceived risks in different societies, Douglas argues that when:

> a certain kind of society is biased toward stressing the risk of pollution, we are not saying that other kinds of social organization are objective and unbiased but rather that they are biased toward finding different kinds of dangers ... each culture, each set of shared values and supporting social institutions, is biased toward highlighting certain risks and downplaying others. ... [Thus] we mix examples of risk selection among people like ourselves and people such as the Amish and the Hutterites, contemporaries who have a strange appearance to the modern eye. One reason for doing this is that these peoples and their cultures have a pronounced identity, so they can be readily described. (Douglas and Wildavsky, 1983:8, 175; also Douglas, 2002:47)

However, cultural essentialism can originate at either end of the pole (Narayan, 1998), because:

> [s]taying within his [*sic*] own culture, a person is apt to see no culturally standardized forms around him: transgression against the norm is more visible than conformity. The inside experience of culture is an experience of choice and decision, scrutinized and judged by neighbours and press. The local view obscures regularities, but as soon as the local moves abroad, he is forcibly struck by the standardized behaviour of foreigners. The innocent view of [Western] culture is that we don't have it at home; it is only abroad that people are culturally hide-bound. A special effort of sophistication is necessary to see our own culture. (Douglas, 2002:25)

In this argument, with almost equal periods of living in two societies, my diasporic location offered an advantage.

Second, the four datasets yielded a tremendous amount of material. To maximise inclusion of the findings within the word count for this PhD, within each analytical section, I first present the UK data. I bring in the Indian data

where the analysis is at risk of ethnocentrism, in the manner described by Narayan:

> Instead of seeing the centrality of particular values, traditions, or practices to any particular culture as given, we need to trace the historical and political processes by which these values, traditions, or practices have come to be deemed central constitutive components of a particular culture ... (1998:93).

A simple example would be reasons for outsourcing of cleaning (see Chapter 3). A physical inability to clean transcends culture, thus I did not need to draw on Indian and UK data separately to prove the point. However, addressing gaps in published wisdom about the association between outsourcing cleaning and status and material resources required drawing on data from both cultures, but without setting them up as ahistorical polar opposites (Narayan, 1998).

Third, seasoned researchers recommend thinking carefully about 're-presenting' versus 'representing' research respondents (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996:13; see also Bhavnani, 1993). Most research on paid domestic work involves a triad of women, the service-provider, the service-user and the researcher. In the classic feminist tradition (Kitzinger and Wilkinson, 1996) it may be assumed that the service-provider is the Other given *her* lower status, and the feminist researcher should privilege *her* experiential knowledge over her authorised knowledge (Letherby, 2003). Indeed, the tone of many works in this field is highly critical of service-users (Meagher, 1997, 2003) and while reading them, I felt admonished. But others have acknowledged that the provider–user power asymmetries are complicated by the shifting positionings of both *her* and her, *vis-à-vis* the multiple axes of oppression (Lan, 2006; Mattila, 2011). I preferred King's standpoint that '[g]iving a forum to only one voice, irrespective of whether that voice is black or white, will inevitably result in an usurping of the space between social reality and representation by the speaker' (2007:ix). Thus, my intention has been to keep all voices 'in the same critical plane' (Morgan, 2009:9) while being mindful that service-providers may 'know' more because they are the *doers* of the work under scrutiny (e.g. in-field analysis showed that cleaning done as paid work is not always the same as cleaning done by the housewife, a common assumption, see Chapter 5). Also, I deemed it important to remain self-reflexive throughout the research and recognise the boundaries of my situated analysis in the process of knowledge production (Taylor and Bogdan, 1998).

Finally, I have not developed any typologies of service-providers or service-users or the work. Categorisations developed using small samples risk creating unrepresentative stereotypes because they might 'efface the multidimensionality of lived lives and the sets of contexts, predispositions and lifestyles that combine in myriad ways to form and reform … diverse relationships' (Gabb and Fink, 2015:13). Also, my standpoint is grounded in the feminist tradition of challenging dichotomisations or further categorisations related to all aspects of living and working. Thus my cross-cultural analysis aimed to develop an alternative paradigm that could plug some of the gaps in existing feminist theory on paid domestic work. This paradigm is grounded in my respondents' (and my own) real-life experiences, but I did not limit my analysis to the most common experiences. Like the conclusions drawn by others before me (e.g. Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), my research contributes situated and partial knowledge. Still, it is knowledge that adds to, and I hope will stimulate further thinking in, what is already 'known' about paid domestic work, both in academia and beyond. At this juncture, I introduce the women whose words and silences helped me realise my research aims.

The respondents

I seemingly use normative hierarchies (see Chapter 1) in my analysis: I introduce the (privileged) service-users first and then the service-providers. I introduce the UK (White) respondents first and then the Indian respondents. I first present UK data and then the Indian data. So what does this say of my criticism of Gregson and Lowe (1994a) in Chapter 1 for using formal names for their employer sample and first names for their employee sample. They stated this was done for 'convenience', but in one sense it is about falling in the trap pointed out by Douglas, when she admonished sociologists for accepting belief systems as the final frontier of sociological explanations:

> You can recognize culture being misused in sociological explanation when you hear behaviour being explained by reference to a cultural value cherished by the actors. Enthusiasm for work (or its absence) is explained by saying that the workers subscribe or do not subscribe to the work ethic. Authority being successfully exerted is explained by a deferential culture. A difficulty in establishing consensus is explained by the value placed on individualism or independence. The submission that we make here is that any explanation by appeal to a dominant value is tautologous. It just says

again the thing that is being wondered at. Furthermore the values have not been analysed. There is no hint about where values come from or about how to explain them. These questions fall outside the common discourse but they should not fall outside sociological inquiry which needs to link a careful analysis of the values to the institutional forms. (Douglas, 2002:167)

Thus I first make clear my reasons for appearing to follow established hierarchical systems. My research is essentially challenging Western feminist orthodoxies around paid domestic work. In this, my pre-field ontological position was grounded in my personal experience of outsourcing cleaning in India and the UK, and through which I understood that it was the experiences of the White service-providers that would in the main allow me to test those orthodoxies. But to make the point effectively, as Douglas (2002) emphasised, I needed to bring in another cultural context to make visible the nuances in work practices of these service-providers. Thus the Indian data inform an essentially Western analysis. As regards the respondents, I introduced the UK service-users first in my fieldwork account because (i) as my visit to India had to fit around family commitments, I started the fieldwork in the UK and my first few positive responses came from UK academics; and (ii) thanks to current university communication practices in the UK, I found it much easier to search for and get in touch with the UK academics than the other groups and the narrative of my in-field reflections flowed better starting from the easiest to the hardest to meet and talk to (UK service-users, Indian service-users, UK service-providers, Indian service-providers). Consistency is a feature of elegant writing, and in my modest attempt to create such an account, I now introduce the service-users followed by the service-providers, while also situating my samples in relation to existing research.

The service-users

One of the 21 UK service-users (age range 37–66 years) identified as European. The rest were of White ethnicity[75] (Appendix C, Table A1). Their living arrangements varied widely. Besides dual-earner couples with (n=6) or without (n=5) dependent children, there were dual-earner couples with (n=1) and without (n=4) dependent children where the partners worked and/or lived part of the

---

[75] Two service-users identified as Australian, one as American and rest as British.

time in different geographical locations, single/divorced women with (n=2) and without (n=2) dependent children and a living-apart together (LAT) couple (n=1). There were eight professors, one reader, five senior lecturers, and four lecturers. The remaining three academics had emerita status. Thirteen were working in the social sciences and eight in the arts and humanities. Fifteen had full-time contracts, two were on 0.8 FTE[76] and one on a 0.6 FTE contract. Seven had partners who were also academics, a few partners worked in information technology (IT) and medicine, and two were retired. Two adult children were living with their parent(s). The monthly take-home income of the household as a whole varied between £1,501 to more than £4,000. One academic lived in a flat and the rest in houses with 2–5 bedrooms and 1–4 bathrooms/toilets. Some older academics (over 50 years) had been outsourcing cleaning for nearly three decades. The younger academics (under 50 years) had been outsourcing for 1–10 years. Five academics had stopped outsourcing 2–7 years ago. A few academics had recently changed service-providers for various reasons.

Owing to scant demographic details in previous studies, I could not comprehensively compare my sample with other UK research. Gregson and Lowe (1994b, 1995) purposively sampled middle-class (White) British dual-career households with women in professional/managerial occupations. They did not include other living arrangements, so my sample is more representative of the wider picture of contemporary British family units (ONS, 2013). But all their respondents seemingly employed White British cleaners and in this sense my sample (by chance[77]) largely matched theirs. Anderson (2000) did not provide demographic details of UK employers. Twelve of Cox's (1997, 2000, 2006) sample of 13 Hampstead employers were White British, but many were not doing paid work.

The UK service-providers also reported that their clients were mostly White and with heterogeneous living arrangements. Besides dual-career nuclear heterosexual families, there were single-adult households (more commonly women), single-earner couples and other economically inactive people such as elderly, retired adults, living either alone or in a couple and stay-at-home-mothers (SAHMs). Similar to Los Angeles (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), their

---

[76] Full-time equivalent.
[77] See later.

customers' socio-economic status varied from modest to affluent, with occupations ranging from medicine and law to hairdressing. Again, like Latina service-providers in Los Angeles who outsource gardening, housework and childcare to other Latino/Latinas (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), *Jessica* had outsourced cleaning when she had been a full-time but low-paid customer services adviser. *Yvonne*, whose cleaning business had rapidly expanded in the space of a year, was outsourcing her cleaning to a friend while she cleaned for her customers. Thus, the service-providers' clients' profile matched the employer profile in Jones' (2004) UK survey-based report (see Chapter 1, Table 1) as well as the profile of outsourcing couple households[78] in waves 2 and 4 of Understanding Society (Figure 2), among which the majority of those not in paid employment were aged 70 and older. The Mumsnet (2012a, 2014a,f) and Netmums' (2012) cleaning discussions[79] included posts by women working part-time and SAHMs (see also Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002), several of whom said their role was to parent and not to be a 'housewife'. Some of these might be 'ladies who lunch', the most significant group of service-users in Cox's (2006) Hampstead sample,[80] whereas others mentioned making decisions about spending money on outsourced cleaning instead of, for example, takeaways.

Figure 2: Occupational category of respondent in Understanding Society living in a couple and outsourcing cleaning
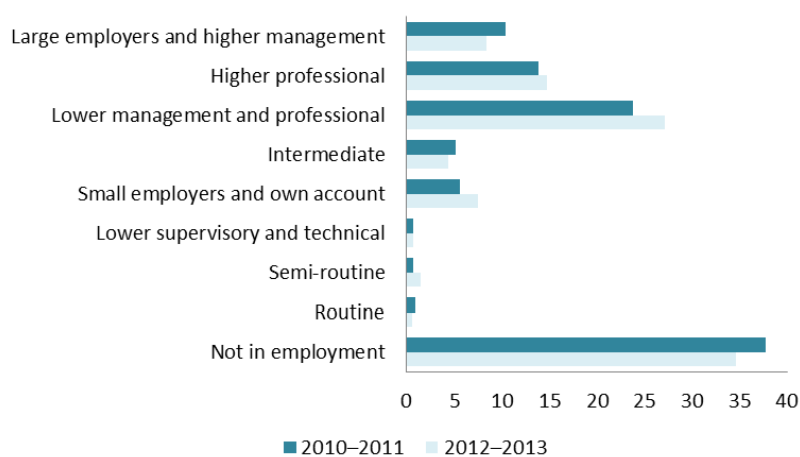
Data source: University of Essex. Institute for Social and Economic Research, NatCen Social Research. (2015). Understanding Society: Waves 1-5, 2009-2014. [data collection]. 7th Edition. UK Data Service. SN: 6614, http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6614-7.

---

[78] Unfortunately this question is not asked of singletons, which means the survey underestimates outsourcing.
[79] Appendix H provides a selection of the webpages consulted on these two websites.
[80] See also online comment by O'Neill in response to Foreman (2014).

The patchy available demographic information about households outsourcing cleaning in other Western contexts also indicates that the range of households in terms of socio-economic status is quite wide. Many elderly people (single or partnered) from across classes are outsourcing housework they find increasingly difficult to do (Bartolomei, 2010; Blackett, 2011; Devetter, 2015; Estévez-Abe and Hobson, 2015; Morel, 2015; Ozyegin and Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2008). Some American research reports equivalent or more outsourcing among non-nuclear households:

- Cornelisse-Vermaat *et al.* (2013): 32% single-adult and 10% single-parent households outsourced cleaning compared with 30% of heterosexual couples;
- Spitze (1999): households with single-adult and same-sex middle-aged and older people more likely to outsource routine and occasional domestic work;
- Zick *et al.* (1996): time-use survey showed less affluent Utahan single mothers working more hours were twice as likely to purchase housekeeping services than two-parent households with similar levels of education.

In the Netherlands, almost 25% of Dutch women who were outsourcing were single and 60% had no children at home (Tijdens *et al.*, 2003). (See also Barstad (2014) for Norway and Lutz (2011:34) for Germany.)

Regarding race/ethnicity and class, the statement 'all the employers were German' (Lutz, 2008:44) does not obviously indicate they were all also White, unless an assumption is made that a non-White citizen could never be a service-user. In the UK, women identifying as Indian/Indian British have a higher likelihood of working in the professional and managerial sectors than as cleaning service-providers (Figure 3). In my Midlands home-town, several middle-class Indians use the services of local White cleaning service-providers (and gardeners and handymen; see also Singha, 2015). Upwardly mobile African-Americans and Mexican-Americans, and blue-collar White families in the American South, where domestic labour is 'cheap', also outsource housework (Rollins, 1985; Milkman *et al.*, 1998). Middle-class Black Americans may look for non-Black service-providers because of the unfortunate history of domestic servitude in the USA (Bates, 2013). Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001), the daughter of a Chilean migrant cleaner in the USA, and her husband outsourced their cleaning to a Salvadoran woman. If Polish migrants work as cleaning service-providers in the UK, Ukrainian women migrate to Poland for the same purpose (Kindler, 2008) (see also Chapter 1).

Figure 3: Percentage of men and women identifying as Indian/Indian British, aged over 16 and in employment in the week before the 2011 census
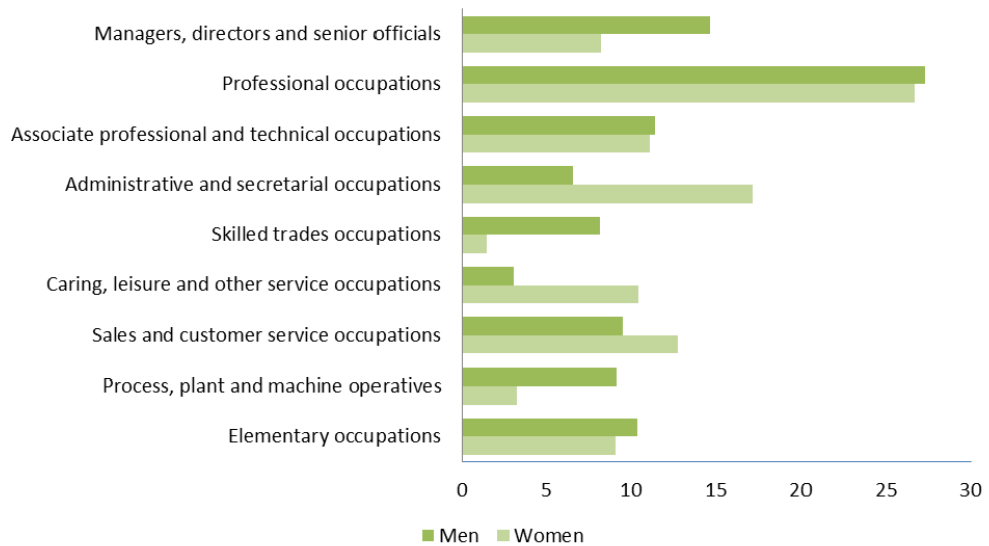
The 19 Indian academics[81] were aged 34–63 years (Appendix C, Table A2), which closely matched the age range of the UK sample. Two were currently not outsourcing cleaning. All the women queried my use of the term 'ethnicity' in the questionnaire as it is a Western construct.[82] In India there are regional/sub-regional, caste/sub-caste and religious identities. Thus, one-third did not answer the question and the rest identified as Indian nationals or by their regional/religious identity. None identified by caste.[83] Similar to the UK sample, their living arrangements varied considerably, although there were cultural differences. Current Indian living arrangements reflect traditional, regionally determined kinship and marriage norms (Uberoi, 1993/2011), as well as the modern Western-type dual-career family-type. Thus, the sample included patrilocal joint families (n=3), nuclear families with dependent children (n=7), single women living alone (n=3) or with a parent (n=2),[84] and single divorced/separated women living with a child (dependent n=1; non-dependent n=1). One married woman was living alone as her husband worked in another

---

[81] One was currently working for a quasi-governmental agency within a higher-education setting.
[82] See also footnote 42.
[83] See later.
[84] Vibha argued this was a nuclear family arrangement too, with role reversal.

city and another with her parents and child. Many of the nuclear families had been (partial[85]) joint families in the past.

All the women had full-time work contracts; one was a lecturer and the rest were professors of varying seniority. Ten were working in the social sciences and nine in the arts and humanities. One husband was also an academic, others worked in IT, law or the civil service. Two women were housewives for several years after their children were born. The total monthly take-home income of the household varied from Rs20,000–Rs50,000 (£200–£500 approximately[86]) to more than Rs100,000 (£1000 approximately). Four women lived in a flat and the rest in houses with 2–5 bedrooms and 1–5 bathrooms/toilets. At the time of the interview, current service-providers had worked for the academics for about 3 months to 20 years. All the women, including the two currently not outsourcing, had started outsourcing domestic work as soon as they had set up an independent household, or had helped in the management of the service-providers already employed by their parents or parents-in-law. Four homes were cleaned by live-in domestic workers. The remaining households had live-out service-providers. Some women changed providers more frequently than the rest and some had had the same service-provider for a long time. Owing to purposive sampling, my sample is not similar in one regard to other published samples, that is, the kinds of household that outsource cleaning. However, the Indian service-providers' customer profiles included many single-earner households besides joint, single-adult and dual-earner households, which is in line with previous research showing that household composition in India and in other non-Western countries has little bearing on outsourcing of domestic work (e.g. *Brazil*: de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010; *Honk Kong*: Constable, 2007; *India*: Dickey, 2000a,b; Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Verma and Larson, 2001; *Malaysia*: Chin, 1998; *South Africa*: King, 2007; *Taiwan*: Lan, 2006; *Tanzania*: Bujra, 2000).

Indian caste divisions are no longer constitutionally recognised but continue to play out in quotidian life (e.g. see Frøystad, 2003). Just as the politically motivated discourses about the death of class in the UK in the late

---

[85] Lata's parents-in-law had lived on the ground floor while her nuclear family occupied the first floor of a two-storey house.
[86] Google currency converter (8 July 2015). Values rounded off to nearest £100.

twentieth century were propounded by those who least experienced class discrimination (Jones, 1997), middle-class Indians often deny practising caste while continuing to do so by recasting it 'in the idiom of class' (Dickey, 2000b:467; also Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Roy, 2014b).

> in the university I find there are people, even at the higher level who very openly refer to these kind of things. We had a senior person here who would all the time say to one of the clerks '*Panditji, Panditji*'. So I said you should not say '*Panditji*' because it is a caste address and the constitution actually forbids us to do this. But this [kind of talk] '*Yeh to baniya hain* so *yeh aise hi karega*' [he is a *Baniya* so he will behave like this] ... it is done in a sporting way, they don't even realise it that they should not be saying it ... (Pratibha)

But like the five working-class academics in the UK who were outsourcing cleaning, upwardly mobile lower-caste Indians also outsource housework (Dickey, 2000b; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). The formidable politician Mayawati,[87] and Khobragade, the controversial diplomat arrested the USA in 2013 for abusing her maid, are both Dalits. In fact, users and providers more often than not have the same racial/ethnic background (e.g. *Ecuador*: De Casanova, 2013; *South Africa*: du Preez *et al.*, 2010; King, 2007; *the Philippines*: Driscoll, 2011; *Zambia*: Hansen, 1990).[88] When it is different, neither may be White (e.g. *Hong Kong*: Constable, 2007; *Malaysia*: Chin, 1998; *Taiwan*: Lan, 2006). But even then 'affluence' is not a necessary condition for outsourcing housework. As in the UK sample, socio-economic circumstances of the Indian respondents also varied. In South Africa, Black service-users include clerical, self-employed, factory and community workers (du Preez *et al.*, 2010). In sum, across socio-cultural-geographical divides, service-user status draws on the 'psychic economy of class' (Reay, 2005) or the 'structures of feeling' (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) with adoption of middle-class attitudes and enactment of middle-class ritualistic behaviours (see also De Casanova, 2013; Dickey, 2000a,b; Lawler, 2005). So who can be a service-provider?

---

[87] Talking about everyday life in an interview, Mayawati indicated she was 'finicky' about cleanliness: "'I got all the carpets removed. I make them sweep the floors thrice a day,'" she said, even as her maid walked in ...' (Aron, 2013, n.p.).
[88] My reference point here is the ONS (2015a) categorisation of race/ethnicity. Other (non-Western) countries may not recognise this system (De Casanova, 2013). I also learnt that I am Indian by 'race' only after moving to the UK.

The service-providers

Twenty-six UK respondents (aged 20–75 years, see Appendix C, Table A2) self-identified as White British,[89] and one as White Irish. Two single women in their twenties had young children, and another two lived with parent(s). The seven older single women were divorced or separated, and three had dependent children. Three lived alone and one lived with an adult daughter. Seven women were married and five had dependent children. Six women were cohabiting with a male partner (of whom four had dependent children) and three were in same-sex relationships (of whom two had dependent children). Seven women had left school at or before 16 years, 14 entered further education (two did not complete their course and one was just finishing), five had higher education qualifications and one was currently an undergraduate. Eight women were working under-the-table, 18 were operating as small businesses (see Chapter 6), and one had worked for a cleaning agency several years ago. For nine of them this work provided their main income.

About half the academics' current service-providers were 40–50 years of age. Two were in their thirties, four were in their sixties and two were over 70 years. One past-user had had service-providers in the twenties. All these service-providers except one (whose service-user, Iris, refused to answer the question) were said to be of White ethnicity. The majority were British, one was Irish, and one academic had outsourced to two Irish Traveller women who were running a cleaning business together. A few of these service-providers were in part-time further/higher education. One academic was using a cleaning agency. It is important to note though, that I did not set out to find UK academics using the services of White British service-providers in particular. Rather, in the main this is what I happened to find, which lends further credence to the observation that in the mid and northern regions of the UK, manual labour is not just done by migrants but also by local people (see Chapter 1).[90]

It is often assumed that many workers in the West are women from ethnic minority groups (see Chapter 1). Cox extrapolated from research based on

---

[89] One respondent's father was Italian.
[90] In the context of Australia, migrant domestic workers are more likely to be found in Sydney and Melbourne, which are hubs for migrant workers; elsewhere, domestics are likely to be from the 'domestic' population (Meagher, 2003:46).

London (where she found a range of ethnicities represented among cleaners) to describe a picture of 'domestic workers living and working in Britain' (2006:9; see also BBC Two, 2015b; Wills *et al.*, 2008). Yet, in Gregson and Lowe's (1994a) research, conducted in Reading and Newcastle-upon-Tyne (i.e. outside London), the sample was remarkably homogeneous and reminiscent of the stereotypical charwoman of another age: 20 White British working-class women with no qualifications and limited work opportunities, and familial caring responsibilities, living in households dependent on benefits, doing cash-in-hand work. In contrast, the nanny sample comprised younger White women with childcare qualifications from lower-middle-class backgrounds. Gregson and Lowe (1995:155–159) argued that outsourcing of different forms of domestic work was grounded in a 'class-mediated hierarchy in domestic tasks', in which the lowliest work was outsourced to the older working-class woman and childcare to a woman who was closer in status to the middle-class employer.[91] Thus, when I went into the field, I was essentially expecting to meet such service-providers. The women I eventually interviewed surprised me in several ways. At the same time, I often heard the UK academics pronounce their cleaning service-providers as 'exceptional': *she* could hold an intelligent conversation, appeared stylish and capable of finding other work, and declared *her* earnings.

> she's an interesting person. She has chosen cleaning, because umm, she hates having bosses, she hates working in a corporate environment, she hates the politics of work, the workplace … when I was having real trouble at work, she was a source of enormous wisdom about these sorts of intolerable situations … and that's when she told me all about this side of her life … And she removed herself from it. So she's … I think, interesting. (Caitlin)

Evie also thought *she* was unusual because of her middle-class background and education:

---

[91] In a similar vein, the post-war employment conditions of domestic work in Germany and Austria have been shaped by an underlying assumption that this work – the 'mini-job' (part-time work with many legal restrictions and fewer regulations that work in favour of the employer rather than the employee) – will attract a particular type of woman: the housewife who works for pin money rather than a livelihood and social protections or an older women supplementing her (meagre) pension (Lutz, 2011:33; Shire, 2015:196).

in my experience of my mum's cleaners, they aren't usually highly educated or intelligent … and that's my experience. Or they're very young, and they're obviously either didn't do A levels or go to university and they haven't got anything else they would, somebody would employ them to do. … (*Evie*)

Yet two more respondents were ex-teachers. Internet posts also mentioned 'glamorous' cleaners and bank-managers-turned-cleaners (see Mumsnet, 2013a,b) and indicated that users and providers could share class identity:

My cleaner is someone I have known all my life, her husband has a professional job, her dad worked with my dad, she lived in the same esate as me growing up and and she now lives in the next street to me in an identical house. The sweeping generalisations about class etc are ridiculous. (Mumsnet, 2013a)

Both service-providers and service-users in my sample also mentioned paid cleaning done by or for friends, neighbours and family members. Two service-users had male service-providers, both of whom were reported to be middle-aged White British men. *Zoe's* husband started working with her following a redundancy. Similar partnerships were mentioned in internet discussions (Netmums, 2009–2014).[92] As wider research on low-wage occupations and UK census data challenges assumptions (see Chapter 1) and small qualitative samples are not representative of larger populations, I also examined survey data to understand how 'exceptional' was my sample.

Statistical estimates of paid domestic workers are deemed inaccurate due to many methodological challenges (ILO, 2013), such as, undeclared workers (Cox, 2006; Gavanas, 2010) and not counting domestic cleaners as a distinct occupational category (Romero, 2002). For instance, in Sweden, between 1960 and 1990, national statistical counts of domestic workers fell from 68,800 to two (Milkman *et al.*, 1998). The 2013 ILO report has no data for Sweden. Recent academic research, in contrast, reveals a thriving in/formal industry in Sweden, with undocumented workers and over 160 companies (Bowman and Cole, 2014:191; Gavanas, 2010). However, some available statistics are useful for examining trends (Abrantes, 2014b; ILO, 2013; Wills *et al.*, 2008), including

---

[92] Employees of a Portuguese cleaning agency committed to gender-balanced employment practices always work in teams of two, one man and one woman (Abrantes, 2014a).

ethnic profiles. A European-level analysis and the search strategy for the LFS analysis presented below is provided in Appendix F.

Regional disaggregation of female participants with occupation 'domestics/cleaners' entering the LFS between January 2011 and March 2015 showed that in London these women were mostly White Eastern European or non-White British, but in the rest of the UK, they were more likely to be White British (Figure 4). A similar situation exists in Belgium, where three-quarters of domestic workers in the Brussels region are foreign but elsewhere in the country, a similar proportion are Belgian (Gerard *et al.*, 2012, cited in Pérez and Stallaert, 2016:157).

Figure 4: Numbers of women working as domestics/cleaners in the UK by region (Labour Force Survey wave 1 samples for all quarters from January–March 2011 to January–March 2015, n=1,034)
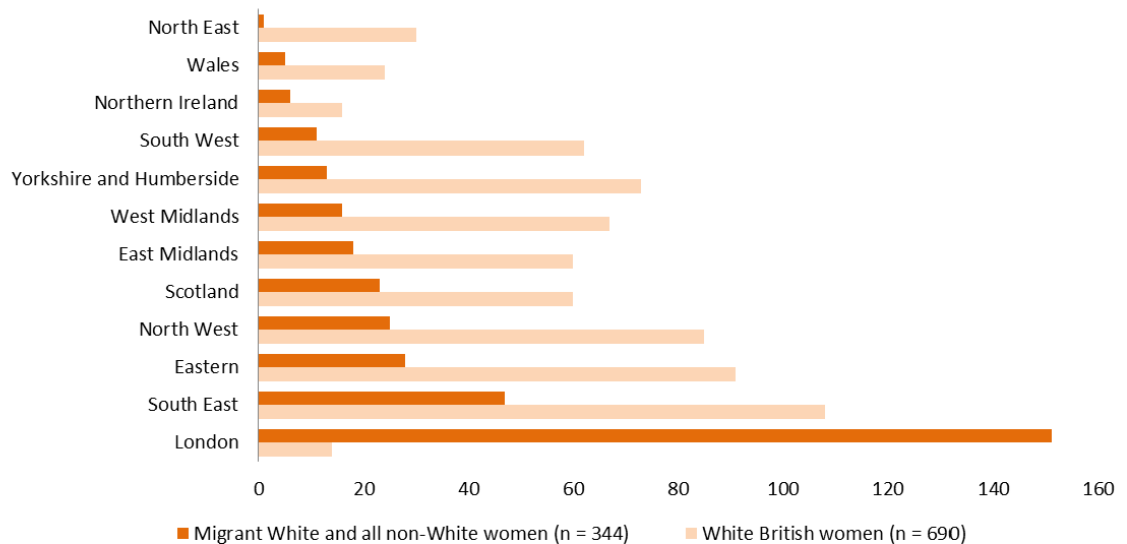
Data source: Office for National Statistics, April 2015.

A third of the LFS sample of female domestics/cleaners were self-employed,[93] of whom two-thirds were White British (66%). My sample had considerably more younger women (20–39 years; Figure 5a) and married/co-habiting women with dependent children (Figure 5b) than this LFS cohort of self-employed White British domestics/cleaners. The latter had considerably more women in partnerships with no children. Gregson and Lowe's sample (1994a) had even fewer cleaners under 40 years (15%) and a higher proportion aged 61–70 years

---

[93] '[S]elf-employed (or "own account") workers: who neither buy labour nor sell their labour to others' (ONS, 2010b:10).

(30%); the proportion of middle-aged women was most similar in the three samples (Figure 5a, Gregson and Lowe: 55%). Seven of the 11 partnered women

Figure 5: Demographic comparison of the UK service-providers (n=26)* with the LFS sample of White British female self-employed cleaners/domestics (n=214): (a) age group and (b) family unit
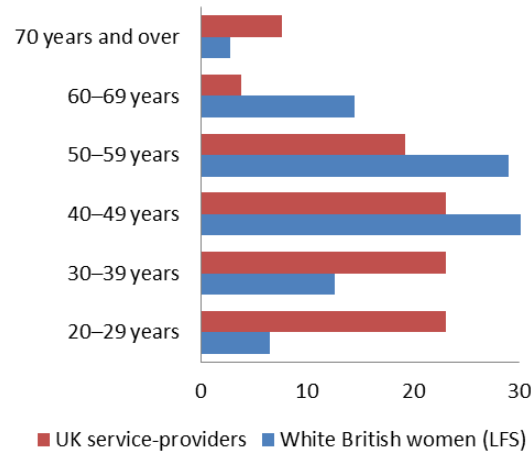
(a)
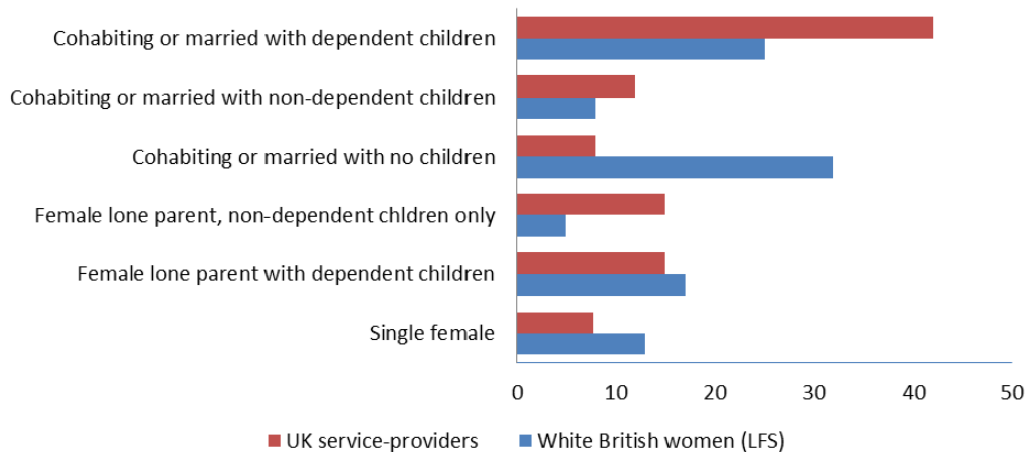
(b)

Numbers are percentages.
*_Georgia_ is excluded from these comparisons because she was no longer working as a cleaning service-provider.
LFS sample data source: Office for National Statistics, 2015.

with dependent children in my sample were under 39 years, my largest age group, and I found most of these women via their internet adverts. Also, 28% of the LFS women but only 4% of my respondents had no qualifications,[94] and only

---

[94] Levels of education as defined in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (Accredited Qualifications, 2012).

14% of the former but 46% of my respondents had level 3 qualifications (Figure 6), and again most of these women were among those contacted via the internet. (Only 15% of Gregson and Lowe's (1994a) sample had left school at 16+ years, the rest having left earlier.) In other UK studies, employees were mostly found through their employers (Cox, 2000, 2006; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a); even elsewhere I did not come across any research using the internet as a search method.

Figure 6: Comparison of the education levels of the study respondents (n=26*) and White British women working as self-employed domestics/ cleaners (Labour Force Survey, January–March 2011 to January–March 2015; n=204)
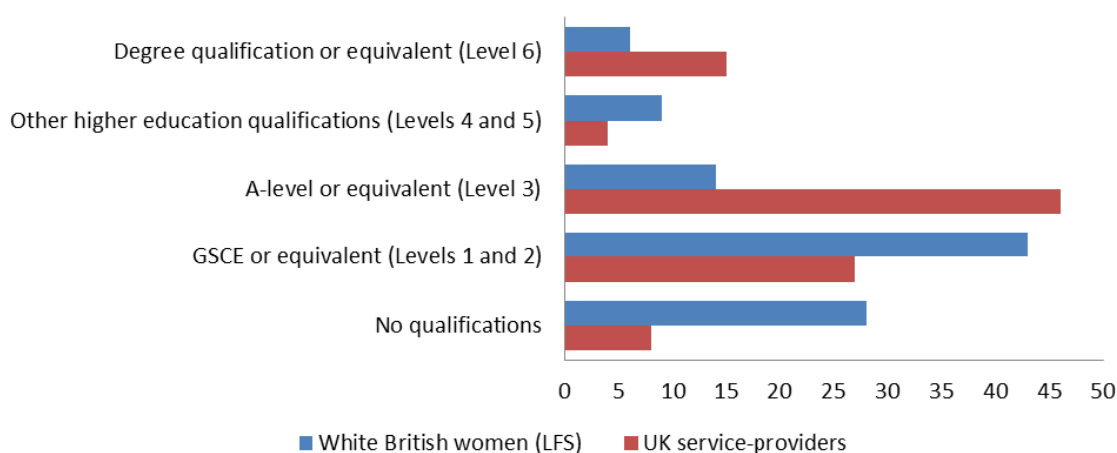
Numbers are percentages.

Georgia is excluded from this analysis as she was no longer working as a cleaning service-provider.

LFS sample number takes into account some missing data (hence lower than total in Figure 5).

LFS sample data source: Office for National Statistics, 2015.

The LFS sample is selected to be representative of the whole UK population and hence uses, for instance, addresses from the Postcode Address File in England (ONS, 2011). Hence the differences between my sample and the LFS and previous studies are most likely due to differences in sampling procedures, since younger workers might have been more likely to use the internet for marketing their services.

Most of my sample were working legally, particular those with level 3 qualifications (Figure 7). The LFS does not collect information on tax returns for the self-employed (Milburn, 2015b), so the proportion working legally is not known. Assuming many domestics/cleaners do undeclared work, particularly those with no qualifications (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a), the main 'exceptional' characteristic of my sample is a relatively higher educational level and I discuss

its significance in Chapter 6. Overall though, this limited comparative analysis questions common understandings (e.g. see BBC Two, 2015b) of the demographics of contemporary UK domestic cleaning service-providers.

Figure 7: Education level of the cleaning service-providers (n=26*) declaring and not declaring their incomes
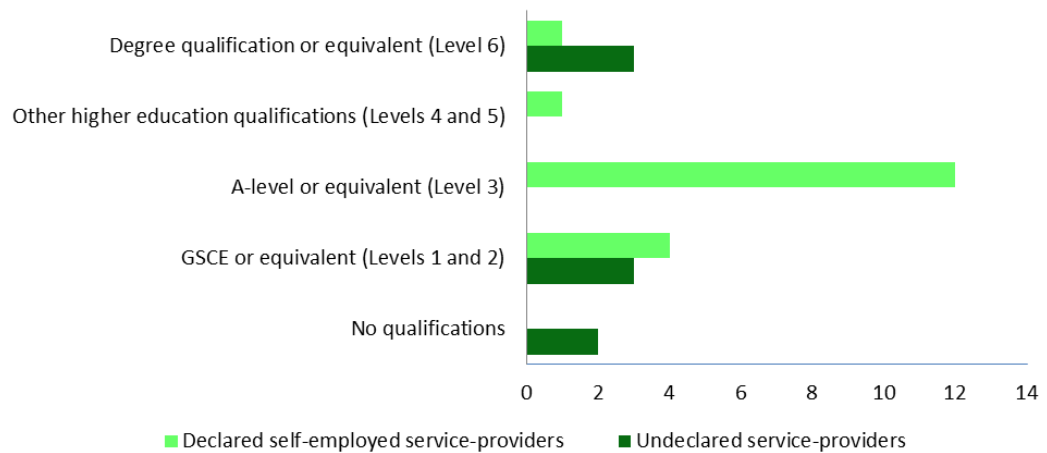
Georgia is excluded from this analysis as she was no longer working as a cleaning service-provider.

In contrast, most of the 24 Indian service-providers were illiterate; three women had studied up to class 5–8 (UK years 6–9). Most of them did not know their exact age, but they had a rough idea of age at marriage[95] and the approximate years of marriage, making them between 24 years and 57 years of age (Appendix C, Table A4). Five women were born within the area (three to migrant parents), one was a Nepalese migrant, and the rest were all in-country migrants from rural north-western India. These women often identified themselves in terms of their caste/sub-caste (political correctness is a game devised by the privileged, those affected by the systems of social injustice might not wish to play it). On average they had more children than all the other three groups,[96] and at a much younger age. Many older children, particularly sons, still lived with them. Three women were widowed and one had married again. Most married women were living in nuclear families although they had lived in patrilocal joint families in their village

---

[95] Marriage remains a mainstay of life in many Indian communities (Desai *et al.*, 2010; Uberoi, 1993/2011). Fourteen women had married between 8 and 14 years and the rest between 15 and 17 years of age.
[96] Most younger women were aware of birth control and many had undergone sterilisation or had an intrauterine device, but its timing was complicated by continued societal pressures to produce male children.

of origin. The women who had been married very young had continued living in their natal homes for some years before joining their husband's family, a common traditional practice associated with child marriage. Two women had a brother-in-law staying with them, one local woman lived in an extended family (separate rooms for each nuclear family within the same compound), and two women's husbands were living and working in another town. One woman had recently separated from her alcoholic/paedophilic husband with support from a women's organisation and was living with her mother.

Seven women did not live out, nor were they 'live-in' workers as commonly understood (single worker living with the employer's family). They lived with their families in rented outhouses in the backyards of middle-class properties. While they worked in the main house, their husbands worked elsewhere.[97] Three of these women also worked for other service-users and some landlords also employed other live-in or live-out workers. Such properties often have a back entrance opening into a service-alley. Service-providers and their families socialise in the alleyways, which was where I interviewed them. I have included these women as their cumulative experiences sit between those of the live-in and live-out workers, and I have used the term 'part-live-out' to describe their living arrangement *vis-à-vis* the service-user. Similar arrangements have been reported in other parts of India (e.g. Neetha, 2009; Raghuram, 1999; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). Paid domestic work in India is largely carried out within the informal economy[98] and predictably, all the women in my sample were informal workers. Seven of my respondents were currently main breadwinners.

The academics' current service-providers were also approximately 23–60 years old, and mostly from rural north-western India and Nepal. The majority were in their forties and fifties, hence on average slightly older than the women I interviewed. Although the academics often outsourced housework to more than one service provider, and a few had part-live-out workers, cleaning was more commonly outsourced to a live-out worker. Other characteristics, such as age at

---

[97] The outhouse may be also rented in exchange for the husband's work, either inside the main house or in the garden. The wife then may not work, or work for the landlord or elsewhere.
[98] The Indian informal economy comprises 'all the activity generating work and employment that is not registered and administered by public regulation' (NCEUS, 2008:12).

marriage, number of children and husband's work status were similar to my sample of service-providers. The main difference was that a few academics had male domestic helpers who did all or part of the cleaning work (Appendix D, Table A5; see also Raghuram (2001) and Chapter 5 for discussion on feminisation of domestic work).

In contrast to the UK sample, the profiles of my Indian sample were largely similar to those of participants in other Indian studies, including that they were mostly married women doing this work 'for their children' (e.g. Mattila, 2011; Neetha, 2004, 2009; Neetha and Palriwala, 2011; Raghuram, 1999; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Singh, 2001; Singh, 2007; see also Chapter 6). This is because three-quarters of the contemporary Indian working population is deemed poor and vulnerable. These workers live just above the official poverty line, overwhelmingly belong to scheduled castes/tribes or 'other backward castes'[99] or are Muslims, are illiterate or only educated to primary level, often suffer from malnutrition and have seen 'very little expansion of their employment and enhancement in their earning capacity', with no job, income or social securities and benefits at their disposal (NCEUS, 2009:iii–iv). My sample included a few higher-caste women, which is also in line with previous studies, as despite larger trends, economic status *intersects* with caste (Dickey, 2000b, Raghuram, 2001, Singh, 2001). There is also occupational segregation within domestic work. Men from the higher castes often work as cooks, cleaning is more likely to be done by a lower-caste person (Neetha, 2008; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Singh, 2001).

As regards migration history, rural development projects – a marriage between persisting traditional, oppressive feudalistic practices and 'development' in which both public and private corporatisation of land, rivers and other natural resources are implicated in the 'dowry' – have led to the loss of local sources of work for many people, who now form a vast underclass of poor and vulnerable in-country 'footloose' migrants in urban areas (Bremen, 2013; Neetha, 2004; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). Thus, in contrast to the transnational patterns of female migration that lie at the centre of the controversies surrounding contemporary paid domestic work in the West (see Chapter 1), Indian in-country migration often involves whole families (Raghuram, 1999), in which husbands

---

[99] This term is part of official Indian social classifications (see NCEUS, 2008, 2009).

first might migrate alone and families follow later. Once in the city and eager to provide their children a good education, the women either start working immediately or remain housewives until the strain of living on a single low wage or no wage[100] becomes too much (Bharati and Tandon Mehrotra, 2008; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Sen and Sengupta, 2012).

All these women, the women I expectedly or unexpectedly found 'out there', made me think hard about how I would theorise their experiences of cleaning work.

Concluding remarks

The demographic analysis in this chapter corresponds with the notion that class- or resources-based inequalities mediate the racial/caste inequalities in domestic work (Dickey, 2000b; Milkman *et al.*, 1998) (see Chapter 1). This mediation, however, is complicated, occurring in the intersections between the various axes of inequality. What is its significance for academic understandings of outsourced domestic cleaning? I will attempt to answer this question through the analyses of my findings presented in Chapters 3–7. I start by analysing in Chapter 3 the reasons underlying current demand for paid domestic work, and their implications for feminist concerns around inequalities both between the genders and between women.

---

[100] For example if the husband has turned to substance abuse (see Chapter 6).

Chapter 3   The politics of outsourcing cleaning in (middle-class) households

In the spring of 2014, I spent a night in a hostel dormitory before meeting a service-provider who lived several miles away. There I met Doreen,* a White British nurse in her mid-forties. We talked about my PhD, and I asked her what she thought about outsourcing cleaning, expecting her to say she had never done it. Instead, she looked at me thoughtfully and narrated the following story. She was single and had a working-class background. Some years ago, her sister suggested Doreen should outsource cleaning as she was not good at it. Doreen started outsourcing to a friend and then a migrant service-provider. After two years, when the service-provider left due to a family emergency, Doreen found out she had been an undocumented worker. This discovery made Doreen reluctant to outsource again, and her house was back in the state her sister had despaired about.

Around the time when Doreen stopped outsourcing, her sister, a mother of two young children, was on treatment for breast cancer, which made her quite unwell. Her husband was working long hours to keep the household going, so they outsourced their cleaning. Sadly Doreen's sister died. Her brother-in-law continued outsourcing cleaning as he juggled bringing up two young children with a full-time job. Doreen's parents, both in their eighties, moved closer to help, but Doreen's mother's eyesight was deteriorating and their own house was showing signs of neglect. Doreen's parents were proud of their working-class roots and therefore she said they would not think of outsourcing cleaning. Based on her own experience, Doreen could clearly see a need for it, however, she did not dare suggest it.

*Pseudonym.

As feminists ponder the contemporary care crisis, outsourcing of domestic work is thriving (see Chapters 1 and 2). No novel reasons for outsourcing housework emerged in my research, but my analytical approach problematises some broad understandings about demand for it. I draw on three theoretical frameworks – Jackson (2011), Pollert (1996) and Ray and Qayum (2009/2010; see Chapter 1) – all of which slot in with Douglas's (1986/1987) cross-cultural argument that the way people think is constrained by socially created and 'naturalised' institutionalised thinking styles.

Jackson's (2011) feminist critique of Beck and Giddens' reflexive projects builds on Mead's (1934) thesis: to fully comprehend how individual selves are constituted, material and cultural dimensions of social life require simultaneous attention. That is, self-reflexivity,[101] 'the space in which selves are constituted' and 'local and particular practices and the meanings associated with them' are always-already bounded by overarching material structures and social institutions whose effects 'transcend everyday realities' (Jackson, 2011:16). Overlooking these foundations of everyday social life leads to erroneous understandings of the capability of human agency to fashion a fully 'being and doing' Self, or, in the context of my research, middle-class women's ability to achieve liberation by outsourcing cleaning. For a nuanced analysis of reflexive agency and structure, I use Jackson's notion of reflexivity within Pollert's historical materialist analysis framework, where Pollert argues the 'process of gendering takes places *inside* class relations' (1996:640, original emphasis). A materialist analysis allowed teasing out the contradictions and tensions between the two dimensions of the social (agency and structure) in a social process that is simultaneously classed and gendered, as well as unpicking how agency manifests as 'compliance, consent or resistance' (Pollert, 1996:648).

Before proceeding further, I also draw attention to interpretation of the quantitative research mapping the modern demand for outsourced cleaning. Statistical modelling tests associations between outsourcing and utilitarian variables, such as resources, time availability, work-hours, and/or social attitudes. However, the survey questions underpinning such statistical exercises may be presumptuous and ambiguous. For example, the Australian Negotiating

---

[101] The 'capacity for self-awareness and reflection on one's own actions and experience' (Walters and Whitehouse, 2012:1121).

the Life Course: Gender, Mobility and Career Trajectories survey (Baxter *et al.*, 2009) and the UK's Understanding Society (University of Essex, 2015) ask questions on housework only to couples, erasing experiences of people such as Doreen. The answer choice 'paid worker only' in Understanding Society overlooks that householders outsourcing housework might still be doing some of that work themselves. Also, how significant are small statistical differences? A study using data from the Dutch Time Competition Survey concluded:

> [I]f men work at home, this increases the use and hours of domestic help. Men may prefer to be there to monitor the housekeeper. Women's working at home has no effect, perhaps due to the uncomfortable feeling they may experience if they are at home while someone else is doing the cleaning. (de Ruijter and van der Lippe, 2007:221)

This sweeping inference was based on a difference of one hour per month in the time spent by cleaners in dual-earner households with male and female home-based workers (19.91 and 18.89 hours, respectively). Standard deviations and ranges were not provided. The Tobit coefficient was significant at 1% level in the regression model only for men, and the model only explained 14% (R^2) of the variance. In my research, many partnered UK academics said their male partner preferred *not* being around when the service-provider came.

I start by considering the 'need' for outsourcing house-cleaning. Next I examine the claims that it stalls the domestic gender revolution and enhances middle-class women's career progression at the cost of continued oppression of domestic workers (see Chapter 1). I conclude by arguing that the root of the problem more likely lies in cultural assumptions around work than in the associated practices.

Outsourcing cleaning: a matter of affluent symbolism, need or choice

One reason for outsourcing housework is disability. After a six-year gap, Pauline outsourced cleaning when she hurt her back and could not use the vacuum cleaner. Learning difficulties can also make cleaning challenging.

> We do … some with special needs. Because of that, he doesn't actually work, but he needs a cleaner as he doesn't know how to do it himself. So it's more like a necessity for him. (*Zoe*)

Spitze (1999) and Baxter *et al.* (2009) found poor health increased the likelihood of outsourcing but Cornelisse-Vermaat *et al.* (2013) reported no association. Doreen's mother's situation, however – an age-related decrease in ability to do housework – is increasingly noted (Bittman *et al.*, 1999; Devetter, 2015; Lutz, 2008; Stacey, 2005; Triandafyllidou, 2013). Libby's grandmother had come a 'full circle': she had done domestic service in her youth and was now outsourcing cleaning. So was Imogen's mother. Over half the UK service-providers had older clients, who were mostly single women. Gendered feminist analyses argue that elderly people's increasing need for paid domestic help is part of the 'care-deficit' associated with (middle-class) women's move into paid work (Bittman *et al.*, 1999; Lutz, 2008; Stacey, 2005; Triandafyllidou, 2013). In India, middle-class households with housewives also outsource domestic work (e.g. see Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010), as happens elsewhere (*UK*: Cox, 2006; *Brazil*: de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010; *USA*: Romero, 2002; Chapter 2).

Nevertheless, most academics said outsourcing cleaning was easily affordable, regardless of household composition, although UK academics tended not to openly talk about it.

> I don't think people, women academics talk about it … you kind of find out in passing, after you've known somebody for a number of years, that they have help. … and then when I realised some more junior female colleagues of mine had cleaners, I thought … it's not a status thing, they made a sensible decision … I look at the work and I think 'How could you possibly do all of this, be good at it and be good at home?', What's, what's going on? These are huge, huge jobs. Yeah! I look at them and think, smart women, me dumb! Who else do you get in? And do you do your own gardening, and what about the ironing? … Tell me you get the ironing done as well! (Janet)

This academic feminist discomfort around discussion of their own domestic arrangements (Romero, 2002) is rooted in gendered theorisations of paid domestic work (Bowman and Cole, 2009:160). Hondagneu-Sotelo's (2001) respondents, drawn from the wider middle-class, indicated that having help could be seen as putting oneself a notch above one's colleagues and friends. Indeed, many internet posts expressed disbelief that 'ordinary' people could outsource cleaning. Having a cleaner meant being rich, living in 'big' houses, or having 'significant' disposable incomes (Netmums, 2012); otherwise, 'don't see how can a cleaner can be justifiably afforded' (Mumsnet, 2014f). Were the

academics all 'rich'? Renee, who had outsourced cleaning briefly, had felt guilty partly because 'there's also the thought that they probably themselves couldn't afford to use a cleaner'. But two service-providers had themselves outsourced cleaning (see Chapter 2). While working as an undercover agency cleaner, Ehrenreich observed that although not all client households appeared affluent, the team leader asserted, 'If we're cleaning their house, they're wealthy' (2002/2010:95). Sarti (2008) argues the recent increase in supply fuelled by migrant domestic workers willing to work for lower fees is creating demand among less affluent sections of Western societies. Yet, practically all my UK respondents had White British service-providers (see Chapter 2), and British historical analyses show demand was never circumscribed (see Chapter 1). Five older UK academics and pilot interviewees had grown up in 'average' middle-class households that outsourced cleaning.

> I didn't grow up in a rich or even well-off household, no, money was tight when I was growing up. But the cleaning lady was just seen as part of, you know, necessity if you like ... I mean obviously if things got very tight, my mum would've cleaned the house herself ...'. (Maisie, pilot interviewee)

Some UK academics and internet posters (Mumsnet, 2012a, 2014a,f; Netmums, 2012) dipped in and out of outsourcing in different life-stages.

> I've had cleaners when I've ... recognised particular needs myself ... there were points when I realised that if the house didn't look reasonable when I came home ... it added to my stress levels. So I think the first cleaner I had was in the period after I had my first child ... (Naomi)

Harriet, whose childhood had included 'the daily', had outsourced when her life had been 'work-based'. On nearing retirement she realised work was not leading to self-actualisation. She reduced her work-hours for a 'home-based' life, which included finding pleasure in looking after her house herself. *Sophie* preferred to work for people 'needing' her services as opposed to those 'wanting' a cleaner. What is socially legitimate need then? Devetter (2015) distinguished between 'genuine need' of elderly people such as Doreen's parents and 'need-as-luxury' of time-poor, dual-earner middle-class households. But *Sophie* included these latter households in her definition of 'need'. She interpreted 'need-as-luxury' as customers lounging around while she worked.

> *Sophie*: I perhaps like somebody who *needs* you more than *wants* you …
> Somebody that needs a cleaner rather than just fancies one because it's a
> trend! … that's my ideal person that perhaps … couldn't do it themselves …
>
> Lotika: So when you say they couldn't do it themselves, now that means
> disability, but what about someone who can't do it because they're busy …
>
> *Sophie*: … that probably falls into that same bracket because they just can't
> do it because they don't have the time rather than – in the past I've seen
> people just sitting on the computer shopping while you are [cleaning], you
> know, those type of people could do it themselves really.

'Those type of people' might include SAHMs who outsource cleaning because they
find it boring (Mumsnet, 2012a, 2014a,f; Netmums, 2012). Libby, Maggie and
other internet posts, however, also alluded to outsourced cleaning as a 'luxury' in
the sense of a 'treat': such as meals out, massages, handbags, alcohol, clubbing.

> the way I explain it, it's my luxury. Lots of people drink more alcohol than I
> do, or they buy designer clothes, which I don't do. To me, having my cleaner,
> she is my luxury … because she's … she's a real part of my … support
> networks … (Libby)

Colombo (2007:221) reported 'ordinary' middle-class families making 'sacrifices'
for temporary domestic help as and when needed. Is this also 'need-as-luxury' as
described by *Sophie*? As Libby notes, her 'luxury' was part of a much wider social
need: a single mother, she also drew on her parents for childcare help. Indeed, it
cannot be assumed that lower proportions of single-parent/childless families
among samples of outsourcing households (e.g. Aalto and Varjonen, 2007; van
der Lippe *et al.*, 2004) means such households mostly do not need help (Milkman
et al., 1998). The absence of partners in single-mother households can increase
(Nelson, 2004) rather than reduce (Hartmann, 1981; van der Lippe *et al.*, 2004)
housework for the women. Those with fewer resources may accept lower
standards of housework or ask children or relatives to help more (Nelson, 2004).
Single mothers, even middle-class ones such as Libby, draw on 'repertory
families', broad-based networks of unpaid domestic support (Hertz and Ferguson,
1997), as do some dual-earner households (Jones, 2003; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez
and Brites, 2014; Metcalfe, 2013; Radcliffe and Cassell, 2013; Tijdens *et al.*,
2003). This arrangement also creates more work – for building and maintaining
relationships and reciprocating in times of others' need (Nelson, 2004; Radcliffe

and Cassell, 2013). Some people who are not outsourcing state they would if they had enough resources (Jones, 2004; Milkman *et al.*, 1998:502; Nelson, 2004; also Mumsnet, 2013a).

> I would say it's probably about 40% are weekly and the rest are what I call fortnightlies, and we do the odd monthly as well. The monthlies tend to be people on a budget who can't afford it every week. (*Zoe*)

But what does affordability mean in relation to outsourced cleaning? Choosing the answer 'cannot afford it' in surveys may have deeper meanings (Windebank, 2010). Misgivings about competence and the legitimacy of commodification (Baxter *et al.*, 2009; de Ruijter *et al.*, 2003; Windebank, 2010), or actually liking cleaning (van der Lippe *et al.*, 2013), may confound the positive correlation between outsourcing and resources reported elsewhere. A UK-wide survey found 42% of about 500 people were uncomfortable with outsourcing domestic work (Jones, 2004). Working-class women in north-east England may not outsource because in that culture, a respectable woman always presents a clean and tidy home to others, including a cleaner (Metcalfe, 2013).

Some research that assumes cleaning service-providers replace 'her' labour demonstrates a link between outsourcing in dual-earner households and women's earnings (Gatrell, 2008;[102] Stancanelli and Stratton, 2010; Treas and de Ruijter, 2008; Wing, 1994). But other research refutes such a link (Cornelisse-Vermaat *et al.*, 2013; Devetter, 2015; Zick *et al.*, 1996); women who are primary earners may be less likely to outsource as domestic gender performance becomes important for reasserting their femininity (Tijdens *et al.*, 2003). Janet argued that her husband paid their cleaning agency because they were replacing his missing labour. Almost all the other partnered UK academics said it was a joint expense.

In India, on the one hand, regardless of women's work status, households with few resources will still try outsourcing tasks considered symbolically polluting (washing up, cleaning) (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; personal observations). On the other hand, a colonial form of status reproduction (Roy, 2014b[103]) is not directly linked to affluence. Public service/state officials are

---

[102] Gatrell cites Gregson and Lowe (1994a) as part of the evidence, however, they claimed a link with women's earnings only for childcare expenses; they do not state whose wages paid for the cleaner (see pp. 207–230).
[103] See Chin (1998) for a comparable situation in Malaysia.

assigned domestics, gardeners and chauffeurs as perks of the job (indiatoday.in, 2014).[104] At the highest levels of the judiciary the practice continues beyond the grave. The colonial discourse is clear in Ritika's explanation of why, she, a single woman, and her mother, had a part-live-out male servant paid by the state:

> they are given officially to us by my [late] father's office … so … they get a salary from the *sarkar* … you'll have to understand that judiciary is in some ways very spoilt … because what probably happens is [that] even after they retire they get … commissions and some re-employment … so then they have people anyway. I guess they sat together and decided that even after that, [since] you are used to them, might as well [continue] …

I did not ask the Indian academics who paid for outsourcing. As maintaining distance from manual labour is a routine part of Indian middle-class status production (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) the idea of the domestic worker replacing 'her' labour does not arise (I discuss this in more detail later).

In sum, my findings show the relationship between affluence/status and outsourced cleaning today is not straightforward, similar to past times (see Chapter 1). Certainly, keeping up with the Joneses is an enduring social theme in which middle-classness is highly valued (Skeggs, 1997/2002). But this does not necessarily entail affluence. du Preez *et al.* (2010) proposed that a 'richer/poorer–poorest' matrix more adequately represents the user–provider economic relationship in South Africa than a 'richer–poorer' matrix because some service-users in their sample were from low-income groups. This matrix is also applicable in India. In addition, my findings show that even in the UK, a 'richer–poorer' matrix is not universally applicable. A 'richer/poorer–poorer' matrix is also evident because several factors are implicated in people's decisions about outsourcing.[105] A popular notion is that middle-class men and women avoid confrontation around housework by outsourcing cleaning.

---

[104] Some officials may hire additional help privately (personal observations).
[105] Also in decisions about becoming a cleaning service-provider (see Chapter 6).

Outsourcing cleaning as a solution for gender inequities and relationship conflict

> We had a cleaner for years, then had to stop as we were skint, then have just managed to get her in again. We call her 'The Sainted Mary'. We LOVE LOVE her. She has saved my sanity and my marriage. ... We don't go out very often, and it is the best money I spend each month. (Mumsnet, 2014a)

Cleaner-as-marriage-saviour is used as a selling point by some Western cleaning agencies (e.g. Alisa, 2008; Marriage Savers Calgary Cleaning Services, 2016; Two Maids and a Mop, 2006) and self-help guides (e.g. Sherman, 2000). Marriage counsellors also might advise couples similarly for resolving housework conflicts (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010). Some blame for the problem is laid at the door of neoliberal knowledge-work regimes. Boundaryless work patterns do not facilitate behaviour changes in middle-class men towards sharing of the least-desirable work (Cox, 2006; Collins, 2007; Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Usdansky, 2011). Other research points to middle-class women's (un)reflexive capitulation to cultural norms that still define household management as their work, in part by characterising men as domestically incompetent (Walters and Whitehouse, 2012). Either way, the consequent inequitable division of housework can lead to relationship breakdown (Walker *et al.*, 2010). The perception of cleaner-as-marriage-saviour thus might appear irresistible to an otherwise 'egalitarian' dual-career couple. This rosy capitalist construction of paid domestic work concerns many feminists: the resultant 'equanimity' in the middle-class household re-entrenches gender (and race/class) inequalities (Anderson, 2000; Chin, 1998; Constable, 2007; Crompton, 2006:198; Devetter, 2015; Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; Ostrander, 1987). My findings, however, reveal flaws in both arguments. I start by unpacking the politics of overall sharing/division of housework, followed by sharing/division of different aspects of cleaning.

Sharing/division of housework and cleaning in particular

> It's not feminist if I do the cleaning and he doesn't (Beverley)

The domestic practices of ten of the 15 partnered UK academics reflected wider Western trends – most partnered women still do more of the routine housework (Crompton and Lyonette, 2008, 2011; Gatrell, 2004, 2008; Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard, 2010; Lyonette and Crompton, 2015; Treas and Drobnic, 2010;

Walters and Whitehouse, 2012). For five women (four were over 50 years), the feminist self walked one step behind on their way home. They accepted their male partners as 'men of their times', took primary responsibility for housework with division easier to manage than sharing, and outsourced cleaning when they needed help:

> I think it's very difficult to apportion that up equally down the middle … one or the other of you has to be the prime carer. … I do think it's difficult for men and women to share equally the decision-making, the responsibility … I'm not saying that shouldn't happen, … but I think in practice it rarely does … if I see a problem, I look to how it can be solved rather than worrying about, you know, whose problem it is. … I felt that my husband was not more concerned about his career than his children, but that he saw the ability to provide for his family as being brilliant at work. … it's never been a case of that I've felt that I've had the bulk of everything to do because he's lazy and can't be bothered to work. (Gayle)

For the other five women, of whom four were under 50 years, the feminist self aspired to the ideology of domestic equality, but was unable to 'achieve' it. To avoid a gendered division of labour, which would have been experienced as oppressive, they outsourced cleaning:

> but I said the difficulty for me … is that if I'm going to be doing the cleaning, that's not very feminist either [because] there's not a shared distribution of labour between us. So … we got a cleaner when we didn't have any children and part of the reason is to take that out of the relationship … Cause it became an issue, became a kind of resentment and a contentious – why am I doing all this? And you're not doing this, that helped to solve that problem … If this is going to facilitate a happier marriage, relationship and household then it does seem to be money well spent. (Beverley)

Are Gayle and Beverley's accounts different justifications for essentially the same issue: husbands' avoidance of housework because of gender privilege? Further analysis precluded a straightforward 'yes' response. Despite Beverley's hope of levelling her relationship by outsourcing cleaning, the distribution of routine household labour remained gendered (Figure 8). It emerged that Beverley's husband did some housework, but *not* when Beverley wanted it done. He was not meeting her standards.

And that's the main thing between us is that he will do things, but it's not in the timeframe, and that's the discussion we always have … like last night he did all the cleaning up and putting on the dishwasher. He will do things but … not necessarily to the standard that I have or in the time that I want to do it. (Beverley)

Figure 8: The bars represent the proportion of time, as reported at the time of data collection by Beverley, that each task* was done by Beverley or her husband or a service-provider
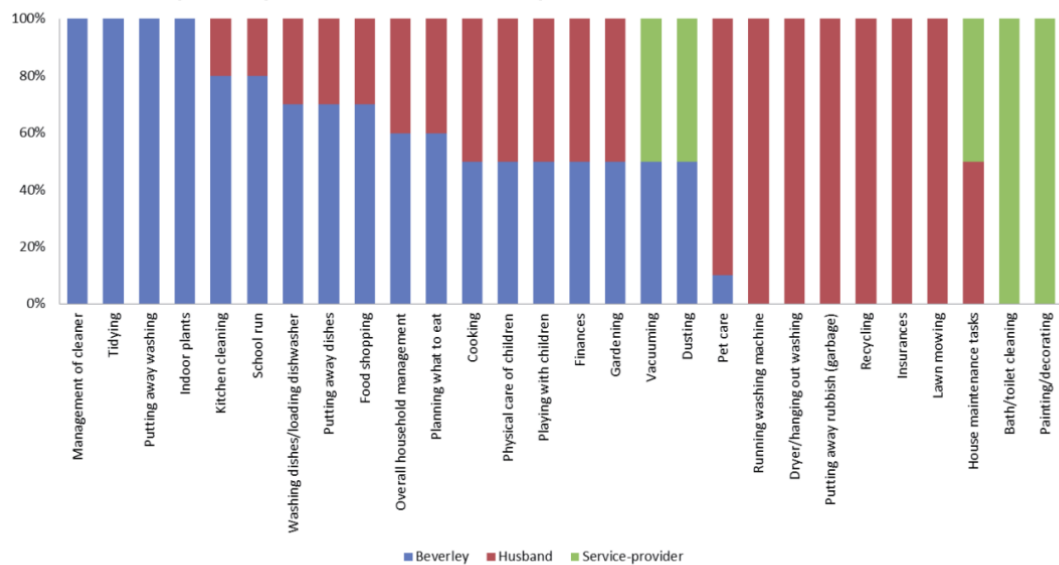
* In this household ironing was not done and children were too young to require help with homework.

Beverley was preoccupied with cleaning and said her service-provider did not clean as well as herself. This was not a problem, it helped Beverley keep her obsession under control. Beverley's willingness to accept lower cleaning standards in a woman but not accept apparent differences between herself and her husband was a recurring theme. Clare and Felicity had been 'slovenly' when they had lived alone:

I was slutty with my house … I was just like … 'can't be bothered with my precious life to waste it cleaning', that is not that I didn't clean, always had a clean kit. I've always kept my kitchen clean, kept my bath, but really in terms of general cleaning, absolutely, like when the floor's about to crawl away … (Clare)

Both Felicity and Clare's standards of cleanliness changed in coupledom and were then assumed to be the 'right' standards. In other words, the academics' ability to act on their feminist self-reflexivity was constrained by a subconscious acceptance of societal norms around domesticity, such as women have the 'right' and higher 'standards', which are homogeneous across households (Bittman and Pixley, 1997; Walters and Whitehouse, 2012). Their reflexive selves overlooked

how the collective term 'society' hides the reality that those policing household standards are most often women (van Hooff, 2011). In Oakley's (1974/1985) study, women who identified more with the housewife role had higher standards and routines. Birch and colleagues' time-use study showed single Australian men and women spent similar time on routine housework, and '[t]he gender inequality in time use that dominates discussion in much of the literature must, therefore, be a phenomenon specific to other family types' (2009:75; see also de Ruijter *et al.*, 2005). The phrase 'family type' is crucial here because the same people might live in different 'family types' in different life-stages, and like Clare and Felicity's, their attitudes and behaviours might shift depending on the situation. Women released from a heterosexual contract might accept lower housework standards because of greater time pressures, with reduced import of the physical state of their house for their self-esteem (Fassinger, 1993, cited in Nelson, 2004:20 and Nelson, 2004). In the six series of the reality television programme *Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners* (Channel 4, 2016a) broadcast before the time of writing, a third of the helpers were men and over half of the people needing help were women. Indeed, rather than 'can't see dirt', partnered men more likely 'don't expect to see dirt'.

In India, three of the 10 partnered academics had a shared division of non-outsourced housework; other husbands did no housework or helped occasionally or with tasks socially construed acceptable for (middle-class) men to do, such as cooking and 'instructional activities' (Verma and Larson, 2001:55; see also Mattila, 2011). In the joint families, retired fathers-in-law were more likely to be involved with management of domestic help. However, the academics mostly expressed little angst around their husbands' lack of contribution in the house.

> whatever class you may be, [however much you want your career] you don't want to disturb your family life. You don't want to pay that cost (Taruni)

> what I appreciate about his participation is that he's not averse to the idea of helping me out. His perception towards the work is not negative, that he is a male member of the household, that he should not be doing the household work. So given a chance, I mean the right opportunity, he is always ready to help out – not that he actually does it. (Lata)

Taruni and Lata exemplify the 'new Indian woman', a dual subject attempting to attain individualistic selfhood through a career while simultaneously participating in traditional middle-class domesticity (Belliappa, 2013a;

Radhakrishnan, 2009; Shah, 2015; Valk and Srinivasan, 2011). The 'right opportunity' that Lata referred to usually arose in the kitchen rather than around cleaning.

> my husband, or my father-in-law … they choose to go into the kitchen, that is a question of choice. Similarly with me if I … go into the kitchen it should be a question of choice, that is why I say I sulk when I have to cook. … So when it comes to equality, like when Asha's gone home … I make my own breakfast, my husband makes his own breakfast, so it's not that because Asha's not there, I'm expected to do the cooking … (Shobha)

Besides the more universal ideology of cooking as part of women's normative role in familial caring (Robinson and Milkie, 1998), cooking is embedded in the Hindu ideology of food consumption as a ritual of purity (Goyan *et al.*, 2008). As (Hindu) wives traditionally represent purity (Wadley, 1977[106]), *maa ke haath ka khaana*, food made by the wife-mother, ensures bodily purity and spiritual sustenance (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Verma and Larson, 2001). Also, Indian middle-class status is still overtly produced by distancing oneself from manual work (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). As Usha, a pilot interviewee, commented, men 'may not be cleaning, but that's something even you wouldn't do'. Thus cleaning rarely figured in the conversation until I introduced it. The following extract captures this culturally informed, segmented socialisation of middle-class Indian women, in which cooking is at the centre and cleaning at the margins of their domestic role (Frøystad, 2003; Verma and Larson, 2001:61).

> Lotika: Do you think you could have managed without domestic help?

> Geetanjali: I think I could have managed … because I'd been doing both the things. Because this help, it's, it's so unpredictable … as I told you that things are not all that organised here in India, you can have guests who would not like to enter the kitchen or share the burden with you, then it becomes difficult.

---

[106] Some Indian academics were Sikhs or non-religious. But women as symbols of purity is a more universal patriarchal concept, and consequently their continued greater 'preoccupation with cleanliness' cuts across religious beliefs and even into secular spaces (Hand, 1992:313).

Lotika: And when we talk of this, are we including sweeping and mopping in it? Or are you thinking more of …

Geetanjali: No, I am thinking more of cooking. Cooking, washing – dusting also – but cleaning I have not thought about so far, no. It's not my domain … if I have to do it, probably, … I don't know how will I do it!

This situation is not peculiar to the Indian context. My analysis alerted me to similar attitudes in the UK. Imogen, who had the most shared arrangement of housework, outsourced cleaning because she disliked doing it (even though she had worked as a cleaner in her student days). She did not discuss her decision to outsource with her husband. That is, when she was in a position not to do it, she did not expect her husband to do it either. This also explains the reluctance to address domestic gender politics among the women interviewed by Gregson and Lowe (1994a). Some UK academics did not see cleaning as 'proper' work:

The other work is the 'real' work, that's what, I do enough to keep things, to keep things ticking over, I mean it's sort of, 'Oh I don't like the kitchen to be filthy' so I clean it before you cook, that's fine, I mean you do it so that you can get the other stuff done. (Tanya)

These attitudes – not 'my' work or not 'proper' work[107] – also prevailed in another age, as dis-association with manual labour is one of the original distinguishing characteristics of British 'middle-classness' (Gunn and Bell, 2002). The Victorian middle-class housewife displayed respectable femininity by distancing herself from the polluting hard graft of the 'rituals of order' (i.e. cleaning, cooking, childcare), encasing her delicate hands in spotless white gloves (Davidoff, 1995). Edwardian feminists could also consider it as work beneath them (Schwartz, 2015). In USA, early twentieth-century White women's 'Americanization through homemaking' movement trained 'the help' to do manual work their way while they led leisured lifestyles or did 'voluntary' work (Romero, 2002). Later, second-wave feminists such as Friedan (1963) also did not see cleaning as work for an educated, intelligent White middle-class person, man or woman. Men did not figure in the 'the problem with no name' that *The Feminist Mystique* attempted to solve, with Friedan advising her compatriots to hire domestic help. In Rollins' (1985) study, the employers (mostly White Americans) said their mothers acted

---

[107] See also Hondagneu-Sotelo (2001) for the American context.

as role models and instigators of outsourcing domestic work as men were not expected to help. Friedan's view has subsequently been criticised as a narrow liberal middle-class feminist perspective, and indeed it is, and Rollins' account may be dated. However, both remain applicable to some Western upper middle-class and middle-class women, such as those in Cox's more recent Hampstead sample, who 'explained that they had always employed help because they had never seen housework as their responsibility' (2006:91). In fact, in Anderson's (2000:18) research, much outsourced domestic work was work intended to maintain a 'life style' (e.g. cleaning a white carpet) than the 'essential' work of running a home. In Brazil, outsourcing domestic work is so common that even 'academics, leftists, and feminists' take it for granted, leaving men's working patterns and domestic (non)contribution unaltered (de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010:99). In an Australian study, women who thought that housework did not have to be done by oneself were more likely to outsource than those who believed it was personal work (Baxter *et al.*, 2009). Nor are these attitudes confined to the domestic space. Cleaning the office is not part of many job descriptions. People may appear to appreciate cleaners, but do they think the cleaners are doing *their* work? Hierarchies in workplace roles (Sassen, 2003) match those in the home (see Chapter 1). My analysis shows that the impact of outsourcing domestic cleaning on gender equality is mediated by a classed view of different household tasks. If a woman does not see a task as her role, she is not going to expect her male partner to do it, regardless of cultural context (e.g. Indian caste-based ideologies) and male privilege.

Furthermore, cleaning comprises several sub-tasks. In the UK, outsourcing hoovering, cleaning of work surfaces, dusting and bathroom/toilet cleaning for four hours at a fixed time every week did not liberate Beverley from cleaning. She still did most of the tidying (Figure 8). Ironically, the UK cleaning service-providers said hoovering and dusting was just another job, but 'picking up' after people was demeaning (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010; Romero, 2002; see also Chapter 4). Yet, both in the UK and in India, this most frequently done – and oppressive – cleaning sub-task (Figure 9) was still more often performed by the academics despite outsourcing of cleaning (Figure 10). That is, focusing on outsourcing of hoovering and toilet-cleaning glosses over middle-class women's proclivity to continue picking up after others. Moreover, Figure 9 (and other data not shown) suggests that outsourcing cleaning to a live-out service-provider

might not stall the gender revolution. Progress could be made if men and children[108] shared in the daily housework, particularly tidying. Other cleaning

Figure 9: The bars represent the frequency of doing each cleaning sub-task in the UK and Indian service-user households

Note: the scale is not the same in the two parts of the figure, see key for details
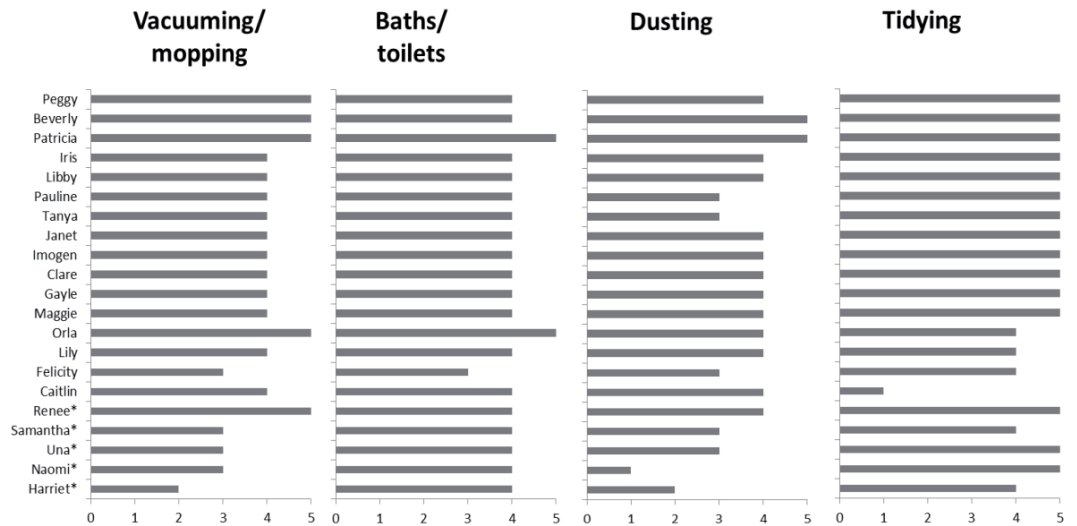
(a) UK service-users

(b) Indian service-users
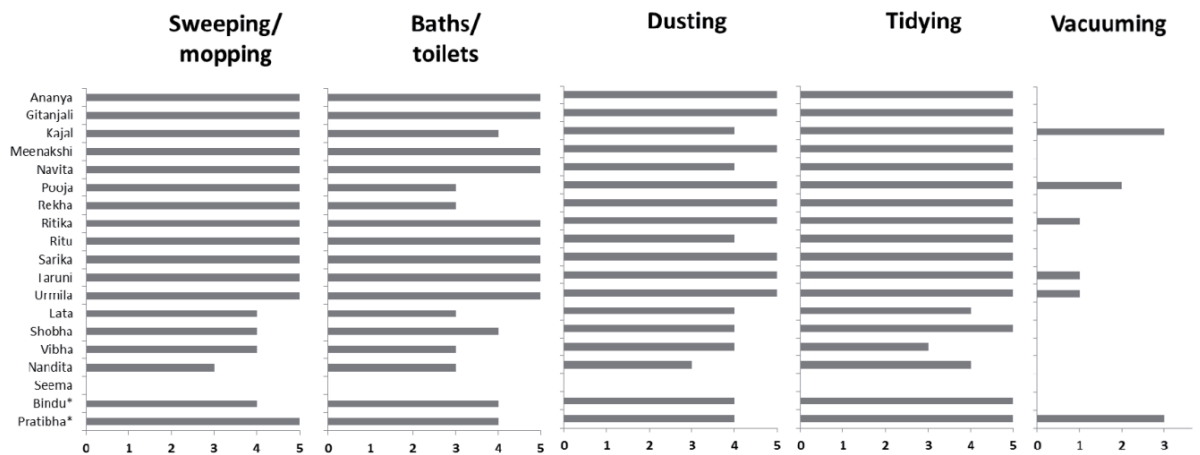
*Not currently outsourcing cleaning

KEY: (a) UK service-users

0 = Question not asked

1 = Sub-task done sporadically

2 = Sub-task done about once a month

3 = Sub-task done less than once a week

4 = Sub-task done once a week

5 = Sub-task done more than once a week

(b) Indian service-users

0 = Question not asked

1 = Sub-task done sporadically

2 = Sub-task done about once/twice a month

3 = Sub-task done once a week

4 = Sub-task done 2–5 times week

5 = Sub-task done 6–7 days a week

---

[108] Ehrenreich (2002/2010) contends outsourcing cleaning means privileged children never learn to do this work (see also Chapter 1).

Figure 10: The bars represent the proportion of time, as reported at the time of data collection by the partnered service-users or those living with a parent, that tidying was done by the respondent or her partner or a service-provider
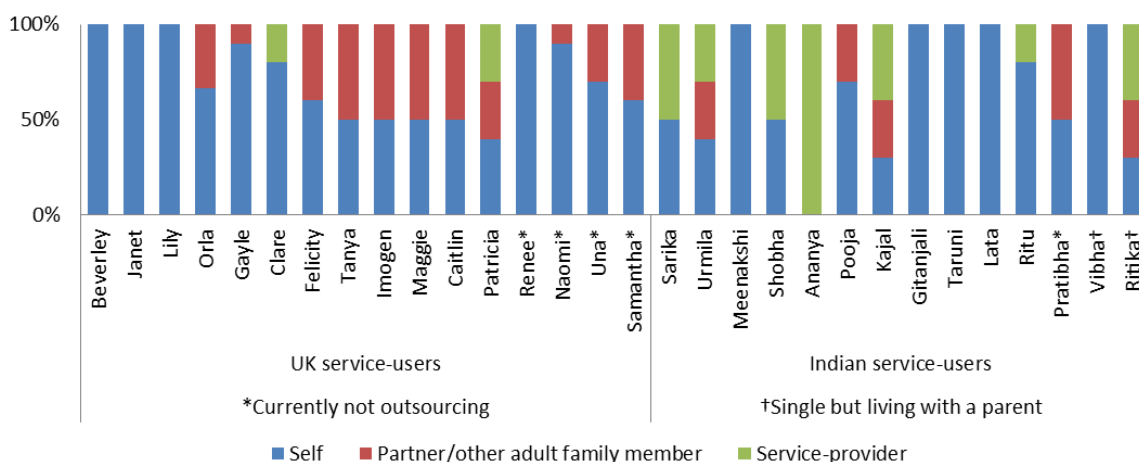
can be shared when the provider does not come. But if women do not see this work as their work or assume men need to follow their standards, erroneously understood as homogeneous among women, outsourcing cleaning is going to make little difference to the domestic gender equation, regardless of country/culture context. Also, what happens once vacuuming, toilet-cleaning and dusting are no longer a source of domestic strife?

Outsourced cleaning as a panacea for conflicts over housework

> [T]hrowing money at a problem is very rarely a satisfactory solution in the long term. I think of the truly staggering number of marriages I know that were supposed to be 'saved' by moving to a new house, or adding a second storey or a new bathroom. If only life was that simple! (Maushart, 2003:232)

In the UK, the dishwasher remained a site of tension for Beverley as her husband would not deal with it when she wanted it done. Orla's 20-year marriage failed despite outsourcing cleaning because her husband felt threatened by her professional success. She was left regretting her choice to remain childless:

> he didn't really want children … I remember saying this to [him], if we don't have any children, I am not going to be limited in my ambitions at work … at the time he had started drinking rather more … he didn't want to do anything much except drink in the village … our marriage split up, not then but ten years after, I think because … he wouldn't really play along with my side of that, which was that we had to have an unfettered life where we could both achieve everything we wanted to achieve … he found my work … very threatening … and the drink I think was the biggest problem. (Orla)

131

In India, Seema, who was separated, Rekha, who was divorced, and Meenakshi, who lived apart from her husband for most of the time, also talked about negotiating problematic relationships and behaviours (e.g. alcoholism) while outsourcing their housework. In the wider world, in both research sites, relationship breakdowns among the most visible members of society – who might also outsource cleaning – provide steady fodder for the media (e.g. the anguish of UK celebrity chef Nigella Lawson over the abusive state of her marriage while drawing on paid domestic help (BBC News, 2013; Orr, 2013)). There are scant published data on this topic. Key Anglo-American qualitative studies mostly accept respondents' comments that outsourcing cleaning improved domestic relations. I found only one that expressed some doubt: outsourcing 'possibly resolv[es] conflict …' note Lyonette and Crompton, because the long work-hours culture makes it difficult for men to share the work even if they want to do so (2015:37). Also, most interviewees are women and quantitative studies show that women are more likely to articulate dissatisfaction with relationship quality when routine housework is not shared (Barstad, 2014; Træen, 2010). So are service-users' claims in interviews proof enough? UK survey analyses show outsourcing is 'largely insignificant' in terms of relationship outcome (Schober, 2013; also Figure 11 (Jones, 2004)).

Figure 11: Survey respondents' answers to the question 'Why do you employ household help' (Jones, 2004)
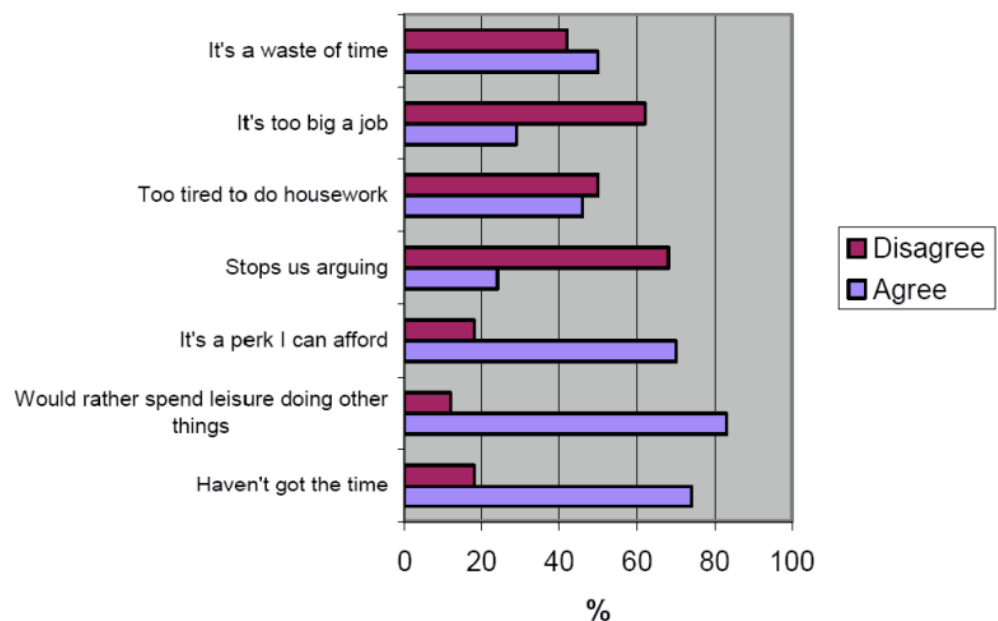
Reproduced from Jones (2004:n.p.).

East Asian studies looking in detail at the lives of middle-class women alongside those of their primarily live-in foreign domestic workers show the women remain vulnerable in various ways, including sexual insecurity around another woman sleeping in the same house (Chin, 1998; Lan, 2006).

Relationships where housework is shared are also susceptible to floundering (Barstad, 2014; Cooke, 2004) because once housework is shared – either directly or indirectly through outsourcing – it may lose its significance for relationship quality (Chan and Halpin, 2002). Felicity's previous 'egalitarian' relationship ended after eight years, despite militant efforts to share the housework. She confessed being happier in her present relationship with its fuzzier boundaries around 'who did what' in the house. Indeed, '[t]he longevity of partnerships seems to be connected with couples' capacity to negotiate changing circumstances' (Gabb and Fink, 2015:61) across a range of domestic – most significantly childcare (Cooke, 2004; Schober, 2013; Sigle-Rushton, 2010) – and paid work issues. In Gabb and Fink's (2015:124–125) study on enduring relationships, inequitable division of housework was number 3 among 15 items women liked least about their relationship and number 8 among men. But sharing housework per se did not feature in the lists describing what people liked most about their relationship. Two items mentioned 'support' ('being cared for and feeling supported' at number 4 for women and number 5 for men and 'we support each other' at number 14 for both), but this could include a range of family practices. Indeed, Western couples in intact relationships who report 'sharing' housework as an important factor, may be describing a mutually agreed *division* of housework: 'in many ways I was professional on the earning side and she was professional on the mothering side' (a male respondent in Walker *et al.*, 2010:52–53). Couples claiming to be egalitarian or 'anti-sexist' also often divide housework (see examples of 'shared' housework in Blaisure and Allen, 1995; Risman and Johnson-Sumerford, 1998; VanEvery, 1995) and may still outsource some of it for other reasons, such as gaining leisure time (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a) or as a status symbol (Anderson, 2000, 2003; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). Many of my respondents said they would continue outsourcing cleaning even after retirement. It may be that non-sharing of housework becomes a significant issue in relationships already under strain (Walker *et al.*, 2010; see also Cooke, 2006).

My findings and previous research show that the notion of outsourcing cleaning as a panacea for relationship conflicts in the dual-career, middle-class

household is problematic because of the complexity of the equation that underpins household (in)equanimity, as well as wider classed notions of work. However, this still leaves one Western academic feminist concern around outsourcing cleaning unaddressed: that it allows middle-class women to progress in their careers at the cost of their domestic worker's liberation. Indeed, housework takes time (Oakley, 1974/1985; see Chapter 5), and Bianchi *et al.* (2012) claimed about half the weekly time spent on core housework goes on cleaning.

Time saved by outsourcing cleaning and middle-class women's career progression

> A lot of these professional people wouldn't be able to follow their career if it wasn't for the back-up. And the back-up is the cleaning. The cleaning lady, the lady who does. It enables them to carry on with their 'good' lives. (Angie, a cleaner from Lancashire, BBC Radio 4, 2012a)

> if one took really seriously all the inequities of academic life, you know, it would be soul-destroying. (Caitlin)

Most academics worked full-time (Appendix C), with a '*work–work*-life balance' (Caitlin; see Currie and Eveline, 2011; Gill, 2010; Kinman and Jones, 2008; Rafnsdóttir and Heijstra, 2013), partly because the e-technology-driven university is 'a 24-hour institution' (Harriet; Currie and Eveline, 2011), and partly because 'you do it without really thinking about it because you really like it' (Gayle). Career progression among female academics required not only demonstrating boundaryless commitment – conferences, lecturing, visiting fellowships, research and extra-professional activities, such as peer-reviewing – but also proving themselves as capable as the men (Ledwith and Manfredi, 2000). Indeed, my respondents often used the time gained by outsourcing cleaning to do more paid work. When such time was spent on domestic matters, it primarily focused on hands-on childcare,[109] and nurturing the relationships involved in this care (*UK*: Mitchell, 2015; Radcliffe and Cassell, 2013; *India*: Belliappa, 2013a), or management of elder care. For example, Peggy spent many 'normal' work hours travelling long distances to sort out care-related problems of four

---

[109] Some career women are opting to remain childless (Crompton and Le Feuvre, 1996; Gill, 2010).

elderly relatives. Vibha oversaw the delivery of her elderly father's care by four live-out domestic/care workers. Thus, in terms of time, outsourcing cleaning was not about achieving 'work–life balance',[110] but about managing many simultaneous demands on one's time:

> Sometimes it's not like balance, okay … here it is: it's not about balance, it's about the absolute quantity of stuff that needs to be done, sometimes just too much stuff needs to be done, it's not about too much time with your family, enough time with your family, it's just your family needs loads of attention at the same time … time as your work, it's the absolute amount of energy and number of hours in a day, you see! (Tanya)

Predictably then, most UK respondents observed that outsourcing cleaning was helpful time-wise. Would a reduction in the length of the working day (Weeks, 2011) allow for greater gender parity at home and in the workplace? The academics were ambivalent about reduced work-hours (see also Hochschild, 2001). Some surveys show an association between women's work-hours and outsourcing decisions in dual-earner households (e.g. Baxter *et al.*, 2009; Cornelisse-Vermaat *et al.*, 2013; Tijdens *et al.*, 2003; van der Lippe *et al.*, 2013), but this is not straightforward. Tijdens *et al.* (2003) found 126% greater likelihood of outsourcing among Dutch women working even as 'little' as 20 hours per week than those working fewer hours. In a later study, the same research group reported only 10 percentage points difference between women in dual-earner couples working full time (39%) and part-time (29%) and outsourcing (de Ruijter and van der Lippe, 2007). These findings confirmed their previous results that part-time workers are also likely to outsource cleaning. Also, in the latter study, women with more flexible work-hours were more likely to outsource cleaning. Unsurprisingly then, even the most family-friendly Scandinavian work model has failed to stem the 'resurgence' of paid domestic work (Bowman and Cole, 2009, 2014; Gavanas, 2010), and Sullivan and Gershuny's analysis of ONS time-use data showed outsourcing had 'little overall impact … on the total domestic/caring workload of either partner in dual-earner households' (2012:2; see also Windebank, 2007). Indeed, much housework was still happening in the

---

[110] Gregory and Milner argue that work is 'integral to life' (2009:2), and the phrase work-life balance is a reductive way of describing lived lives.

time between a cleaning service-provider's visits (Figure 9; also noted by Cox, 2006), which then impacted on paid-work time (see also Bianchi *et al.*, 2012):

> well, he's reached professor and I haven't. Just because he can do things differently … he can say no in ways women can't in academia, and I think it's read differently as well … and because he doesn't have the domestic baggage behind him, he doesn't have to think about dinner … [which] gives him an extra hour a day. He doesn't have to think on a weekend about putting his clothes … in the washing machine so he gets extra time there. (Janet)

The Indian academics said outsourcing was crucial for their ability to do paid work. My analysis revealed two issues with this argument. First, the most common reason given was the volume of housework: India is a geographically dusty region, daily cleaning of the whole house was essential. Indeed my data agreed (Figure 9) and are corroborated by the sense of incredulity in Mattila's (2011) meticulous description of daily housework in middle-class households in Jaipur.[111] Manual help was needed due to factors beyond the academics' control.

> In Britain the story is different, everything is automated, everything is at your beck and call. It's not that I'm complaining against my own country, but the thing is, we don't know, the moment you launch your washing machine, we don't know whether the electricity supply is going to be there or not. So that means at times things are timed out, you're not available [when the electricity is there], that's how you need people. And we have plenty of people who are looking for this kind of work. So I don't know who's helping whom. It is embedded within our system. And had things been different – given a choice, if I'd been staying in UK or in the States or in Canada, I've seen my sister-in-law doing all sorts of things … (Geetanjali)

This comparison required deeper analysis given Ritu's off-the-cuff comment that daily cleaning was done 'because our custom is to do it, even if we don't need it, we do it', and Geetanjali's justification, 'It is embedded in our system' (see also Chapter 4). Western feminist research shows although mechanisation of housework reduced manual laboriousness, it did not translate into requiring less time because of the simultaneous market-driven rise in standards of housework

---

[111] De Casanova (2013) describes a similar situation in Ecuador.

(Bose, 1979; Hardyment, 1988; Jackson, 1992). Martens' (2007/2012) ethnographic study of kitchen cleaning revealed that even while denying 'external' regulation, people's cleaning practices included 'individualised' routines that were rooted in social norms. These secular trends provide evidence of the ever-enduring ritualistic meanings of cleaning in both countries. Moreover, in India, my question 'who is a good cleaner' elicited little about cleaning ability. The person's appearance ('clean' versus 'dirty') and their sense of responsibility was perceived as most important (see also Chapter 5; similar behaviours are seen in the West, e.g. see Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001 and Chapter 1). My findings show that higher education and academic gender sensitisation mostly failed to overcome the 'structures of feeling' around cleaning rituals or cultural norms around standards (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010:4). India *is* more dusty but the necessity of daily cleaning of the whole house is a moot point (see also Chapter 4).

Second, although my respondents only included women in paid employment, the wider literature shows that the kind of outsourcing practised by my respondents is also practised by housewives (Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). That is, outsourcing is also about assertion of middle-class status. Verma and Larson (2001) found no difference in the likelihood of employing domestic help between 40 dual-earner and 60 single-earner Indian upper-middle/middle-class urban households. Traditional notions of class also endure in Ecuador, where lower-middle-class families employ at least a cleaner because that might be their 'only claim to middle-class status' (De Casanova, 2013:562–566). In Brazil, the routineness of outsourcing makes it 'invisible' (de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010). In this situation, the time issue is not about time spent cleaning but possibly about the time spent previously on 'spiritual' housework (Roberts, 1997) and cooking, which is now juggled with time in the workplace (Radhakrishnan, 2009; Valk and Srinivasan, 2011).

> Participation in paid employment might enhance [middle-class Indian] women's sense of empowerment … but it does not necessarily result in individualization, nor are women necessarily seeking liberation from family ties through their participation in paid employment. (Belliappa, 2013a:135)

Belliappa's argument also applies to single women. Navita, who had cared for her elderly parents, said people constantly assume 'you can devote time to these things because you … don't have a home to run, you don't have a husband and children to look after. And I say I'm not free, I'm not free. I do more work than

anybody else.' Kishwar (1991/2005:31) argues this familial connectedness is a key distinguisher of Indian and Western women's emancipation/feminism but clearly that emancipation is class-constrained. I am not convinced that it is the notion of individualist selfhood that is the problem here: rather, servant-employing Indian women more likely do not even think about extricating themselves from kin and community because of pre-existing 'cultures of servitude' (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010).

Yet these 'cultures of servitude' are not unsurmountable. A few people are resisting societal norms, rethinking utilitarian needs and doing manual housework themselves. Two Indian academics had stopped using domestic help. Bindu, a single woman had outsourced cleaning in the past because it was 'the done thing'. When her service-provider began absenting frequently without notice, Bindu realised she could manage on her own, regardless of what her neighbours thought.

> I found at the end of the day I was getting more tensed about her coming at 8 in the morning and waking me up. I mean I would be up at 7.30, but I thought I'll be more relaxed if I do it myself, and after a while I realised it's not much work. I employed her because everybody around me was employing. Actually, I remember a neighbour telling me that you must employ someone otherwise there'll be pressure on you, because it's like, you know, you have to have someone ... (Bindu)

Ray and Qayum's (2009/2010) ethnographic study of an apartment complex in Kolkata also had one such household. Two of 26 IT professionals in Belliappa's (2013a) sample and of 100 middle-class households in Verma and Larson's study, 20 had full-time and 62 had part-time domestic help (2001:52). In several other households in my study, when domestic help was temporarily unavailable or their work was unsatisfactory, a few women (and in rare cases other family members) did the work themselves.

> in the last two days [my maid] had to go, her brother is very sick, he's hospitalised, so I had to get up early. Today I got up at six. Then my husband and I, we cleaned the house. The cooking – that I have to manage at night, beforehand, ... I'll cut and keep [the vegetables] in the fridge. So that it takes less time, because cleaning you know takes more time. We've got two dogs as I told you, and they make the house very messy ... (Taruni)

Shobha topped up bathroom cleaning because she thought her service-provider did not pay 'enough attention' to these areas. Kajal and Lata's cleaning service-provider did not clean toilets. This is an important point because toilet-cleaning is often considered the most degrading housework, based on purity–pollution dogmas (Frøystad, 2003:78; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2011; see Chapter 4). All this work might have impacted on their working lives. The extract below echoes Janet's comments in the UK:

> and because teaching the children has come to me. I don't know … how we made this arrangement, that ultimately [these roles] have fallen upon me … For example, who's going to lock the house at night, which I think is men's work. That I do … and now he says that 'If I do it sometimes I will forget or sometimes you will think that I have done it and I will think that you have done it', so it's better you do it. So I keep on doing it … (Pratibha)

In sum, outsourcing helped create some time, often to do more work. Did this help career progression?

Universities remain male-dominated and in the UK, in an era when discourses about individual responsibility disguise continuing public patriarchy (Meyers, 2013), female academics might interpret structural gendered inequalities such as pay and promotion gaps as individual failures.

> I do think that there's something of that … it's one of those slightly hard to describe, intangible things, not that anybody has consciously thought 'Oh, she's a woman, we'll pay her less', but I have been less … aggressive about my own right to increments, promotions and so on, than many male colleagues have been I think. (Patricia)

In both cultures, two factors were noted to impact on women's career progression: gendered pastoral responsibilities (Ledwith and Manfredi, 2000) and self-exclusion from the predominantly male spaces of out-of-hours informal networking.[112] In the UK, only those with young children made this comment, but in India single women too might not feel free to step out for a drink in the pub (Belliappa, 2013a,b; Shrivastava, 2015).

---

[112] Sang *et al.* (2014) describe a similar situation in architecture.

> Now if I, if I have to negotiate certain things, [I am limited if they] take place beyond formal domain. Because men can very easily, given the cultural, Indian cultural context, they can easily sit together, have drinks, and so projects are negotiated, favours agreed on, things happen that way: I call you, you call me, okay? But I cannot, you know, if I do that, I may be termed as very easily accessible, easy in terms of my character. (Vibha)

Hence, despite gender sensitisation, few like Bindu challenged the status quo in various ways: 'I was very high on merit ... because I was a divorcee they kind of ... carried out an exercise in character assassination with the experts ... you know, "We don't want *her* in the department"' (Rekha). Many more performed self-policing as institutionalised 'respectable femininity' was not worth risking for career progression (Belliappa, 2013a,b; Fernando and Cohen, 2014; Radhakrishnan, 2009:209).

> when it comes to socialising ... being a woman, you have certain restrictions, *hain na* [isn't it]? You can't move around with everybody and you can't go out for coffee or tea that frequently to the student centre as our male colleagues can do. So that restriction is there, which has been created by myself only. It has not been forced by anybody on me but the informal socialising system is like that: that being a female, you can't ... without any work you can't ... sit in anybody's room, specifically a male colleague's room. But as such there's no discrimination. I have never felt it. (Sarika)

Sarika's account hardly implies the kind of emancipation envisaged by the WLM. Western women too feel vulnerable in terms of sexuality in informal networking spaces (Ledwith and Manfredi, 2000): being called a slut still has different connotations to being called a bastard (Frostrup, 2015). Although the UK academics did not talk of contemporary sexual or bodily subordination, it is not absent here or elsewhere (Fernando and Cohen, 2014; Williams *et al.*, 1999). The resignation of the eminent feminist Sara Ahmed (2016) from her post at Goldsmith's University, London, in May 2016, in protest over the university's failure to tackle sexual harassment among students is telling. Sexual liberation today has come to mean women tolerating and laughing off sexist attitudes and behaviours by undertaking self-surveillance, self-monitoring and self-disciplining in workplaces (Meyers, 2013:280–281) or being branded as overly sensitive (Hinze, 2004). Indeed, self-disciplining of body and appearance among elite Western businesswomen is common enough for it to acquire a label –'respectable business femininity' (Mavin and Grandy, 2016) – not that different from

elsewhere. Such encounters may affect career progression by forcing a job change or avoiding male-dominated professions/fields. Renee coped with being a woman in a malestream discipline by limiting her involvement to feminist/gender issues, a space inhabited primarily by women. In both cultures, some academics mentioned being routinely 'passed over':

> I can't say that I've done badly career-wise, in the sense that I'm a woman in a, with a senior post in a good department. But on the other hand there is this thing of going to meetings and blokes are talking, bloke will speak to bloke and it, it is difficult to get a voice in. (Maggie)

> there was a convocation ... we were a few women who were senators and deans ... the chief guest comes ... all the men are standing there, the women are standing next [to them], [the vice-chancellor] introduces him to all the men and they pass us and they go for lunch. ... I got furious ... (Taruni)

Other axes of discrimination included age and mothers versus childless women:

> some lecturers are much more *in* the department and available ... whereas people who are much more focused on their research may well be working from home and simply don't do that kind of collegial stuff. I'm not sure whether that's really gendered, I know men who pick up the slack ... and men who don't and women who do and women who don't. So that may be along a different dimension ... a female colleague who's recently had a baby ... she's chosen to just have a very demarcated approach to work, so she just says 'no' a lot, you know, and actually as a consequence pisses a lot of people off! (Felicity)

Romero (2002) argued that a service-user's workplace exploitation cannot be compared to *her* exploitation because she can transfer the burden of her sexist exploitation onto *her* but *she* has nowhere to escape. This assertion is grounded in an ontological position that housework is women's work and outsourcing is a transfer of work that happens only between women. The Western academics were aware of this and tried to underplay their issues:

> It's not, it's not outright discrimination, but it's, it's a drag factor and is a contextual factor and it means that things are played out differently [... in] my privileged position as a White woman, you know, in a wealthy economy, umm it's, it's, drag and context, and relative disadvantage in my case because I share other privileges. (Janet)

Several Indian academics in contrast referred me to a story published in a left-leaning Indian broadsheet, *The Hindu*, that problematised the middle-class woman's liberation through the gaze of her young daughter. The daughter is not convinced that a good education will ensure a better life as she sees her mother being constantly harassed by her family and her employer as well as her maid (Krishnan, 2006; also Singh describes employers feel vulnerable to employees' 'erratic behaviour' such as 'absenteeism'[113] (2007:161)). My analysis is not intended to elicit sympathy for service-users, but attempts to understand the significance of outsourcing housework for their career progression. My data confirm that as of now, women have been added rather than integrated into the public sphere (Crompton and Le Feuvre, 1996; Usdansky, 2011), which remains a masculine space across the West–East cultural divide. While outsourcing cleaning helped the academics to prioritise activities related to career progression, these activities did not necessarily overcome gendered discrimination in the workplace: that is, she was *not* able to transfer the burden of her sexist exploitation in the workplace onto *her*. This is not different from some men's situation: they may have wives to look after them at home, but that does not alleviate the class/caste/racial/sexual discriminations they might experience in the workplace. That is, within either public or private patriarchy, removal of one patriarchal structure does not mean others cease to exist (Walby, 1990). Also, in UK households with shared labour, the service-provider was working for both partners, and in India, there was no transfer of work per se, *she* was doing work traditionally not performed by women or men of the middle and upper classes. How does this analysis then contribute to existing literature?

Concluding remarks

While income remains a strong predictor of outsourcing, all household types might outsource cleaning for a variety of reasons. Devetter (2015), who analysed survey data and interviewed only upper-middle-class service-users, concluded that the democratisation of such service work was unlikely. My findings offer a

---

[113] 'Absenteeism' is used as a form of resistance, similar to other areas of the informal economy (Bremen, 2013). It may be interpreted as a lack of commitment to work in 'those people', but when people's health, living and working conditions verge on the chaotic and lack security, mainly because of social injustices, the meaning of commitment becomes a moot point (see Chapter 6).

gleam of hope, which I will confirm in subsequent chapters. Even though (middle-class) women gain time for their work commitments by outsourcing cleaning, working harder does not guarantee breaking the glass ceiling, because this is bulwarked by a complex mesh of patriarchal structures (Walby, 1990; Raju and Jatrana, 2016b). Outsourcing also does not mean householders are totally free from housework: women in particular continue to pick up after others. Middle-class reflexivity due to greater education or material capital (Skeggs, 1997/2002; Walters and Whitehouse, 2012) does not necessarily lead to greater 'freedoms' because we do not live in a vacuum (Jackson, 2011:16; Pollert, 1996). Claims of outsourced cleaning pitting the liberation of one class of women against that of another reduces women's emancipation to freedom from housework, naturalises housework as women's work, and deflects attention from contesting the real exploitative features of domesticity (Bowman and Cole, 2009:160). These synecdochical claims are not helpful (Narayan, 1998) for Western or other feminism(s) because having a 'good' paid job and earning enough to be 'independent' is not the be all and end all of emancipation.

As Rivas (2003) argued, labour of paid care is concealed through spatial, linguistic or communication practices because such care is provided within a framework of 'achieving independent living' (also in India, see Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). Dependency has to be obscured as it threatens the ideology of individualism. Similarly, the feminist denial of the housewife role and family wage, alongside the adult worker model, also feed into a distorted notion of independence (Fraser, 2013; Glenn, 2000; also Schwartz, 2015): that earning one's own money makes a person 'independent' when they are still dependent on others for fulfilment of many needs. Outsourcing domestic work makes this dependence visible, but again society and feminist research frame it in terms of independence: she achieves 'independence' through *her* (invisible) labour. In reality contemporary 'independent' living requires several workers' input (electricity, water and internet suppliers, rubbish collectors, etc.). Adding the suffix 'in' to 'dependent' simply hides the dependence of (in)dependent people and creates a myth about the power of independence acquired through doing 'paid work' outside the home or through outsourcing housework. Rather, the 'housewife' is omnipresent – personified by different people at different times in different spaces. Thus, it might be more useful to develop theories that challenge societal assumptions around the work itself (e.g. that it is 'real' work). I present the analysis that underpins my proposition in Chapters 4–7.

Chapter 4   The imperfect contours of paid domestic work as dirty work

One fine summer evening during the time I was writing this chapter, a friend and I were walking by a farm. My friend held her breadth to avoid the 'stink', while I thought the smell fitted in with the place and season. But, I see slime as dirt, whereas my husband sees it as just a bit of mucus. But, he sees my hair scattered on the bathroom floor as dirt and I see it as just hair …

Labelling unpaid housework as menial[114] drudgery seems almost obligatory in feminist/sociological literature (Ahlander and Bahr, 1995), given its theorisation as a site of power (Davis and Greenstein, 2013). The same drudgery becomes dirty work when it is outsourced because it becomes infused with institutionalised symbolic understandings of dirt as 'matter out of place' that underpin control of social order in most societies (Cox, 2016; Douglas, 1966/2002). Along with the work, people themselves are seen as imbued with the taint ascribed to their work and accorded similar status (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999). In that wider sense, dirty work includes all 'tasks and occupations that are likely to be perceived as disgusting or degrading' in physical, social or moral terms; some of this work, however, is accorded higher status (e.g. investment banking and policing and lab work involving handling of excrement) (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999:413, drawing on Hughes, 1951; see also Simpson *et al.*, 2012). Wolkowitz thus cautions against emphasising higher-level explanations in theoretical conceptualisations of paid domestic work because they risk trivialising the material realities of working with 'real' dirt:

> What is needed is theory and research that acknowledge that as social phenomenon 'dirtiness' and 'cleanliness' are real social objects and do not exist only within discourse. In particular we need to consider 'dirt' from the point of view of those whose work involves dealing with it. (Wolkowitz, 2007/2012:24)

Indeed, even the exhaustive feminist research detailing how paid domestic work is dirty work focuses on the social relations and practices that reproduce race, class/caste and gender inequalities (e.g. Anderson, 2000; Cox, 2016; King, 2007; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Triandafyllidou, 2013). There are few descriptions of people's actual experiences of working with dirt. For instance, Anderson's three publications (2000, 2001, 2003) use the same examples from a single study to illustrate domestic workers' experiences of exploitative cleaning work.

Therefore before commencing my own analysis, I explore whether it is possible to conduct an objective analysis of the materiality of cleaning work experiences, as demanded by Wolkowitz (2007/2012), without reference to dirt's

---

[114] Note the Latin (Albin, 2012:234) and Anglo-French (Merriam-Webster, http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/menial) origins of the word 'menial' lie in 'related to the household' and not 'demeaning' work.

moral meanings for the researched and the researcher. I then discuss how the material reality of the socially constructed work of outsourced cleaning was conceptualised and experienced by my respondents. Finally, I consider the feminist implications of my findings, which suggest the physical is inextricably linked with the moral, as well their implications for the rest of my analysis (see Chapters 5–7).

Cleaning: drudgery or dirty work

An instinctive revulsion to dirt occurs throughout the animal kingdom, related to a fear of infection, of ill-health (Curtis, 2007). While privileging this biological behaviour, Curtis concedes that the social, in the form of 'experience and culture' shapes the human reaction to dirt (2007:660), that is, 'social' associations between germs and dirt pre-date modern Western scientific theories (Douglas, 1966/2002). Disgust is in part invoked by fear, fear of the upper classes of a perceived attrition of class boundaries (van Dongen, 2001). Yet in much sociological research there is an epistemological assumption that everyone understands dirt and the associated disgust in a similar way, the researcher's way (van der Geest, 2002). For instance, Longhurst argued that the privileging of the [White] mind over the [marginalised] body had meant that 'abject sights/sites' could lead to 'dis-ease and dis-comfort' among geographers (2000:90). Consequently, body–space relations had received limited attention in geography (Longhurst, 1997, 2000). Salzinger's research, however, into the working practices of middle-class Latina domestic workers belonging to the Choices cooperative in Los Angeles challenged her assumptions about housework as being naturally demeaning work to the extent that she herself began to see outsourced housework as 'clean' rather than 'dirty' work (1991:158). My journal extract illustrates differences between perceptions of dirt between myself and my (English) friend and my (Indian) husband.

Surely some things, excrement, for instance, generally elicits revulsion (Cox, 2016). However, there are 'contradictions in meanings' of nurses' reactions to dirt, including faeces, depending on, for instance, their age, length of time in the work, their relationships with the patients, their own mental and physical states at the time of dealing with dirt and presence of organisational support (van Dongen, 2001:209). Infection-control practices might differ depending on whether a nurse is dealing with non-infective or infective dirt. In the absence of clear-cut infection, nurses' handling of patients and use of protective gear may be

influenced by how well they know them, their appearance (dirty/clean) and age. For instance, faecal incontinence in a child might not be considered disgusting. In other words, wider social notions of dirt and associated disgust might override scientific protocols (Jackson and Griffiths, 2014). Outside the care setting, historically, communal defecation was the norm worldwide until private facilities appeared as a marker of status. Explanations of appropriate human defecation practices based on social hygiene with private toilets as the norm developed much later (Elias, 1994/2003). Even so, a third of us still defecate in the open (World Health Organization (WHO), 2012), and in some areas, private toilets are dry toilets that are emptied by manual scavenging.[115] In India, because of the persistence of caste traditions (Dickey, 2000a,b; Frøystad, 2003; Gill, 2009/2012), particular groups of people are compelled to do this work under dire conditions, for instance without being appropriately paid for it (Human Rights Watch, 2014). In Ghana, van der Geest accordingly felt uneasy when asking a night soil-collector about his work experience, but then was surprised by his response.

> Mr. Atia … took pride in his work and had no inhibitions telling us about it. … he saw his work as clean work and was aware of the fact that people needed him. He knew his value and 'he had his price'. (van der Geest, 2002:203)

Mr Atia's experience of manual scavenging differed from that of the Indian workers, partly because of the way the work was constructed by those who required such services and his own approach to it as a private entrepreneur. He earned more than other manual labourers in the region (van der Geest, 2002), whereas the Indian manual scavengers were often compensated only in kind (Human Rights Watch, 2014). Moreover, if in urban areas excrement is dirt as there is no use for it, in rural areas, it is matter *in* place, matter that enriches the soil in which we grow our food (Cox, 2007/2012b). Urine was used to wash linen in Europe until the industrial period (Cox, 2007/2012a), and urine therapy features in Asian medicinal traditions and in contemporary Western alternative medicine (Christy, 2005; Peschek-Bohmer and Schreiber, n.d.).

---

[115] Scavenging commonly means searching rubbish heaps for useful materials. But 'manual scavenging' refers to the work of night soil-collectors.

What did my respondents think? Before I present their views, I reiterate my analysis is limited to a particular context: urban living spaces with modern sanitation systems, from where some dirt eventually 'disappears' through relatively invisible routes (underground sewage system and organised rubbish collection) to processing facilities in public spaces.[116]

How often should a house be cleaned?

> at both an individual and collective level, we are driven to eradicate dirt by a complex and often contradictory web of scientific and cultural, rational and emotional, physiological and psychological prompts. (Campkin and Cox, 2007/2012:2)

Most UK academics said their house was less clean when they had not outsourced cleaning.

> None of us would do the cleaning and then we'd sort of have a day when we would decide we would clean, and we would clean and then the things would get done and we'd go 'Ooh, ooh okay!' ... (Tanya)

Indeed, standards of housework in Western dual-earner households appear to have fallen (Bianchi *et al.*, 2000, 2012; Collins, 2007; Lader *et al.*, 2006; Robinson and Milkie, 1998; Sullivan, 2006). Also, some rooms were cleaned more often than others.

> The kitchen floor I clean every day, ... sometimes twice a day, because ... it gets really dirty. Even now if you see in the kitchen, you'll see that it's covered in muck. Cause it has dirty shoes, and food and cereal is always all over the floor, bread and so on. So I do that virtually every day. But I have a cleaner who comes once a week and vacuums the rest of the house. (Peggy)

Generally, the amount of unpaid and outsourced housework was greater in India (Figures 9 and 10, Chapter 3). But Pratibha and Bindu had relaxed standards since they had stopped outsourcing. Among the rest, standards expected from service-providers varied. In both countries, standards also varied between women (Figure 9, Chapter 3). Libby, a British single mother, disparaged her sister-in-law's ironing and cleaning routines.

---

[116] About half of the Indian service-providers used communal toilets and one woman had no access to a toilet (except in a service-user's home).

> But I do think this is about our ideas around what needs to be done, domesticity in the house, like, my sister-in-law ... *every* day she cleans or does some kind of domestic stuff for five hours, ... ironing every bit of underwear and every bit of thing that you've ever washed, [whereas] I do not have an iron. I wouldn't buy something that needed ironing, ironing just doesn't happen!

Navita, an Indian singleton, said she was 'very finicky' and examined 'every nook and corner ... [to] see what is not clean'. Her 'whole concentration is on what is not clean'. Nandita, another singleton, however, was 'not one of those people who try all the time to see specks of dust in the house. I'm just a minimalist, that is my principle.' Back in the UK, Pauline's account of co-housing residents' attitudes to cleaning revealed this could be an area of tension for the community more generally:

> [T]here was quite a wide range of views, and it wasn't gendered either, about the level of cleanliness people expected. There was one woman whom I remember said, 'Well, I don't bother in my house, so why should I bother about common areas?' [...] And then, one of the men was very, very clear that he expected cleaning to be done and done properly ...

Indeed, an Australian survey found little difference between men and women's attitudes towards standards (e.g. 60% of men and 57% of women thought you should clean behind furniture at least once a month) (Bittman and Pixley, 1995, cited in Bittman and Pixley, 1997:160–162; see also Robinson and Milkie (1998) for differences in standards in the USA). Attitudes to standards also vary in different phases of life (see Chapter 3).

The UK cleaning service-providers generally cleaned more often than the academics (Figure 12). Since most service-providers were working-class women, it is likely that this difference was underpinned by classed ideologies linking respectability with cleanliness (Cox, 2016; Hand, 1992; Metcalfe, 2013; see analysis in Chapter 3).[117] Still, I saw a large variation in the standard of

---

[117] Until recently, these included the whitened doorstep and polished door-knob, which were ways of affirming the 'sanctity' and respectability of the home within (Hand, 1992; Nicholson, 2015).

cleanliness in the homes I visited (*Amelia*'s had birdfeed strewn over the floor of the living room while *Martha*'s was 'squeaky' clean).

Figure 12: The bars represent the frequency of doing each cleaning sub-task in the UK service-user and service-provider households

Note: the scale is not the same in the two parts of the figure, see key for details

(a) UK service-users

(b) UK service-providers†
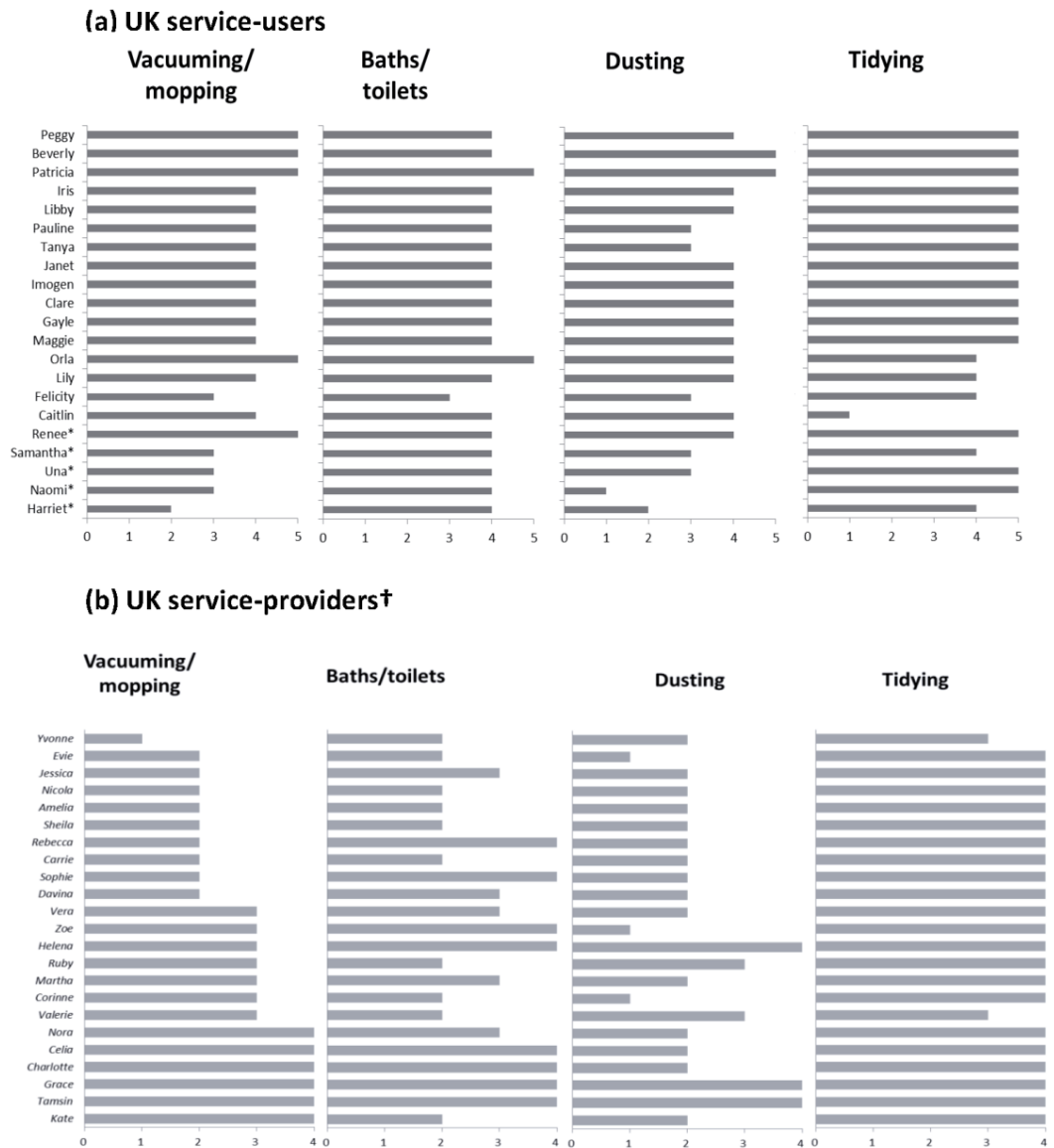
*Not currently outsourcing cleaning   †N = 23 (question not asked to remaining service-providers)

KEY: (a) UK service-users

1 = Sub-task done sporadically
2 = Sub-task done about once a month
3 = Sub-task done less than once a week
4 = Sub-task done once a week
5 = Sub-task done more than once a week

(b) UK service-providers

1 = Sub-task done less than once a week
2 = Sub-task done 1–2 times a week
3 = Sub-task done 3–4 times a week
4 = Sub-task done 5 or more times week

The Indian service-providers cleaned daily, but given that their living spaces were materially very different from the other groups – all domestic activities carried out in the same space – a comparative analysis is precluded. In my view though,

here the physical realities of slum living (rat infestation and lack of basic civic amenities (Suresh Reddy and Snehalatha, 2011)) appeared to play as great a role as symbolic notions. But again, some rooms appeared cleaner and more pleasant than others. In sum, despite geographical considerations (e.g. higher dust levels in India) my respondents in both cultures did not ascribe to a universal, ahistorical standard of cleanliness. So how much cleaning is absolutely necessary?

For many service-users, housework was not 'the "real" work' (see Chapter 3). Tanya did 'enough to keep things ticking over' but acknowledged that 'you don't want to be depressed when you walk in your front door, because the house is a disaster zone' (see also Hochschild, 2001; Metcalfe, 2013; Nelson, 2004). Many other UK academics and internet posts (e.g. Mumsnet, 2014a,n, also posts and comments at Baby Center (2013) and Soukup (2012)) said how nice it was to come home to an already clean or orderly house on the day their service-provider had been.

> And it's not just about helping me achieve what I want to achieve. You know, I actually like going back to a house that looks nicer than I would've left it.
> (Orla)

In parallel with these accounts, a recurring theme in the interviews with the UK service-providers was 'appreciative customers'. Many left thank-you notes or sent thank-you texts after coming home.

In the Indian setting, only Seema, who spent much time travelling, said it was a relief to come back to an already clean and orderly house. This did not mean the others did not care. When housework is done daily to the same extent, the house looks the same every day when those working outside return (Rafkin, 1998:158). Thus, like Navita said, Indian service-users were more likely to note what was not done, the matter 'out of place'. If a service-provider did not come, the service-user could experience the heart-sink noted in the UK. An Indian part-live-out service-provider's account confirmed my interpretation of the silences in the Indian data. *She* wished that *her* service-user would appreciate what *she* had done rather than focusing on what *she* had missed.

> I have noted that however pleased I am that I have done everything in a tip-top way, that *this time* ma'am will come back and say, '*Mohini*, you have done a great job'. But ma'am will somehow point out some deficiency or the other. Then I get that feeling within me, 'I've been working since morning and I'm

tired, and now see, ma'am is speaking to me in this way.' Yes this hurts a bit. If ma'am would appreciate at that time, how much work I have done it would make me a bit happier. This is how it should be. (*Mohini*)

The post-war Western cereal-box nuclear family ideology also emphasised the role of an always-already orderly home in refreshing the spirits of the tired worker (man) as he stepped in through the door (Bianchi *et al.*, 2012; Gatrell, 2008; Lutz, 2011; Rathborne, 1924, cited in Oakley, 1974/1977:228). My respondents' comments that being greeted by 'order' rather than 'disorder' made a difference indicate that this is not a gendered ideology: whosoever goes 'out' to work would like a wife (see also Introduction and Chapter 3):

Why did we start [outsourcing cleaning]?! ... it wasn't so much to create more time, but to create more pleasantness, because what tends to happen is that things just don't get done and umm, and so it was to make them get done, to make things less unpleasant. (Una)

having a house that feels nice, that really does matter to me, otherwise I get miserable as well ... And I think in terms of wellbeing, it really is making an enormous contribution and I mean that quite seriously, not in a kind of patronising, sort of, you know, 'Oh your work does matter' [kind of way] I honestly believe, ... more so than if I spent that money on an hour with a psychotherapist. (Felicity)

In other words, beyond a point in contemporary urban social life, when people finish a (paid) shift of dealing with disorder,[118] coming home to some always-already order seems desirable as part of the 'good life' (see also Metcalfe, 2013:220–222). This notion may be in part grounded in symbolic ideologies of order, status and respectability, which are internalised in childhood (Douglas, 1966/2002:50; Elias, 1994/2003) to varying extents. Certainly everyone may not feel this way: Quentin Crisp's flippant dismissal of housework because '[a]fter the first four years the dirt doesn't get any worse' is well known. In early-twentieth-century America, 'slums' were partly a consequence of rustic migrants continuing to live by rural traditions in urban settings, e.g. keeping livestock in their

---

[118] Because that is what all work is about, creating order out of, 'impos[ing] system' on the 'inherently untidy' disorder that is life on Earth (Douglas, 1966/2002:5) for different purposes, whether it is marking an academic essay or running a country.

basements. Proselytising middle-class women, the domestic-science educators, 'had to teach' these migrants middle-class norms about privacy and order. The migrant community spirit and rural ways were denigrated in this discourse (Ehrenreich and English, 1978/1988:171; see Cox, 2016 for a similar situation in Britain). Ehrenreich and English (1978/1988:161) also sent questions to six home economics professors and the American Home Economics Association about the significance of germ theories for modern ideas of good house-cleaning. The few responses all struggled to provide convincing data on links between 'good' cleaning methods and absence of germs, and house-cleaning and family health. Thus classed urban notions of 'order' may be dismissed by feminist researchers. Feminist critiques of 'the absurdities and ethnocentricities of the past', however, are not located in a moral vacuum (Ahlander and Bahr, 1995:61). Although strict European norms about 'order' have been slackening since the early twentieth century, the reduced or variable 'order' displayed on the individual level, *à la* Quentin Crisp, is a bounded 'relaxation' because at a structural level, 'the more advanced feeling of what is offensive [had] been on the whole secured. It is relaxation within a framework of an already established standard' (Elias, 1994/2003:119). So while Western dual-earning couples might be doing less housework, they might despair going home at the same time (Hochschild, 2001) and Indian households continue to depend on domestic workers for that good feeling day after day. The success of the British reality television programmes *Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners* and *How Clean is Your House?* (Channel 4, 2016a,b) also bears this out. Otherwise why would people who have been putting off housework indefinitely sign up to change the status quo, and viewers find it fascinating to watch the process?

The exploitation in paid domestic work in many societies and historical periods suggests the link between order and (gendered, class and racialised) status and respectability lies more in the process of creation of order than in the outcome, in the freedom from the hard graft of removing 'disgusting' dirt (Anderson, 2000, 2001; Davidoff, 1995; Lutz, 2007, see also Chapters 1 and 3). However, weekly or fortnightly outsourcing of cleaning, or even daily outsourcing does not provide total freedom from the housework required to maintain soothing levels of order. Family members, rather than being oblivious of dirt and disorder, simply may not expect to have to do the work (see Chapter 3). So if some outsourcing is considered acceptable, what can be outsourced?

Dealing with physical dirt or waste

> The house needs tidying as well as cleaning and I think that's going to be interesting … (*Celia*)

> I am agonising over getting a cleaner. I can't seem to get my head round it. It feels wrong to me to have someone in my house '*picking up after*' me. I don't know why but it does. (Mumsnet, 2013a; my emphasis)

For some academic feminists, '[t]he ability of dirt to act as a means of social classification is revealed [most] vividly in the organization of paid domestic labour. Paying others to deal with the most *intimate* forms of dirt reinforces social status and signals it to others' (Campkin and Cox, 2007/2012:6; my emphasis; see also Ehrenreich, 2002/2010; Lutz, 2011; Chapter 1). The angst is reproduced in wider society as the post from Mumsnet (2013a) above illustrates. This post was part of a larger discussion set off by someone who noted that '[d]omestic cleaners clean intimate, private parts of our houses, and clean up our bodily mess …', where 'the bits of the house I have washed in, slept in, thrown my dirty tissues in' were considered 'private/intimate'.

Service-users in both countries construed specific tasks as 'personal' and out of bounds for outsourcing, but there was no consistent pattern. Bed-making was outsourced by some but for others this was a personal task.

> Umm, the cat's litter tray, so cleaning out the cat's mess, umm, doing things to a *dirty* loo, anything to do with my, with the bed. The bed that's been slept in, I shouldn't expect the cleaner to make it or change it. Because these are personal, and for the same I wouldn't ever ask her to do washing, clothes, these seem to me to be personal jobs. If you like, I see that she's got a defined role which is to keep the surfaces of the house clean and that's it … there's a fairly inflexible set of, you know, category of things that *Sandra* does, that seems to me, I wouldn't feel at all good about asking her to do any of the more intimate, like 'dirty' jobs. (Maggie)

Maggie expected *Sandra* to empty the kitchen bin, but not because she thought it was a disgusting task. Maggie could do it herself, like all the work she asked Sandra to do. Her decision to outsource cleaning was part of wider decisions to outsource various domestic tasks.

> If I thought that I was asking her to do something that was deeply personal, for instance if I tried to employ somebody simply in order to, as an example,

empty the bin, and do nothing else, cause I think emptying the bin is disgusting, I would think that was an unpleasant job, to create a job and to say this is a disgusting job … It's something that I *could* do but I decided I have got a lot of commitments, in the same way I could make my own clothes but I've decided I'm going to go to the market to do that. That there are jobs I can – I make the choice, do I want pay for this or do I want to use up my own time to do it? …

Generally my respondents were not constructing the work as demeaning per se. Were they giving me socially desirable answers? Was Maggie actually choosing to do 'nice' work and passing on her dirty work because of her comparatively privileged position (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a)? In India, although laundry, including bedlinen, and ironing were frequently outsourced (Appendix D, Table A5), many service-users washed their own underwear and some emptied their bathroom bin themselves. In the UK too, there was some unease around service-providers seeing or touching dirty undergarments, unease that was marginally greater around female underwear (which may have menstrual blood stains or remnants of vaginal discharge). Bujra (2000) noted that some Tanzanian service-users expected their service-providers to wash their underwear.

More generally though, in contemporary societies, few people wholly clean up after themselves. My respondents' used sanitary products, and the water they used for washing soiled undergarments eventually entered the public space, but no-one mentioned being concerned about the further processing of this 'personal' dirt by male waste/water treatment operatives.[119] The water we use to wash dirt in the kitchen, bath and toilet is cleaned and decontaminated by someone else, as is the garbage we ourselves or a domestic service-provider dumps in the bin. Just because this work is no longer done on a one-to-one basis – 'my' dirt becomes subsumed into 'our' collective dirt and is done at a distance, and the worker is not under 'my' direct control – does not make it clean work or less personal. The restricted (to private) and gendered nature of the concerns around what is and is not personal work, suggests that the meanings of 'secularly defiled' underwear are underpinned by intersecting perceptions of what counts

---

[119] I come back to this point in more detail later.

as physical (personal) dirt and wider beliefs around sexuality and culture (Douglas, 1966/2002).

One difference between the UK and India was the concept of 'pre-tidying', that is tidying up before the cleaning service-provider was due for their weekly/fortnightly visit. Some UK service-users said they tidied up because they wanted the service-provider to get on with the real work of cleaning.

> Yeah! I pre-tidy, so I don't umm, you know, all the kids toys and whatever, I just – that's like a nightmare, cause to me that's what's obstructing her getting on with her job, so I kind of you know, we do have this, you know, 'Get it up! it's cause Robin's coming tomorrow and she has to hoover', so the kids are kind of getting into that. But yeah, I do kind of like try and, ... try and do stuff so that she can maximise her clean, actual cleaning rather than just messing around, yeah! (Libby)

A few women felt uncomfortable about asking someone to sort out their mess. When Renee was on maternity leave, although she had a househusband, she outsourced cleaning because 'even with the two of us, we still found that we just couldn't keep the mess under control'. However, after two months she stopped outsourcing because she realised their problem was tidying rather than cleaning:

> but it didn't last for very long. Umm, ... I think the reason was partly that we felt it didn't seem to help that much because the problem we were having wasn't actually so much with the cleaning but it was with tidying. And, I mean, maybe there are people – I don't know – who have cleaners who come in and actually tidy up their things, d'you know? ... We certainly wouldn't have felt able to ask. (Renee)

What did the service-providers think of all this? In the Mumsnet discussion I referred to at the start of this section, a few cleaning service-providers stated they did not agree with the original poster's notions of intimate spaces and cleaning work: 'Er..I don't clean anybody's private intimate areas' (Mumsnet, 2013a). Nor is there consensus in the literature about the 'personal' in housecleaning. Bujra (2000) found that doing laundry was demeaning for male Tanzanian domestic workers. Gregson and Lowe (1994a) used the term 'personal dirt' while describing the work done by the cleaners in their study but Meagher defined house-cleaning as 'jobs that do not involve personal care' (2003:8). Romero's (2002:185) sample of Chicana service-providers did not include the *personal* tasks of laundry, ironing and childcare in their housecleaning services. In contrast, the European

Federation for Services to Individuals (2013) includes ironing in household rather than personal services. In the UK, domiciliary care workers' job descriptions also might make a distinction between personal service work, which includes intimate body work such as cleaning up human excrement, and household work, which is called domestic work, and includes ironing (Draycott Nursing, n.d.; Rubery *et al.*, 2011). Lutz (2011), drawing on Anderson (2000), argues that it is not possible to distinguish between object- and person-related tasks within the context of home life. This might be so within familial care, but the UK service-providers who had been carers previously confirmed this distinction: 'We don't do personal care now … (*Nora*). *Amelia*'s primary interest, T-shirt printing, required her to work flexible hours in her second job so she took up house-cleaning (see Chapter 6) even though she preferred care work. Cleaning personal dirt had meaning for her, cleaning a house did not:

> Yeah! I don't know why I prefer to do one over the other. I think it may be because the house is material, and a person is obviously physical. (*Amelia*)

Other service-providers included removal of pet faeces in personal work.

> I'm happy to clean anything really [but] if they said to me, I've got a cat, will you change her litter tray, we talked about that, and we said no, that's a *personal* responsibility. If they have a dog, will we go clean up the poo in the garden, no! (*Celia*)

But unlike the Filipino worker in Athens who hated removing dog hair from the carpets for an affluent service-user (Anderson, 2000, 2003) my respondents said removal of pet hair was not a problem. Some service-providers emptied bins. Bin liners introduced a barrier between the service-provider and personal (dirty) waste but perceptions varied regarding its meaning. *Charlotte* said because 'they're all in bin liners and I just pull them up, I don't see a biggie about it'. *Evie* said the contents of the bathroom bin were more 'personal' that those of the kitchen bin: 'some people … empty their bathroom bin because what's in it mightn't be very nice'. In all, the services offered by the UK service-providers varied. Some included ironing and others laundry work. A few offered grocery shopping, which elderly clients were more likely to take up.

Several UK service-providers did consider tidying up – as in 'picking up after others' – especially underclothes, demeaning, similar to cleaners in previous

research (Anderson, 2000, 2001; Lutz, 2011; Pérez and Stallaert, 2016; Rafkin, 1998; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002).

> Well I think … because now people …, they treat you better but they shouldn't expect you to pick stuff … I don't mind, I'll do it … I don't care if it's littered, I'll pick it all up and put it away before I start, no problem, but I don't think people should expect you to do that, because that's like years ago when people were like your servant and they treated people like skivvies … And you had to pick up everything for these people and that's how they treated you, not with respect. Cause if you have respect for someone you don't expect them to come into your house and pick up things that you shouldn't have to do. (*Davina*)

But many considered stripping the bed and putting on fresh linen a housekeeping activity. While the service-providers were appreciative of customers who tidied up before their arrival, some of them did not mind putting away things such as children's toys or washed dishes, or doing some washing-up, as long as their customers factored in additional time in their fees.

> Why pay a cleaner and do the work yourself? I often used to be told 'Oh! the house is in such a mess', yes that's what you employ me for. (*Nicola*)

> Washing the bedding, sometimes, I've got a couple of clients where I'll strip the bed, put it on to wash, but I just leave it in there really, I'm not there long enough for the wash to end and sort it out. [Later] sometimes there's a bit of crockery lying around, I don't mind washing that up. I've got one client, she's got twin babies, and I'll wash their bottles and put them in the steriliser for her. I'm quite laid-back in my approach really. In that I'll do pretty much anything [in the agreed time] … (*Jessica*)

Some service-providers said they preferred a house to be somewhat messy, otherwise the outcomes of *their* work would not clearly visible.

> I don't think there's a need to clean the house before the cleaner goes, which is what some people tend to do, because I like to go in and, when they come back or when they see it, know I've been. (*Sophie*)

Mess other than personal items such as clothes and shoes became a problem when it made the service-provider feel demeaned and disempowered. This feeling was more likely to be brought on by the quality of the social relationship within which they were working (see Chapter 7) than the nature of the work itself. For

instance, *Tamsin* described how dealing with mess made her feel demeaned in one client's house but not in another's. She distinguished between people might live with increasing mess and disorder until they reach a tipping point and people who expect a paid provider to tidy their mess simply because the latter is the 'the cleaner':[120]

> I've got one lady, she has five hours a week … she's got health problems, so she is there, but she can't do a lot. But she's got a family and you can leave some bin-bags on the table and they'll be exactly in the same position next week. Following week. So nothing is done in between. … But they don't look down on you … It's just their way of living. You got to accept that people live in different … I like to be clean, but, you know, some people, it doesn't bother them. They're not dirty, the house is clean, they're just cluttered and that's their way of life.
>
> [Later]
>
> I've got one customer … I think she's training to be a doctor but she doesn't speak to us – this is the really untidy house, she just leaves everything … They'll leave wrappers, and they've had tea last night and things are still all over the place, they're just piled on – I mean it's just like they think the cleaner's coming in today. … So it is quite, and … she doesn't really speak to us, she just grunts at you, and you just feel a bit as though she looks down at you really. (*Tamsin*)

The anxiety around pre-tidying/cleaning was absent in the Indian interviews. One reason might have been that cleaning was often outsourced as fragmented tasks, and a live-out service-provider may clean only ground-level surfaces (see Chapter 5 for analysis of fragmented labour), which is done from a squatting position. (This position itself is not demeaning when, for instance, the person squatting has paid to put themselves in the position as part of 'exercise' in a gym or yoga class. But when the person squatting is being paid to squat it becomes associated with low status.[121]) Some service-users may be wary of live-out providers touching their belongings because the service-provider appears

---

[120] This is also the situation where the customer often 'forgets' the time it takes for this work when negotiating payment.
[121] I thank an acquaintance who pointed this out while we conversed about my PhD when I was volunteering in a charity warehouse in Calais in February 2016.

comparatively 'dirty' (Rani and Kaul, 1986). For instance, a woman who lives in a slum with open drainage, poorly maintained public toilets, who bathes in her one-room shack with water she fetches from a communal tap at 4am in the morning or late in the evening, who walks to work in well-worn clothes and footwear on dusty, littered footpaths or even cycles to work in the heat of summer is likely to appear grubby and smelling of sweat in the cool, pristine interior of a service-user's house. Unfortunately, some privileged people conflate the inability to practise middle-class hygiene rituals due to lack of amenities (Suresh Reddy and Snehalatha, 2011) with symbolic dirt (Dickey, 2000b; Frøystad, 2003; Mattila, 2011) and the cleaning service-provider works within an invisible fenced-off space.[122] Moreover, the social distance between the provider and user might preclude the user feeling the need to 'impress' the provider. On the practical level, since cleaning is a daily task, a special effort to 'tidy' may have been subsumed within the daily tidying.

The part-live-out worker in contrast is likely to appear 'clean'. They often do tidying and related tasks such as fetching a glass of water or serving tea to guests, resulting in the worker being on their feet for hours on end, often in an 'invisible' way. For these workers, this work then is not just physically tiring but also becomes symbolically demeaning because of the conditions of work, similar to *Tamsin*'s experience in the UK (Singh, 2007:163).

> Yes, I think some work is [personal work], like when clothes are left lying around, your own things you should put away yourself. Okay, we can do the other work, but … the clothes are lying somewhere, the shoes are lying elsewhere, and everything needs to be tidied up. I feel that if he did this himself, it would make my work a bit easier. (*Pallavi*)

Pallavi's service-user appeared to have the sense of entitlement grounded in the 'structure of feeling' in a 'culture of servitude' (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). But how value-free are the Western secular beliefs that are couched in terms of scientific truths? Douglas argued that the Western perception that 'our ideas [are] hygienic where theirs are symbolic' is flawed, and 'the difference between pollution behaviour in one part of the world and another is only a matter of

---

[122] Similar discourses have been reported elsewhere, for instance, in Brazil, service-users construct their lifestyle and world as distinct from that of service-providers (de Santana Pinho and Silva, 2010).

detail' (1966/2002:43). In the UK, notions of the lower orders as 'the great unwashed' underpin contemporary cultural differentiators of class (Skeggs, 1997/2002), and cleaning is still seen as a job fit for particular groups of people based on class, race, gender and (lack of) intelligence (Cox, 2006; Gregson and Lowe, 1994a, see also Chapter 7)). *Evie*, a middle-class woman who took up cleaning due to lack of other work alternatives at a particular time in life said it was annoying when people kept asking her 'but surely you must want to be something else or do something else?':

> So yes there is, there is definitely stigma, despite the fact I earn, well including my caring, I earn £750 a month, I can work the hours I choose, and totally fit around my children's, I can drop them at school, I can pick them up if they're ill, I can be with them, holidays I can be with them, and umm, so really there shouldn't be any stigma at all. I should be able to hold my head high and say this is what I do. But there is constantly that question of a, umm, but surely you must want to be something else, or do something else.

Thus, while I do not excuse explanations based on cleanliness of the 'worker' in India, I also cannot accept Mattila's piecemeal explanation of her practices as rational compared with those of her Indian research participants as idiosyncratic:

> If I think of the periods when I myself have hired somebody to clean my house, it has been the quality of cleaning work that has mattered the most. For the employers in Jaipur [a city in western India], ... this seemed of little concern. In fact, none of them mentioned it as a criterion when recruiting a new worker ... It was more important that the person was clean than that they cleaned properly ... (Mattila, 2011:241–242).

Nor can I totally discount some prejudices in my UK sample of service-users, perhaps if I had interviewed more than once I might have uncovered some.

So what is 'personal' in domestic work? My research data, observations in and out of the field, and conversations with people in general show this is not an easy question to answer – meanings are underpinned by wider social and cultural discourses around 'dirt' and 'dirty' and conditions of work, regardless of cultural context. One task that I have not yet considered is toilet cleaning. In some (feminist) spaces, toilet cleaning is the ultimate social equaliser

(Ehrenreich, 2002/2010:91; Maushart, 2003). Is it demeaning for a cleaning service-provider to do toilet-cleaning as part of contemporary housekeeping services?

My analysis, first, takes as its point of departure that defecating in the toilet is not 'natural' – the toilet is symbolic of the social state of being 'civilised', where historically, being 'civilised' is a way of staking claim to privilege (Elias, 1994/2003). In the UK context, since private toilets and toileting has been the norm for several decades, and many public spaces also have private toilet facilities, this link between status, being civilised and private toileting has shifted to, for instance, having a Villeroy and Boch toilet rather than a B&Q toilet. In India, having a toilet is a priority among those who still do not have one, so eventually the link between private toileting and status will also shift. Thus, second, my analysis considers the private toilet as part of the seamless, sheltered contemporary urban living experience: 24-hour electric and water supply, central heating and air-conditioning, plumbing for sewerage, organised recycling and rubbish disposal, etc.

Some service-users mentioned they took care to leave the toilet 'respectably clean' for the cleaning service-provider to clean, similar to the Pakeha[123] men in Longhurst's (2000) research into men's attitudes towards bodily mess and bathrooms. These men talked about checking for floaters and streakers after they had been to the toilet. Several men did not clean the toilet themselves, but they did not like leaving 'bodily residues' for the person who did clean it.

No service-provider said they 'liked' toilet cleaning, but a few UK service-providers said that they had not encountered dirty toilets.

> They're always normally clean, to be honest. Yeah! I don't really ever come … I mean I have heard people that I've known, they've said 'Oh! God, I went to this house and it was really bad, and it'd been left there', but I've never ever had any problems, most of my clients are quite clean already to be fair. (*Grace*)

The rest had cleaned dirty toilets, and over half said they would rather customers did not leave toilets dirty. Why were these literate women willing to clean other

---

[123] White New Zealanders.

people's clean, and even dirty, toilets, when most could have found a job in another industry or still did another job (see Chapter 6)? First, toilet-cleaning was considered as part of their work (Rafkin, 1998) and you did not give up clients just because they left the toilet dirty.

> In my personal experience, I think that if you put yourself down as a cleaner you've got to be prepared to do everything. ... I mean you can't go to a house and say I'm not going to clean the toilets because it's part of the set-up and the job ... (*Sophie*)

Every job had good and bad aspects and, at the time of the interview, for most women, the advantages of being a cleaning service-provider outweighed the returns offered by other jobs and the disadvantages of cleaning work (see Chapter 6). In many women's experience though, people were less likely to leave the toilet *dirty*. Still, some women said dirty toilets was indicative of demeaning behaviour and if they were in a position to do so, they dropped such clients. *Sheila* had 'learned over the past year to become more, a lot more picky' when potential customers approached her:

> when I first started out, I did some really disgusting places. Whereas now I can gauge it a bit better as to ... if these are nice people, if they are going to treat me well. If they've got high standards anyway themselves.

The remaining women, often those with children of their own, appreciated customers who did not leave toilets dirty, but said it did not bother them. Wearing gloves[124] and armed with bleach, the task was done.

> Messy toilets, not literally, just not flushed, but yeah there is, sometimes. Dirty. But all I do is, I check the kitchen and the toilet first anyway when I go in, and if there is scale on the toilet, poo in the toilet, I'll just put some bleach in and I'll leave that, go and do the kitchen and it's disintegrated by that time. I just use a brush to get rid of it. Nothing fazes me really. (*Jessica*)

Tamsin, who had been a nursery nurse, said 'sometimes you have children, but that doesn't bother me. That sort of thing [floaters and streakers] doesn't bother

---

[124] Is wearing gloves only about modern 'hygienic' practices or also a way of distancing oneself from symbolic meanings of dirt? I did not consider this question in my interviews but my findings show it is worth researching.

me'. For her, and a few others, the worst jobs were end-of-tenancy cleans: 'the state of the house, dirty nappies and sanitary towels still … it was horrible and rancid …'. They had given up this line of work after one experience. Some UK providers who had elderly clients took the view that urine splashes, on the toilet and around it, were inevitable. Yet some women particularly sought elderly clients because they saw other opportunities in this area. For instance, *Tamsin* wanted to expand her cleaning service to elderly clients into a broader 'home-help' service because she liked doing elder care but did not want to go through the route of formalised care work.

In the Indian setting caste still defines occupation (see Chapters 1 and 2). Thus, service-providers from both higher and lower castes can refuse to clean toilets, stating it is the work of designated toilet cleaners, the *jamadars/jamadarnis* (Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Singh, 2001; see Chapter 5). Some service-users included in the research cited here, and a few of my respondents cleaned their toilets themselves while others employed *jamadars/jamadarnis.* For instance, Lata had two households. The toilet in her flat was cleaned by a cleaning service-provider. In the family home, they had a male cleaning service-provider who cleaned the bathroom but not the toilet. The family did this work themselves. Lata said the man had not cleaned toilets before and she felt she could not ask him to do it. Previous to this, when they had lived together, the toilets had been cleaned by a *jamadar* contracted for the estate. Only one part-live-out provider said she did not clean toilets because she did not like doing this task. The remaining service-providers who cleaned toilets were ambivalent about it, arguing that stealing and prostitution were dirty work, they were doing honest service work.

> I don't want to learn fancy cooking to do as a job. [...] I think, I mean in cooking, sometimes you might put too little or too much salt, not enough chillies, and also I mean, with cooking, you could be stuck the whole day in the client's kitchen. With *jaddhu-poccha*,[125] I do my work and I come away, you do your work – I do the sweeping, I do the mopping, I wash the dishes and the clothes if any and I mean then it's done. [...] Do any work, there is no shame in doing any work. Shame lies in stealing. Whatever your work, do

---

[125] Hindi term for sweeping-mopping.

it sincerely and eat three meals a day thanks to your hard work. Rest, there is no shame in doing work. Our work, this work, now, don't we do this work in our own houses? In the village we take the cow-dung, we carry the cow-dung on our heads, even in the rainy weather, get wood [to cook], we get grass for the cattle, so even in the village all this work is there to do. I mean, in the village we do all our own work, … we are also doing the same here. (*Sonali*)

This discourse of 'honest' work is also prevalent among other low-status 'dirty' occupations such as butchery and the work of cleaning human waste that happens outside the boundaries of the private home (Simpson *et al.*, 2014; Slutskaya *et al.*, 2016). It could be argued that all the service-providers were using the 'ideological techniques' of reframing, recalibrating and refocusing, and social comparison (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999) to maintain their self-esteem in front of me. But Ashforth and Kreiner's theorisation focused on the present job whereas other research shows that meanings of work are also shaped by workers' other work and life experiences (Stacey, 2005). This certainly was the case for the UK service-providers (see Chapter 6). The Indian women, however, had few options available, and most had not done any other work (see Chapter 6). Still, many, like *Sonali*, had migrated from villages where they had done back-breaking physical work in the fields, often in harsh weather conditions. They had handled cow-dung as part of their housework. Cow-dung is mixed with mud and applied to floors and walls of many village dwellings for insulation and is also an efficient cooking fuel because it burns slowly. Perceptions of cleaning toilets located in the relatively much cleaner interiors of an urban service-user's home may have been influenced by previous experience of handling 'dirt'[126] as implied by *Sonali*.

Moreover, for many women, the conditions of work were little worse than the conditions under which they did their own housework, which is why perhaps *Kalpana*, a survivor of domestic sexual, other physical and verbal insults, said, 'we did it for the people in our own house [who abuse us], so what was the harm

---

[126] Domestic workers in rural Gujrat reported that carrying cow-dung and applying it to the walls and floors is the most arduous task for them (Kothari, 1997). However, cow-dung is also used for similar purposes in the West (e.g. production of biogas) – except here it is likely to be handled indirectly in an industrial processing unit whereas the rural Indian (woman or domestic worker) uses her bare hands. Cow-dung is also a rich source of manure for the fields where food for human consumption grows. So is cow-dung dirt or the conditions under which it is handled?

in doing it for others?' Under the highly patriarchal conditions of this section of Indian society (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; A.N. Singh, 2001; V. Singh, 2007), many service-providers lived not just with obvious, daily domestic abuse,[127] but also the general lack of status accorded to daughters, wives and daughters-in-law. The last role could be more degrading than that of a housewife. For instance, in the villages these women came from, a daughter-in-law will not sit next to her parents-in-law (e.g. if they are sitting on a bed, she will sit on a low stool or the floor) – similar to the master–servant situation that is distressing to witness (Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). I do not condone either situation and there were several indications in the interviews of struggle for agency. *Rashmi*, whose account revealed much exploitation had had her refusal to clean toilets accepted by her otherwise unreasonable service-users. But it is not possible to divorce the Indian service-providers' experiences of the material nature of the work of toilet cleaning from the wider context of their circumstances.

In previous research, reports of toilet cleaning as demeaning are also mostly linked to more broad exploitative work conditions of the domestic worker. For instance, a domestic worker being expected to flush the toilet after her employer had used it (Anderson, 2000, 2001, 2003: the example is quoted in all three publications). Hence it is difficult to discern how the particular physical work of toilet cleaning was actually experienced in these studies. Ehrenreich (2002/2010:91), an investigative journalist, found cleaning dirty toilets and removing pubic hair from baths repugnant. But she worked as an employee of a cleaning agency that employed Taylorist work practices (see Chapter 5), which reduce job autonomy, and may instil a sense of inauthenticity in the worker and heighten feelings of 'core disgust' (Goerdeler *et al.*, 2015). Rafkin (1998), another university-educated middle-class White American, whose parents employed a cleaner, worked as a private service-provider while establishing herself as a writer. She had no issues with hair in sinks, dirt-rings and soap scum in tubs and showers or toilets as long as they were clean. She disliked clearing up nail clippings and never changed beds – she found them 'very personal'. Many in my

---

[127] Domestic violence occurs across classes. However, in the context of the single interview, these women were more likely to talk about it because it often was part of their reason for doing paid work (see Chapter 6). In the other three groups, the women worked outside the home because as modern women they expected to do so.

sample drew a line at cleaning rental accommodation – people could leave properties in the most disgusting conditions and cleaning these could take a lot longer than bargained for. Many gave up this work after one experience. Gregson and Lowe (1994a) also reported that most of their sample of less-educated private cleaners (see Chapter 3) would not clean a house that was dirty beyond a certain limit. The example they provided was also not of a toilet but a generally grimy house.

A few service-providers said cleaning vomit or blood stains was disgusting. Elias (1994/2003) argued that the degree of revulsion towards bodily fluids depends on how far humans have managed to exert control over them. In the West, spitting is largely frowned on and easily controlled thus it evokes greater revulsion; vomiting probably produces similar feelings because it is a sign of ill-health (e.g. see Sandroll *et al.*, 2015; van Dongen, 2001). Also, viscous matter is perceived as more threatening possibly because it is neither solid nor liquid and thus harder to classify (order) (Douglas, 1966/2002). It 'slithers and slides' and spreads easily, invoking disgust (nurse's words in van Dongen, 2001:210).

Moreover, all 'intimate' personal activities, from defecation to sex, happen not just in private but also in the public sphere. Cleaning of dirt created in the process is routinely left to Others in both 'advanced' and 'developing' societies. A few of my UK respondents did both commercial and domestic cleaning (see Appendix C, Table 3) and people exhibited similar behaviours and attitudes to them as those documented in the private sphere (see also Sykes *et al.*, 2014).

> *Yvonne*: … I don't know if it is just in my head but you find that … some people are dead friendly and everything but you don't get the same sort of, similar sort of respect cause you're just the cleaner there, whereas they're working in the office … Even though that's not how it should be, because I've done both, on both sides of it, but from the outside coming in as the cleaner I don't like it.
>
> Lotika: Okay, so that feeling is there more in the office than in the house?
>
> *Yvonne*: Yeah, definitely. Yeah, yeah, cause the office, they're there to work and you're there to work but obviously they're like a sort of step above even, you know even when they're not but … that's how it feels.

Lotika: And what about the toilets. I mean public toilets, lots of people use them. How do you feel about that? Is there a difference between cleaning a public toilet and cleaning somebody's toilet at home?

Yvonne: … the warehouse toilet was disgusting, it was just … yeah! they weren't nice so it's a matter of just bleach everywhere.

Lotika: But you still do that though …

Yvonne: Yeah! You take the good with the bad don't you, because sometimes then when you're finishing at two on a Friday, everyone else is stuck till five, d'you know what I'm saying, like when the weather's nice and you can think oh! all right, I've only got three hours today, so, d'you know what I mean, while people are sat in the office, till five/six – you've just got to think of the good things as well.

Much other 'personal' work is also more commonly performed outside the home by others, such as hairdressing and personal banking and increasingly personal event planning (such as weddings; Hochschild, 2012). Personal work for others also happens in neo-professionalised service jobs: a third of over 1,000 female secretaries recently reported doing personal work for male bosses such as booking a back wax, walking the dog, researching for his child's homework, buying gifts for his wife, collecting his parent's ashes from a funeral parlour and sewing trouser seams (Truss *et al.*, 2013; see also Chapter 1). Any of this work can be experienced or not experienced as demeaning dirty work. I now discuss the implications of this analysis for theorisation of paid domestic work.

The limitations of theorising paid domestic work as dirty work

It is important for the development of feminism to transcend simplistic notions that housework is 'naturally' dirty work resulting in stigma … the structure of housework is determined by a variety of social factors … (Romero, 2002:74)

The biological reasons for body cleaning may deem it essential work (Curtis, 2007), with the sight and smell of human waste evoking a 'natural' reaction of disgust in most people. However, the work of cleaning of contemporary living spaces is socially constructed and continues to evolve. In this, some sense of order and/or cleanliness appears to be desirable for people to function, that is

the outcomes of housework are valued even if the processes are considered mundane. My findings suggest that today, how clean and orderly a private living space should be is governed by a 'complex algebra' (Douglas, 1966/2002:10) in the which variables include visceral reactions and historical processes of increasing, yet 'flexible', self-control as a marker of being civilised (Elias, 1994/2003:135) as well as of maintaining social order (Douglas, 1966/2002). What is perceived as material dirt is defined by the overarching moral norms of cleanliness-goodness–dirtiness-badness, it is difficult to separate the two (Douglas, 1966/2002; see also Dill, 1988; Meagher, 2003; Perry, 1998; Romero, 2002; Rose, 2004/2014; Stacey, 2005).

With regard to dirt, disgust and paid domestic work, based on an investigation of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literature and other data sources, Delap argued that the contemporary gaze through which domestic service is viewed is itself shaped by 'an attempt to assimilate and make pleasurable or titillating that which disgusts', and thus 'to associate service exclusively with disgust would be an impoverished reading' (2011a:237). The variations in the moral parameters of 'personal' work and outsourcing of house-cleaning among my respondents bear out Delap's argument as well as Bujra's, who notes that given that her 'own political sense was that it was a demeaning and exploitative occupation' her pre-field research goal had been 'to document rather than to challenge the institution of domestic service'. But while interviewing and observing her respondents Bujra realised that the occupation 'had many other facets, even for those who were subjected to servitude' (2000:191; see also Salzinger, 1991:159). Wider experiences and conditions of life and work influence meanings of working with physical dirt in the context of the contemporary urban house (see also Chapter 6). Furthermore, all occupations dealing with what is almost universally acknowledged as 'dirt' are not all accorded the same status: funeral directors and laboratory workers (who also deal with urine/faeces) have a higher status than domestic workers (Ashforth and Kreiner, 1999).

Second, my findings do not support Wolkowitz's argument about refraining from drawing on symbolic explanations of dirt while analysing experiences of working with real dirt. Rather, when the two are separated, the end analysis is more likely to be influenced by the researcher's own epistemological understanding of dirt. For instance, Gregson and Lowe (1994a) argued that the assertion of autonomy as an advantage of domestic cleaning was

a device used by female service-providers to create self-worth when doing other people's dirty work. Their argument drew on the premise that over time 'removal of human dirt' has been reduced to being a natural feminine activity with 'strong social taboos over men doing such work' (Ungerson, 1983, cited in Gregson and Lowe, 1994a:226). The affluent offload the most onerous work onto working-class women. This argument is incomplete because:

- Human dirt does not disappear into the ether when a woman cleans a house (in an unpaid or paid capacity). It enters the public space, where, as sewage and garbage, human dirt undergoes further processing. The frontline operatives in water-treatment or waste-processing units, who are also doing our dirty work are more likely to be men than women (e.g. the 'watermen', 'binmen' and 'wastemen' – BBC Two, 2014, 2015a;[128] see also Perry, 1998; Slutskaya *et al.*, 2016). This work also involves dealing with vast mounds of filth (garbage, turds, etc.), with smells clinging to bodies long after. In other words, men might not do 'dirty' work inside the house, but they do it outside, and the cited studies all show gender and class shapes the meanings these workers attached to working with dirt, as well as other low-wage 'dirty' work such as butchery (Simpson *et al.*, 2014). In countries such as India, sewage workers work in far worse conditions than domestic workers (e.g. see Praxis India/Institute of Participatory Practice, 2014).

- There have always been male domestic workers (8,925,000 in recent worldwide official statistics, ILO, 2013). They were also present in my women-focused research: two of the UK service-users had White male cleaning service-providers and four Indian service-users had live-in or live-out in-country migrant male domestic workers. It is ironic that feminist efforts to make visible women's paid domestic work should make invisible the work of these men.

One common finding in both cultural settings was about workers' attitudes to tidying, picking up after people with a sense of entitlement. This was overwhelmingly experienced as demeaning work, similar to workers in previous research (Romero, 2002). In my view everyone should also check the state of the

---

[128] Among the first-time entrants in the LFS between January 2011 and March 2015, 87% of water and sewerage plant operatives and 95% of refuse and salvage workers were male (Appendix F, Table A7).

toilet after using it. However, in all, my research shows that the 'dirty' work in the work of cleaning up dirt in the setting of the contemporary urban house seems to be more about the undemocratic social relations under which the work is done (Delphy and Leonard, 1992; Jackson, 1992; Oakley, 1974/1985:60; Romero, 2002; Tronto, 2010) and which preserves historical hierarchies (Davidoff, 1995) than about natural human repugnance for physical dirt.

However, if paid domestic work is not dirty work, it could be argued that it still is immanent 'drudgery'. And so exploitation and the reproduction of inequalities through paid domestic work is due to the 'continuities' or 'interconnections' between women's unpaid and paid 'drudgery' (Bose, 2009; McDowell, 2014). I consider this point in the next chapter.

Chapter 5   Domestic cleaning: *work* or *labour*?

At the 2014 Gender, Work and Organization conference at Keele University, I presented a paper (Singha, 2014) based on my interviews with the British service-providers. Later, another researcher, whose work focused on the experiences of migrant domestic workers in Turkey (Akalın, 2007, 2014), questioned my choice of sample – how could a researcher of paid domestic work in the West focus on White cleaners? 'We' were in the business of exposing racial exploitation in the private sphere – the experiences of White cleaners were not of interest.

> People expect, they think, they think you're a cleaner, you're a miracle
> worker with a magic wand, it doesn't work like that. (*Vera*)

Like everyone else, researchers are susceptible to assuming that ideas about housework are universal (see Chapter 2). Among the few accounts of the actual doing of the work, Romero's (2002) work stands out. Her excellent analysis, highlighted the differences in structuring of unpaid and paid housework and showed how outsourced housework was being transformed by modern live-out cleaners into a service occupation as opposed to servitude. A few explanations about cleaners' struggle for control over their work, however, were problematic. For instance, Romero argued that when stay-at-home employers closely supervised their cleaners, they were simply exerting class privilege by ignoring the cleaners' housekeeping knowledge, amassed through years of experience. I appreciate Romero's intention to value her respondents' housekeeping skills. However, her argument suggests the women always-already had these skills, even though there was no way of knowing from the study whether all these women were good, efficient cleaners. Did they all work exactly the same? Romero writes that their work experience ranged from five months to 30 years and new workers often underwent an induction period to learn the ropes as well as strategies of negotiation. Given the grey nature of 'dirt' and cleanliness, and their association with the metaphysical (see Chapter 4), some differences in outcomes delivered by the cleaners and expected by the employers cannot be summarily discounted.

In this chapter, I build on Romero's exposition of the structure of paid housework, but unlike her (and much other Western research, see Chapter 1) I do not locate my analysis in an understanding of paid housework simply as a matter 'between women'. Instead, my analysis is organised around questions that arose as I heard the service-users' comments about their service-providers' work, and service-providers' own descriptions of their work:

- Are some people better at doing housework than others?
- Do (female) domestic workers inherently 'know' what to do?
- How do we know when housework – or 'women's work' – is done well or badly?

Note that I would not have thought of these questions had I ignored the work experiences of the White British cleaners, experiences that Akalın considered of little significance for a feminist theory of paid domestic work. In the process of

addressing these questions my argument began to develop, which I introduce in this chapter: cleaning can be done as *work* or as *labour*.

The words 'work' and 'labour' have been used variously in published literature. In Marxism, labour refers to the human capacity to do work that produces a product, that is, the living labour underpinning the fabric of capitalism, with work being the activity performed by that labour (Weeks, 2011). Others have used these terms interchangeably (e.g. Weeks, 2011) or to distinguish between tasks of one kind and another based on their, for instance, social valuation or what they entail (production or reproduction). While elaborating her synonymous use of the terms in her proposition that doing less work (in part grounded in the refusal of work as theorised in the domestic labour debate) was the key to future social progress, Weeks reviewed the use of these terms by Arendt (1958), Mies (1986) and Schleuning (1990) (cited in Weeks, 2011:14–15, 88). For all these feminists work was not a problem in itself, but its differential valuation. Arendt categorised reproductive activities under the banner of 'labour' and productive activities as 'work', and linked by common political activity, the 'action'. Mies and Schleuning argued against total rejection of the activities required for 'direct, immediate production of life rather than the production of things or wealth', rather these kinds of work (or labour as Arendt classifies them) should be 'integrated into life' (Weeks, 2011:88) so one works to live and lives to work simultaneously. Weeks rejected all these categorisations since they take work for granted, that is, they essentialise and valorise work (and labour) as such and her objective was to critique and question the doing of work itself. My use of these terms differs yet again as I am not distinguishing between kinds of work in terms of the end product (productive versus reproductive activities) or in terms of doing more or less work for a fulfilling life. My focus is on the conditions under which we work and how varying the conditions of a particular activity can change its social meanings.

Two more theoretical issues form the background to this analysis. Historical inquiries show feminisation of paid domestic service is more likely a consequence of changing political-economic-social conditions, including the gender pay gap (Banerjee, 2015; Bujra, 2000; Moya, 2007; Neetha, 2009; Ray

and Qayum, 2009/2010; Sarti, 2005) than its framing as 'women's work'.[129] In late eighteenth-century Britain, men started to move out of domestic service (except more prestigious roles such as butlers and footmen) as the servant tax of 1777[130] made it more expensive to hire them while seemingly less-hierarchical male day labour and white-collar occupations were expanding. Still, demand was rising (homes embellished with shining artefacts and soft furnishings and displaying high standards of cleanliness were integral to status affirmation among the new middle-classes), women were permitted in few other occupations and they were 'cheaper' to employ (Hill, 1996; Sambrook, 2005/2009). In India, women began to predominate in domestic service only in the early twentieth century (Banerjee, 2015). Focusing on Bengal, Banerjee argues that the work women had done as part of the caste-based occupational structure shifted into the public sphere as 'men's work' under colonial mechanisation of agriculture and urban industrialisation. Domestic service then started to become the main option for women from poor and vulnerable backgrounds. Another more recent surge in the 1980s was mainly due to an increase in rural–urban in-country migration consequent to 'development' activities in rural agricultural regions (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) with concomitant urbanisation (Srinivas, 1995:272). This narrative is replicated in other poor countries, where in cites, illiterate rural women compete for the same jobs as less-educated urban (and rural) men, and, again, service-users often prefer the women because they can pay them less (Bujra, 2000).

I also draw on the ideas of two (male) sociologists with a background in blue-collar work, who have challenged the manual–mental division of work (Rose, 2004/2014; Torlina, 2011). Torlina (2011) questioned the vertical orientation[131] of occupational classifications, which accord privilege to certain occupations based on an instrumental view of work. A 'job' is simply a 'a set of tasks or duties to be carried out by one person', with more prestigious jobs (careers) requiring greater skills and having wider remits (ONS, 2010a:2). The SOC follows this

---

[129] This also happens elsewhere: numbers of men applying to nursing courses rise in times of job crises in male-dominated industries (personal communication, Dr Jacqueline Collin, Head of Department of Child & Family Health, Florence Nightingale Faculty of Nursing & Midwifery King's College, London, 2 July 2016).
[130] As elsewhere in Europe (Sarti, 2005).
[131] All social classifications are commonly presented vertically, according privilege to certain groups (see also Chapter 1).

tradition with 'cleaners and domestics' appearing at the bottom, with a rather brief job description (Figure 13).

Figure 13: Cleaners and domestics' job description in the UK Standard Occupational Classification (2010)

9233 CLEANERS AND DOMESTICS

Cleaners and domestics clean interiors of private houses, shops, hotels, schools, offices and other buildings.

TYPICAL ENTRY ROUTES AND ASSOCIATED QUALIFICATIONS

No academic qualifications are required. On-the-job training may be provided. NVQs/SVQs in Cleaning: Building Interiors are available at Levels 1 and 2.

TASKS

- scrubs, washes, sweeps and polishes floors, corridors and stairs;
- dusts and polishes furniture and fittings;
- cleans toilets and bathrooms;
- washes down walls and ceilings;
- empties ashtrays, waste bins and removes rubbish.

Reproduced from Office for National Statistics (2010). *Standard Occupational Classification 2010. Volume 1 Structure and Descriptions of Unit Groups*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 245.

In other words, 'elementary' occupations, which include cleaning, are perceived as a series of discrete physical tasks that require minimal mental exertion, which can be further reduced by task breakdown and top-down control of workers' activities and movements (Rose and Pevalin, 2005:15). Because no educational qualifications are required, it is assumed any one can do a cleaning job. Drawing on research on the meanings of work among blue-collar male American workers, Torlina (2011) argued classifications should be horizontal rather than vertical, as these workers also utilised numerous skills and mental labour. Rose's (2004/2014) detailed accounts of many low-status manual and service occupations such as waitressing revealed 'an intricate interplay of thought and action' (2004/2014:xix; also Coelho, 2016). My analysis of thought and action in cleaning starts with a consideration of whether cleaning is something everyone can do.

Cleaning fairies versus *kichh-kichh*

Western feminists argue that outsourced domestic work became 'unskilled' as the Victorian cult of domesticity was established. Working-class women were constructed as ignorant, to be moulded by the employer or through formal

domestic science 'education' to learn middle-class values and practices. These courses 'did not benefit workers but rather cheapened their labor service to labor power' (Romero, 2002:125; see Chapter 1). Unfortunately, this argument does not challenge common wisdom that anyone who is physically able can do 'women's work' for a living (Dill, 1988; Cox, 2006). Rather, service-users' remarks on quality of work are often interpreted as idiosyncrasies that contribute to status reproduction (Molinier, 2009/2012:291), that is, *her* ability to do paid domestic work is uncritically accepted (see Chapter 1).

In the internet discussions, some posters waxed lyrical about their amazing cleaners, while others despaired about their experience of outsourcing.

> My lovely cleaner ... does a thorough clean of the kitchen and bathroom. Cleans all hard floors and hoovers throughout. She makes sure all glass is clean and dusts. When she started she cleaned all doors and door framed [*sic*] etc and kept on top of all that. It's the best £20 I spend! (Mumsnet, 2014d)

> My mum ... has had cleaner after cleaner and has given up. She has found (and I agree) that as their standards are so much lower than hers, it's not worth the money. They tend to clean the surface of things but not thoroughly. (Mumsnet, 2014a)

Service-users in my research also did not like the work of some service-providers. Perhaps their knowledge of cleanable physical dirt was wanting and they failed to recognise good work (Rafkin, 1998; Romero, 2002). *Vera* described how one service-user mistook stained bathroom sealant for mould and unnecessarily harangued the service-provider:

> because I'm a painter and decorator as well, [I know] what you can't clean and what you need to get decorated ... So you've got sealant round the bath, which is chalk. If mould and mildew and stuff gets into it too much, it can't be cleaned. People expect it, they think you're a cleaner, you're a miracle worker with a magic wand, it doesn't work like that. But because they did that to one of my girls ... came back to me saying it's disg[usting], she's done absolutely nothing. So I blasted them a bit to be fair ... She's a good nit-gritty cleaner, ... and if they hadn't been so arsey ... they would've got an explanation about why the bathroom isn't [looking] cleaned because it needs resealing. So you do get some people like that. (*Vera*)

Note *Vera*'s comment that *some* people are 'like that'. Many UK service-users were said to appreciate good cleaning. Perhaps then, some despair around poor work merits further investigation (see Chapter 1).

> If I'm to be honest, sometimes one of the things that frustrates me a bit about having a cleaner is that most of them I feel do a less good job than I would have done myself … particularly the agency ones … so that was another reason for sort of thinking, 'Oh well you know we're paying a lot of money for something that …' (Una)

The UK service-users were often apologetic about such 'niggling' issues, wanting to avoid confrontations. The Indian service-users, however, often were not shy of giving feedback on poor work, while service-providers reported being scolded (Rani and Kaul, 1986; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Singh, 2007; for a similar situation in Brazil see de Santana Pinho and Silva (2010)). The interaction is effectively captured in the Hindi phrase *kichh-kichh*, the constant quibbling around work half done or not done. *Kichh-kichh* is equally frustrating for her and *her.*

> Ananya: She will sweep what she can see, and what she can't see – under the beds, under the chairs – what is not easily visible, is just left out! When cleaning the washroom, if she feels that nothing is 'looking dirty', she will just mop the floor. So when I enter the washroom [and see what she has left out], I point out to her …
>
> Lotika: Why don't you get somebody else?
>
> Ananya: Because I've tried and … they're all the same! I've got used to her and she's got used to me. So that's it … for example, with the previous one … my daughter tore a piece of paper and put it under the chair. And three days later, the paper was still there! So that kind of thing is there …
>
> Lotika: So your way of dealing with it is say, sometimes you point it out?
>
> Ananya: To this one I point out whenever I see it. Sometimes she comes late and I'm not there. Then I have to point it out the next day. But otherwise the moment I see something … I point it out immediately.

Research also documents ample *kichh-kichh*[132] in the West, except it is described as close supervision or monitoring by a service-user (e.g. Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002).[133] These data challenge the notion that outsourced cleaning is a natural extension of women's 'unskilled' unpaid work. I now examine this point in more detail.

The *dis*continuities between unpaid and paid-for house-cleaning

> most of the ladies do their own work at home, so they know how to do it. (Sarika)

> when you're doing *housework* you can sit down, have a brew, watch telly for a minute and think, 'Oh I'll do that in minute'. When you're doing a *clean*, you've got two hours to get a whole house done. … So I think you don't realise how much different it is to doing it in your own house, cause you don't … 'Oh! I'll just sit down and watch this, just a minute!' (*Tamsin*)

To impress upon me that they were conscientious workers, some service-providers said they cleaned customers' houses like their own.

> I don't think most cleaners clean … my mum's cleaner never seems to bother with things like that, or if you open the door, there's always a triangle behind the doors. I think most of my clients would agree that I clean properly … I

---

132 From this point I use *kichh-kichh* in both cultural contexts. '[U]niversalistic pretensions of Western social science' can be addressed by 'cultural borrowing' to allow development of a more inclusive global sociology (Qi, 2011:292), and the same can be argued for feminism(s).

133 The 'cultural' difference in how feedback is (or is not) given needs to be understood in terms of wider cultural norms around social interactions (including politeness and courtesy), which vary between world regions and are also classed and gendered (Mills, 2004). Still, British workers' struggles in the first half of the twentieth century clearly levelled the social playground between classes to a significant extent, and currently, recognition of workers' rights also likely encourages people to treat others with greater respect. In this situation, however, service-users might struggle with how to communicate with regards to what is considered poor work or work relationships. White lies can be used to end an unsatisfactory arrangement, and frustration vented in online discussion forums. In India, regional variations in social norms and language use, dialects and accents, also means people might appear to sound more harsh or rude in some regions than others to someone from another culture (see Mills, 2004). Yet again however, struggles similar to those in Britain have been part of Indian history and continue to happen, including by domestic worker unions and cooperatives (e.g. see Bali, 2016) and have led to changes such as shifts in domestic workers being referred to as staff rather than servants, and service-users' children addressing these workers in familial respectful terms such as *didi* rather than by name.

wipe down everything … my approach to it is that I clean as if it's my own house. (*Evie*)

I could have considered other work had I been educated … That's why I could only do housework … I don't think there is anything wrong with it, I put my heart and soul into anything I do, I never think it is somebody else's work. I work like I would in my own home. (*Pallavi*)

But others stressed the same point saying their own home was *not* cleaned in the same way.

when I'm at my sister's, I'm always thinking, 'Have I done it well enough?' … I clean thoroughly, I make stuff look nice, I always spend more than two hours there … So I think when I'm cleaning for somebody else … it's like I'm looking at it from the outside and thinking: Is that okay? Have I done that? I clean her kitchen floor every week. My kitchen floor does not get cleaned every week. … So, you know, being more thorough, being more aware of … that there is an external observer to my work, whereas here I'm the observer! (*Carrie*)

There is no difference as such, but this is there that their work is done to a somewhat better standard. I do my work a little differently. They ask for a very high standard of cleaning. We also do cleaning in our own home, but in our own way … So our [paid] work is to clean spotlessly. There should not be even a speck of dirt. (*Chetna*)

To explain these apparent contradictions I unpack the construction of cleaning by my respondents in terms of site of work, the time-bind, the work that needs to be done and its outcomes. Researchers agree that separation of the worker's home and workplace was key for the transformation of domestic work from servitude to service (Dill, 1994; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Salzinger, 1991). Glenn noted live-out domestic work was more liberating for Japanese-American women than home-based or family-business work because it was 'employment outside the family' (1981:362). Yet theories of paid housework as a matter 'between women' often refer to the site of work only in terms of the service-user's home rather than the worker's workplace (e.g. see Lutz, 2011).

Some live-out cleaning service-providers in both countries said their workplace was not in *their* private sphere; they went *out* to work (Glenn, 1981). The first visit to a service-user's house could be daunting, and the conditions

could made the work different. For instance, *Nora* thought her paid work was similar to her housework. But she did housework as part of 'doing family' (Morgan, 2011), while she did paid-for cleaning as a provider of a paid service. These service-providers' views problematise feminist arguments that the service-user's home cannot be considered a 'workplace' (see Chapter 1), a point that is key for enabling legal enforcement of domestic workers' rights (Neetha and Palriwala, 2011; Vasanthi, 2011; also ILO, 2010, 2016; Schwartz, 2014).

Whereas unpaid cleaning may or may not be subject to routines, paid-for house-cleaning is expected to occur at regular times at regular intervals. It also consumes a tangible amount of time (see also Bailly *et al.*, 2013; Glenn, 1986). Like the popular misconception that housework just 'happens', the withering feminist critique that women indulge in 'elaborating housework tasks so they take up endlessly increasing amounts of time' (Oakley, 1974/1985:104; Friedan, 1963), does not help service-providers in their negotiations with potential service-users about time required for cleaning.

> you often find, particularly with mothers who are returning to work after maternity leave … they kind of underestimate … how much time they physically spend in running a home. … They'd go, 'Oh! a couple of hours twice a week' and I'd look at them and go, 'Really? Right, keep a log – even if you're just wiping down the draining board and it took you two minutes, you write that down. Do that for a week … You will be horrified, because putting out the recycling, sweeping the kitchen floor, wiping down the baby's highchair, you think it takes ten seconds? It doesn't – it takes five minutes. You do that and then get back to me and tell me realistically, how much time you think I need' … women, particularly, don't realise how much time they spend on domestic tasks. (*Nicola*)

When Navita said her service-provider could not 'multi-task', I thought she was asking *her* to do a lot in little time:

> She is not able to multi-task. And I realised that one day when my friend was visiting and I said do this, and after five minutes I said can you do this and after another five minutes I said can you do this? [My friend] said you're giving her too many things to do, she's only able to do one thing at a time.

In the numerous internet discussion threads on the reasonableness of service-providers' quotes, many respondents blithely noted it was 'just about' the

number of bedrooms and bathrooms. Some measured responses said it also depended on the tasks to be done. Very few (often service-providers themselves) pointed out that the time required also depended on the area, design and state of the house (also Rafkin, 1998). Nor is this issue simply a domestic matter concerning women. Time more generally is a multi-valent category: broadly separable into 'clock'-time and social-time, several 'times' pass simultaneously (Adams, 1995:99). People's differential valuation of calls on their time(s) and consequently time(s) itself is grounded in modern malestream work–everyday dualism.[134] Since housework is less valued, the time spent on unpaid housework is imagined to be less than the actual time required (Adams, 1995). Clock-time has 'power' (Adams, 1995:99), so resistance to service-providers' quotes is part of potential customers' exertion of power. Also, in the present capitalist context, when cleaning is outsourced, service-users seek to extract maximum work for the minimum fee (Romero, 2002; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). But the equation of money, efficiency (pace of work) and profit that is used to translate paid work into clock-time (Adams, 1995) simplifies the real-life myriad, complex relations between work and time, as clearly evident in the different internet forum responses.

Some UK service-providers negotiated the time-bind by doing an initial 'deep' clean, and charging separately for it, followed by regular 'maintenance' cleans done in less time. Others used the 'creep and go' method – doing one room thoroughly every time in rotation with light cleaning of other rooms. Oven cleaning can be a major job, and increasingly in the UK this work is offered as an 'extra' – for some respondents this happened with experience. Some people in both countries kept a watch on clock-time (*kichh-kichh*), requesting odd jobs to 'fill' spare time or chastising the service-provider who left early. Others gradually increased the work expected more generally – *she* might as well wash (more and more) dishes while cleaning the sink *in the same time*. Astute service-providers with sufficient work can stop working for such clients. However, like the internet respondents, my interviews also revealed that not everyone is insensitive about time.

---

[134] Which, unfortunately, some women's liberation has bolstered rather than challenged (Johnson and Lloyd, 2004).

No the thing is, if she going to give you an hour, in the hour she has to clean up the entire house, obviously she's not going to clean it as if it's her own house … she may avoid the upstairs, or she won't err, mop the stairs or where the bathroom is concerned, she might just kind of mop the floor. They're not going to spend time you know, cleaning the grout or you know, cleaning behind the tap. (Shobha)

I've got one I go twice a week, on a Monday and a Friday. Both times they want the kitchen doing and on Mondays its upstairs and Fridays its downstairs. … she doesn't overload it, so it can be done at a nice pace, where you can do a thorough job and don't have to rush to fit it all in. (*Charlotte*)

This analysis shows why time-management is crucial for paid-for cleaning but optional in the unpaid situation (see *Tamsin*'s quote at the start of this section).

Variations in the materiality of domestic spaces and domestic work itself are not just a historical matter; regional, cultural and class differences affect workers' 'competencies' (Bujra, 2000; Jackson, 1992). All the UK service-providers lived in houses whose basic design was similar to their service-users' houses, although they might have had cheaper carpets and linoleum. Many Indian service-providers' families, however, slept and cooked in a single room dwarfed by a bed (some also bathed and entertained visitors there). The slum tenements had mud walls and floors, a few shelves but often no windows. Very few respondents had a kitchenette with worktops; the rest cooked squatting on the floor. Built tenements often had rough cement floors and surfaces, whereas service-users' houses could have marble floors and granite kitchen surfaces. Clearly, the Indian service-providers cannot be assumed to 'know' cleaning of windows, worktops, cookers, or using cleaning products they could not afford to buy for themselves. Some house-cleaning practices they knew, for example applying cow-dung to the floor (Kothari, 1997), were irrelevant when cleaning a contemporary urban house. Indeed, many learned what they now knew when they started working (see also Lutz, 2011:56).

Yes, my employer taught me, holding my hand. Sweep like this, mop like this, I mean like this, all the work. So this is how I learnt [how to do it] after I came to this city. (*Urvashi*)

The woman who was already working in that house teaches you how to do it: you need to sweep like *this*, mop like *this*, wash the clothes like *this*, do this

like *that*. She tells you whether the verandahs have to be cleaned, what has to be cleaned, how to clean the photographs, she instructs in all these things. [Lotika: Is there a lot of difference between the houses?] Yes there is a difference. Also, in one's own house, people do what they want to do. In others' houses you worry about it – what if something gets left? What if am I blamed for something [like breakage or missing valuables]? You might have to work under fear of something going wrong. (*Brinda*)

Pratibha had given up outsourcing partly because '[m]ost maids come as raw hands and are to be painstakingly taught the nitty-gritty of efficient housekeeping – before they are lured away by the neighbours! I had so many maids leaving at this stage [as] I had become well known for my "training programmes".' Even UK service-providers talked about a learning curve. *Yvonne* had been subcontracting work to her friends. This arrangement had led to customer complaints and she gradually realised not everyone cleans in the same way:

obviously with the level of cleaners that I've seen now that I've got – some of the girls are dead slow and compared to some of them, they're really, d'you know they're really good and everybody loves them … and they make sure that everything is done with an eye to detail. So it isn't just as you can either clean or you can't, there is a bit more to it, when you … know about it, when you're looking for it. (*Yvonne*)

Singh (2007) notes domestic workers in Ranchi, India, often had to be taught the work, with service-users willing to pay more for a trained worker. Early Japanese migrant domestic workers also had to learn the American style of housework; many had never done housework or had maids themselves in Japan (Glenn, 1981:362). Male domestic workers mostly do not do housework in their own homes, because the unpaid work of cooking, cleaning and childcare has largely been carried out by women across classes and cultures (Bujra, 2000; Flather, 2013). A few single women said they did not doubt a man's cleaning ability but expressed unease around male sexuality.[135] The service-providers who subcontracted work had been approached by men, but customers showed reluctance. It appears domestic cleaning as paid work in a modern context is

---

[135] A similar issue might occur with male nurses (Evans, 2002).

influenced not just by traditional views of 'women's work' but also notions of the wider relations between men and women.

The starting point of paid-for cleaning varies: in the UK, sometimes the work started with tidying, and at other times it was just about 'topping' up an already tidy and clean house. Others have argued that service-users, particularly housewives, move the goalposts of their own unpaid cleaning when they outsource by 'imposing specific cleaning methods, and adding ritual cleaning' because outsourced cleaning is as much about status reproduction (Romero, 2002:161; also Anderson, 2000, 2003). Indeed, people's expectations of the outcomes of 'cleaning' are often higher when it is outsourced:

> How will they be able to do all the work? If no-one helps them, they will cook themselves and eat. I mean, they will not relax as much as they are doing now. But will they do all this work all day? Like now, they will use three to four dishes, but if she is doing it herself, she will use only one dish. She will manage to do all the work with one dish. Like when I mop, she tells me to change the water in the bucket twice. But if she was doing it, she would do it with one bucketful. All of it. … I do it every day but she would do it every third day. (*Gauri*)

But is this always the case? On the one hand, from the business-minded British service-provider's[136] perspective, the 'extra' work could become added-value work.

> I think some people don't clean to the standards that I do and you have to have a high standard in this job. Because … even though you go into somebody's house and you know that they never clean their skirting boards, I would still do that. Because it's about impressing people as well, it's about, you know, they are, they can clean their house for free, [but] I want [the work], they are *paying* me to clean their house, it needs to be that little bit extra. … I clean my bath and sink out and I leave water there after I've done it, but in a client's house I would wipe away all the watermarks on the shower screens … even though they wouldn't necessarily. [Then] they walk in and think 'Wow' Isn't it lovely', you know, and they like that and I get complimented on that. (*Jessica*)

---

[136] See Chapter 6.

On the other hand, service-users may not always desire perfection. Naomi, for instance, stopped outsourcing cleaning to a friend because:

> she was actually too good a cleaner! She was a meticulous cleaner. Actually what I needed was somebody to go around, do the kitchen and toilets and things like that. And tidy things away and do a bit of dusting. But she got very frustrated by the fact that ... our house is a very open house and there are always lots of kids in and out and it needs to be clean but not necessarily meticulously clean.

Beverley, who was compulsive about cleaning, said outsourcing cleaning to a woman who did not pay the same attention to detail helped her keep her obsession under control, she was 'less worried about it': her 'mental health seems to be linked to having a cleaner'. Some Indian service-users also tolerated substandard work, often topping up paid work with unpaid work.

> Now she has learnt, but sometimes I still feel that she is not doing it to my satisfaction so I need to tell her. But she is a good, responsible woman. She does it more or less, and if I explain this to her [once] I don't have to explain again. But because I myself am a bit fastidious I feel ... it's all right. But on the whole she's okay ... (Nandita)

> That they don't do, in any case they don't do [housework as well as we do it ourselves]. You have to accept ... isn't it, that if it is not like this – you have to think, you have to rationalise it and then [you think] it's okay, it's okay. At times you lose temper also, it's so very human, I cannot say that I do not get upset, and that happens. [And] at times I ignore it also, it's a mix of things. (Geetanjali).

As previously reported, many Indian service-users considered domestic workers unquestionably necessary, and it was more important to have a clean and honest service-provider (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Dickey, 2000b; Mattila, 2011; see also Chapters 1 and 3). Tolerance is not absolute, however, as Geetanjali said, and *kichh-kichh* around unsatisfactory work is common (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Verma and Larson, 2001). But is *kichh-kichh* just about a struggle for control over the work between the privileged middle-class housewife and her substitute (Romero, 2002)? Certainly, service-providers overwhelmingly prefer customers who do not indulge in *kichh-kichh*. At the same time, many service-users in both countries and the UK service-providers themselves (including

internet posters) did not think everyone could clean well enough to successfully earn a living. *Nora* and *Casey*'s clientele had expanded rapidly, but growing the business, finding subcontractors, was proving difficult despite many enquiries:

> [W]e set a lady on last week and she just lasted one day. Yeah! she came with me, she'd done cleaning before so she was experienced. She was a mature lady, so... I thought that was good, not that I'm ageist or anything like that. [But] when she came with me, she stood in the bath with her shoes on so consequently we had a dirty bath that was clean to start with. So you know, she wasn't as experienced as I thought she was or she thought herself. (*Nora*)

Women do not 'naturally' see dust (see Chapters 1 and 3), an issue that has not been researched sufficiently. However, this analysis shows there is no contradiction between the two views on paid-for cleaning presented at the start of this section: when service-providers claim they clean 'like they clean their own homes' they mean they are putting in similar effort and care; it does not mean that they are doing the same work. But the 'care' with which work is done is not a natural feminine virtue. It is the mental labour involved in cleaning work. I explain this in more detail later, but one point is relevant here. Unpaid housework is frequently disparaged as 'mindless' work. Many service-users said their minds would be elsewhere when they did housework. But most UK service-providers stressed they took their work seriously. They often focused on the work at hand to work (and multi-task) in a time-efficient way.

> If say, I'm going with somebody else then one will do the top and one will do bottom. Obviously you'll go in and put all the products in the kitchen or in the bathroom, and you'll bleach the toilet and leave the spray in the bath, and then do the dusting in the bedrooms and obviously do the floors last – but you'll also switch the kettle on as soon as you get there just to boil the water for the mop ... (*Yvonne*)

They occasionally altered routines, which forced them to remain mentally alert and not miss out areas/things; mental alertness was also required where tasks were split between visits and for avoiding breakages. *Evie* had 'a picture in my head' about how she worked. The mental labour involved in paid-for cleaning became more evident in the analysis of the structure of paid-for cleaning in the UK and India.

Cleaning as *work* versus *labour*

> I think it's partly *seeing* things, it's actually paying attention, … putting a bit of energy into it, not physical energy, but, you know, actually *seeing* what needs doing. Which I'm quite likely not to see really. And then when it's done the whole place does look nicer. So having a little bit of an aesthetic sense really about how you tidy things up and make things look nice, that's what Enid's got … 'sprinkle fairy dust' is an expression I use … I don't know what she does! (Patricia)

When I asked the service-users and the UK service-providers whether they thought anyone could clean for a living, the responses varied.[137] In line with common wisdom, some women thought just like unpaid housework, it 'did not require any sort of skill – obviously with time you learn these things' (Sarika). Some service-users acknowledged paid-for cleaning required skills, although they could not pinpoint them like Patricia's comment, 'I don't know what she does!'. These accounts are in line with Elson and Pearson's (1981) argument that work learnt through socialisation becomes cast as unskilled. However, other comments I heard made me realise that the issue in cleaning is not just about skill, which is an ambiguous term itself. Social definitions of skills shift historically, depending on who is doing the work (Game and Pringle, 1983; Pollert, 1981). The issue is about whether paid-for cleaning qualifies as *work* (requiring both manual and mental skills and effort and performed under decent, democratic work conditions) or as simply *labour* (requiring mainly manual labour, accompanied by exertion of 'natural' emotional/affective labour and performed in undemocratic conditions).[138]

In the UK, outsourced cleaning generally meant cleaning all interior surfaces (floors, kitchen counters etc.), including high-and-low dusting, cleaning bathrooms and toilets, windows and mirrors, and buffing stainless steel surfaces. Floor-level surfaces were vacuumed or mopped, mostly standing and occasionally on hands and knees. External areas such as driveways and garden furniture

---

[137] I missed this question when I interviewed the Indian service-providers. Many were working only out of dire necessity, yet in retrospect I think I should have asked it.
[138] The same argument could apply to other low-skilled, and high-'skilled', occupations where Taylorism is being applied to increase efficiency and white-collar work is being experienced as 'labour' (see Carey, 2007; Carter *et al.*, 2011; Costas and Kärreman, 2016).

were always excluded. Otherwise, my respondents appeared willing to do a variety of tasks such as deep cleans, laundry and ironing or occasionally feeding the cat as well as making changes to routines. Many service-providers went to work when customers were on holiday. Some service-users left it to the providers to decide how to use this time, such as for less frequently needed tasks. In fact, the services requested and provided are better described as 'bespoke housekeeping services' rather than 'just' cleaning.[139] In most instances, the work was outsourced to one independent cleaning-provider or one quasi-agency/company,[140] who came once a week or fortnightly, and rarely twice-weekly or monthly.

Clearly, the contemporary self-employed service-provider who works for several clients should understand modern cleaning materials and procedures. As Salzinger noted after ethnographic observation of training sessions of a domestic-worker collective, 'it is easy to see how not knowing some of these things could lead to disaster' (1991:147), in terms of not just bodily harm or damage of material objects, but also a service-provider's reputation related to their work ability in a particular cultural context. This technical knowledge requires learning about costs and efficiency, and which products reduce 'elbow grease' and least affect one's own health. For instance, *Kate* and *Nicola* used eco-friendly products because they were prone to allergies (see also Smith's (2011) review of health and safety in domestic work). A few of my respondents drew on internet cleaning guides.[141] Many women bought the products they preferred to use, including vacuum cleaners, or asked their service-users to buy specific products. They used colour-coded gloves and cloths to avoid contact with dirt and contamination.

But technical knowledge is not enough to be a good cleaning service-provider. As *Carrie* explained: 'you have to be able to *see what needs to be done*, you have to be able to *prioritise your time*, and you've got to *have the motivation*.'

---

[139] I do not see this as a 'problem': such variations made the work more interesting for the service-providers.

[140] No-one in my research used independent ironing services. Quasi-agency: see Appendix E.

[141] There are also several modern versions of Victorian household cleaning manuals (e.g. see Mackenzie, 2009; *Reader's Digest*, 2011).

Maisie[142] echoed *Carrie*'s observation when explaining her 25-year relationship with her service-provider:

> What Clara's got is the ability to make a room look nice, because you can clean a room and *it can be technically clean but it can look terrible*. And she's got the ability to clean a room and leave it looking … looking so sparkling, neat and rather wonderful.

The room-plan of contemporary urban houses is similar regardless of architectural design. But individual preferences around order/disorder transform them into unique homes; one house will look and feel different when occupied by different people. Thus, good service-providers aim not 'just to cart out rubble and go away' (Maggie), but clean in a way that refreshes but does not disturb the individual homeliness of the house. This requires 'responsiveness', the essence of which is captured in the italicised parts of the following quotes:

> [What makes a good cleaner is] having some knowledge about how to do a thing properly, which they've learnt from somewhere … And, *probably a certain willingness to listen when I say I want more of this and less of that*. Yeah! so there is a, a skill element and a kind of … responsiveness element. (Iris)

> [A]nother reason I know that I'm good [at my work], is because I've had cleaners in the past … three cleaning ladies before and even quite a big company, and … *they seemed to sweat*, and, and you know, *they seemed to be doing all this, but* when I went around afterwards, *it wasn't really to my … standard*. (*Jessica*)

As responsiveness is not recognised as a feature of cleaning work, that is, cleaning is considered simple manual labour (Bailly *et al.*, 2013:311), some commercial companies abuse the notion of cleaning being about 'making things look nice'. When Ehrenreich (2002/2010) worked as an undercover cleaner she was told that she only needed to make sure the obvious dirt was removed and things 'looked alright'. (I have been on the receiving end of such practice, where the house was sprayed with freshener to give that 'good' feeling after a superficial clean.)

---

[142] A pilot interviewee.

Responsiveness has been reported previously in research but it has not been recognised as such. Hondagneu-Sotelo wrote service-providers have to 'exercise creativity in responding to' service-users (2001:157) and Cox (2006:132) mentions service-providers having to 'mind-read' their service-users' wishes. Molinier described it as invisibility of the work done: housework, 'if it is well done, should not be seen and should not disturb the daily life of whoever is benefiting from it' (2009/2012:293). Defined in these ways, responsiveness becomes an inherent characteristic of the service-provider and interpreted as exploitative affective labour (Anderson, 2000; Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014; Lutz, 2008, 2011; Rollins, 1985). In this scenario, 'effective' paid-for cleaning, argues Molinier, bears the mark of the service-provider and will 'never fully satisfy those it serves': '[t]he care which we bring to a domestic space – even if it is not our own – is *personalised in our own image*' (2009/2012:294–295; original italics).

Molinier's argument is flawed on two counts. First, for other researchers the problem is exactly the opposite. For instance, Lutz feels '[b]ecause the home is the employer's place of identity performance … there is little space for the employee to deploy their own creativity in the household' (2008:55). Second, research on emotional labour mainly focuses on its exploitative potential, the effect it has on the worker (e.g. Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014). But when emotional labour is examined through a lens that views, for instance, how healthcare assistants manage patients' emotions, it appears different, as skilled labour (Kessler *et al.*, 2015), as part of the manual–mental labours of care work (Federici, 2012). Similarly, casting responsiveness as a low-status inherent feminine trait also delegitimises the mental *work* of figuring out what service-users want from their service-providers. Rather, development of responsiveness is contingent on appropriate signals from the service-user via explicit or implicit good channels of communication. Even Lutz acknowledges that relationship development does not 'exclude … a learning process on the employer's part' (2011:51). Responsiveness takes time to develop (see also Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001:170), and is not a mindless one-size-fits-all response on both sides. Mattila argued that the increasingly short-term arrangements with live-out providers in Jaipur were reflective of modern 'market logic' (2011:190). In my UK samples, where responsive relationships had been developed, live-out providers worked for long periods for one client within a capitalist market (range 5 to over 40 years;

Figure 14).

Figure 14: Length of time (in years) respondents in the UK (a) had used services of a single provider and (b) provided services to a single client
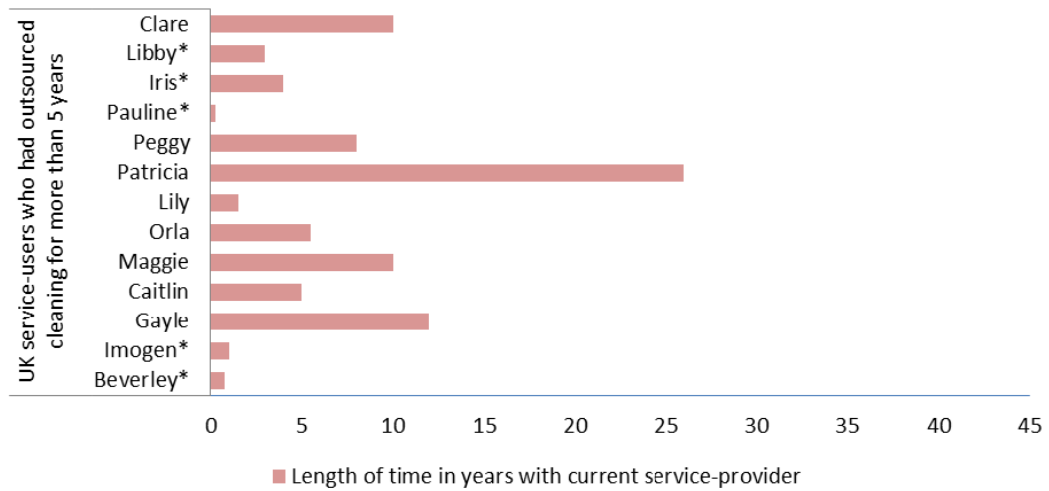
(a)
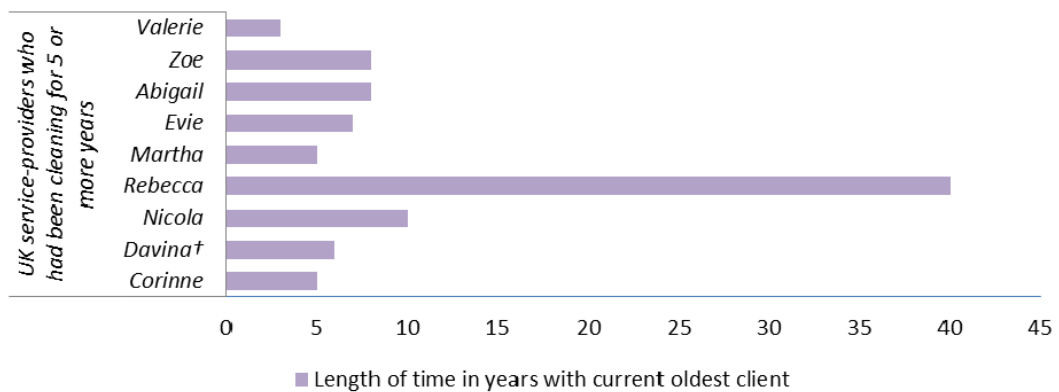
(b)

*At least one previous service-provider worked for this user for several years.
†Previously worked as employee of one household for many years.

Responsiveness draws on emotional intelligence (BBC Radio 4, 2015) similarly to 'relational' caring work, which is not about a unidirectional expenditure of emotional labour, but a two-way process that produces value for both the carer and the client (Bailly *et al.*, 2013; Rubery *et al.*, 2011; Stacey, 2005). Research on mental aspects of healthcare assistants 'manual' labour of caring confirms this point. Kessler and colleagues (2015) found that healthcare assistants' previous experiences in social care better explained their greater ability compared with nurses to manage patient emotions rather than their maternal caring experiences.

Second, responsiveness is also not about service-providers imposing their aesthetic style but restoring the service-user's style (Dill, 1988). Additional mental work is required where the aesthetic sense of the user and provider

diverge. Lutz (2011) considers this a 'problem' for the service-provider but I do not agree. Paid-for cleaning should not be about service-providers working in non-autonomous ways to satisfy whims and fancies of service-users with a sense of entitlement. It is about doing specific tasks but in a creative way that takes into account the singular character of each serviced house. The situation is akin to restoring an old painting. The contemporary artist is not supposed to put their own stamp on the painting but re-create the original. Similarly, a service-provider is reinstating order in their service-user's home and not their own. This need not suppress their creativity, rather, responsiveness means using one's creative potential like a restorative artist. Some service-providers see their work as an art form (Dill, 1994; Lutz, 2011). In a study that recorded experiences of both men and women in low-paid work (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012), caring was considered one of the more creative jobs.

The caveats appended by the UK service-providers who thought that anyone could do cleaning for a living revealed that responsiveness also depended on attitudes to cleaning on both sides.[143] With regard to service-providers, *Martha* said, if you do not enjoy cleaning,

> you're jogging uphill ... You have to be quite thorough, and you have to have attention to detail. You can't just clean stainless steel. You have to work at it and buff it up, if you've not got that inclination to do it properly it won't look right, it won't look nice.

Valerie stopped using subcontractors who did not pay attention to small details:

> The toilet is the main thing. Missing cleaning the toilet, not wiping when you do a handbasin. The water runs down ... make sure you clean around the bottom, because there's always like little drips down there isn't it? ... you get scummy if you're not careful. But I notice things like that. What you have to do, and people don't realise is that if you sit, put the toilet lid down and sit on the toilet and look at the bathroom, you're seeing at the level as the customer's seeing it at.

Nora straightened her back when she categorically told me:

---

[143] *Amelia*, who articulated a strong dislike for cleaning, was struggling to succeed in the work.

No, not everybody can do it. Like I said you've *got* to enjoy it. There's no point coming for a cleaning job really if it's [only] for the pay. Because it's only rewarding if you're enjoying it …

Even among the architects of early training courses, of whose un-feminist intentions Romero (2002) and Skeggs (1997/2002) are highly critical, at least Magnus (1934b) in the USA noted that this point was important to consider during selection of candidates for housework training courses. The Australian cleaning managers interviewed by Smith (2009) also recommended that if people with an interest in cleaning were employed for cleaning jobs, the quality of the work would improve. But do such people exist? Given that 'drudgery' is practically its synonym, and the vociferous, presumptuous way in which those who do not like cleaning articulate their dislike, and the feminist wariness around it,[144] it is 'bizarre isn't it!', said *Carrie*, that she liked cleaning. The internet discussions were peppered with such self-remonstrations.

I am one of those freaks that enjoys cleaning … (Netmums, 2012)

I am interested in doing cleaning or ironing as I enjoy both – am I mad?

(Netmums, 2009–2014)

I quite like cleaning (I'm a loser) (Mumsnet, 2014a).

Previous research also does not unequivocally bear out the 'drudgery' descriptor. The most common reason given by Windebank's (2010) survey respondents for not outsourcing housework even when they could afford to was that they liked looking after their home. Four survey-based studies report ambivalence rather than drudgery to be the most common feeling towards cleaning (Robinson and Milkie, 1998; Stancanelli and Stratton, 2010; Sullivan, 1996; van Berkel and de Graf, 1999). Class may or may not mediate attitudes: in a Work Foundation survey, those earning less than £25,000 were seven times as likely to enjoy housework as those earning £70,000 or more (Jones, 2004) but in Oakley's (1974/1985:70) study, similar proportions of working- and middle-class women were 'satisfied' or 'dissatisfied' with housework more generally. Ironing and washing-up were less liked than cleaning, and ironing was also the most commonly disliked task among the UK service-users in my sample. In a radio

---

[144] See Spitze and Loscocco (1999) and Chapter 1.

programme (BBC Radio 4, 2012a) on housework featuring interviews with cleaners in Lancashire, all said they liked cleaning. Angie was 'ashamed to say' that she had had 'a very very low opinion of cleaners' when she had been head of claims in a legal company. But now she did not want to stop cleaning 'because I like it …'. Dill (1994) noted that 'contrary to popular opinion' the majority of her sample of 26 Black American women working as domestics in the mid-twentieth century also felt ambivalence rather than antipathy towards their work (see also Delap (2011a) and Schwartz (2015) in the UK context). Rafkin described an encounter in New York with Claudette, a Jamaican private cleaner, who was due to receive a large lump sum in damages. Claudette intended to continue working as she liked cleaning. Rafkin believed Claudette as she herself liked it but 'it is often hard to explain why I like an activity other people find unbearable' (1998:157). In sum, the evidence may not be overwhelming, but clearly cleaning is not universally disliked, and perhaps some of us are simply socialised to express dislike for it (see Chapter 1).

With regard to service-users, responsiveness may not develop where there is *kichh-kichh*, where 'reluctant' service-users waffle about rather than giving clear instructions on what they would like done and do not feedback on poor or missed work because it could be seen as behaving 'hierarchically',[145] and where service-users assume that the service-provider already knows what to do (Bailly *et al.*, 2013; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001:170; Molinier, 2009/2012:290).

> I do tend to … specially with the ones that … I didn't know before … I do sometimes do a bit of a customer service thing on them and ask them if they're happy and if anything needs improving and stuff like that. Just, for my own peace of mind, you know, not that they are going to look around really. (*Sophie*)

> [Good customers are the] ones that stand back and let you do it and if they've got something they want you to do in addition or they want you to do differently, they're happy to say. (*Martha*)

Responsiveness thus requires the user to respect the provider as another fully developed worker rather than just 'the cleaner'. For instance, trusting the

---

[145] These include guilty feminist users who tip-toe around a service-provider or make overtures of 'friendship' (see Chapter 7).

service-provider will work responsibly in their absence (not 'nosing' around, see Chapter 7). Indeed, key-holding is a huge responsibility and a significant mental aspect of cleaning work. All the UK service-providers held house-keys and a few service-users paid a retention fee when away for long periods to providers where there was a responsive relationship. Responsivity is not limited to paid domestic work. In the operating theatre, when a nurse hands over the right instrument at the right time to the surgeon without any verbal communication, his or her action is underpinned not just by technical knowledge but a responsive relationship.

Mental work in cleaning also involves crafting 'an economy of movement' (Rose, 2004/2014). As in waitressing, cleaning service-providers need to think of the best way to move and work through different areas of a house, maximising the efficacy of their physical labour in the least time. Self-employed service-providers also need 'soft' interpersonal, negotiation and communication skills, for instance, knowing how to issue discreet warnings to customers who leave personal items such as condoms lying around, and how to be assertive[146] in the face of common assumptions about cleaners as 'dumpy' women (all these also contribute to developing responsiveness). They require organisational skills to make efficient use of time not just while cleaning but also timetabling. For instance, *Sheila* scheduled customers who lived near each other on the same day to avoid wasting time travelling. Those declaring their earnings require learning about running a business including dealing with accountants, using the internet to market the business, doing research on cleaning, etc. A recent internet discussion thread started by a self-employed service-provider for cleaning business-owners to swap knowledge and tips reveals many aspects to the business of cleaning (see Netmums, 2009–2014 and Chapter 6).

In India, most service-providers worked for all their clients 6–7 days a week. Outsourced cleaning could include outside areas (e.g. verandahs and driveways[147]) and was often fragmented for reasons such as:

- persisting caste-based segregation of occupations (Frøystad, 2003; Gill, 2009/2012; Mattila, 2011:112; Raghuram, 2001; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010);

---

[146] *Nora* pointed out a 'smart'-appearing person was more likely to be treated as a *service-provider* rather than 'the cleaner'.
[147] Although these areas may not be cleaned daily.

- countering inefficiency resulting from absenteeism (if one worker did not turn up without advanced notice, the other may be asked to do *her* work);[148] and

- managing the volume of housework (cleaning, cooking, laundry) done on daily basis (see Chapter 4). As Mattila (2011) noted, even with two or three workers to help her, the (middle-class) Indian housewife remained busy from morning to evening.[149]

Thus, a live-out service-provider often only cleaned both inside and outside ground-level surfaces. They rarely did what *Vera* called the nit-gritty 'finishing touches' (i.e. the responsive touches), such as plumping the cushions. Other tasks – dusting, kitchen cleaning, washing-up and manual laundry work could be done by either the same or another (live-in/part-live-out/live-out) service-provider, the (live-in/live-out) cook or service-users themselves (Figure 15 and Appendix D; Mattila, 2011). Bathrooms/toilets were sometimes cleaned by the *jamadar/jamadarni*, who often only did this work (Raghuram, 2001). Ironing was outsourced to the *dhobhi* or done by the householders themselves and occasionally by the live-in worker.

The materials and tools for the job were provided by the service-user (see De Casanova (2013) for a similar situation in Ecuador). The service-provider was unlikely to test out materials and tools like some UK service-providers. These latter women routinely used vacuum cleaners and wore gloves for manual cleaning. A few cleaned floors on their hands and knees, usually on their own initiative. In India, cleaning in the squatting position is routine, using traditional brooms and hand mops; no-one mentioned gloves. Very few had access to vacuum cleaners and washing machines, with most service-users doing the work themselves when these products were used (did their use lift the task of cleaning

---

[148] A logic of 'rationalisation'. Other such logics lay behind the fragmentation of paid domestic work in Victorian Britain (Davidoff, 1995).
[149] De Casanova (2013) paints a similar picture of Ecuadorian life.

Figure 15: Number of Indian cleaning service-providers doing various household tasks
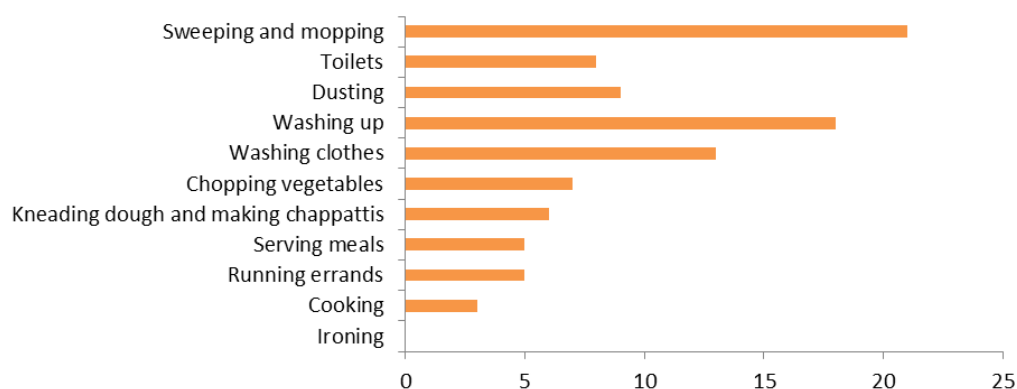
Different tasks could be done for different clients, for instance, sweeping and mopping in one house, washing clothes in another.

Ironing was mostly outsourced to a *dhobhi* (who is most often a male live-out ironing service-provider).

from low to somewhat higher status?). Almost all Indian homes had no dishwasher (see also Mattila, 2011 and Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010).[150] Still, the significance of mental engagement in responsive cleaning, as described in the UK setting, was reified somewhat in the Indian setting:

> that girl has qualities that we educated people don't have, the understanding that girl has, how good natured she is. I never have to tell her what work she needs to do, you have not done this or that. … She is *mindful* of the work she has to do. If I give her clothes to wash but she has decided she will do this other work, she will ask can I wash the clothes tomorrow? She is *mindful* that today I have to do this work, I didn't do this yesterday, she knows what she has to do – *I don't have to tell her* what to do. I consider it my luck to have found her. … Usually … there is no interest in the work, they just do a cursory job and leave. She is honest also, very honest, I have no worries. (Vimla[151])

But in the fragmented work setting with impoverished living conditions, most Indian service-providers showed little investment in their paid work (see Chapter 6) with only little evidence of responsivity. As in the unpaid context, most said their mind dwelled elsewhere when they worked, on family issues, fantasising themselves as service-users, etc. Also, as well-established in previous studies, there is often a disjunction between the views of middle-class service-users with

---

[150] The same reasons can be ascribed: beliefs around purity-pollution and/or modern hygiene practices.

[151] Pilot interviewee.

a sense of entitlement[152] or even conscientious ones[153] (see Chapter 7), and the service-provider's own view of their lived experience of being a low-wage, low-status worker. This can breed reversed responsivity, a palpable tension between the two sides manifested as *kichh-kichh* as well as acts of resistance by the service-providers to maintain their self-esteem (Dill, 1988; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010:152). So Vimla's account of 'they just do a cursory job and leave', is often *her* response to being treated as an invisible non-person, who then 'just does the work and shoots off' (*Anjali*). Responsivity is also hampered by the anxiety bubbling in the subconscious of service-users, particularly middle-class working women, around the practice termed 'abseentism' (Bharati and Mehrotra, 2008; Singh, 2007; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010), well-described here by Pratibha:

> The most irritating thing was their unannounced absenteeism. The day I would have an international delegation coming, my husband would have an important assignment, and the kids were to be dropped to their school function, our maid would just decide that is the day she needed to visit her ailing mother. A cursory glance at the pile of dishes in the sink and the chaotic household was enough for my blood pressure to shoot up.

In the construction of cleaning as casual labour, service-providers struggle to negotiate regular days off. At the same time, their lives are defined by a complex intersection of poverty, minimal state welfare provision and top–down middle-class patriarchal ideologies that have made life worse rather than better because of the lack of the material resources that sustain those ideologies and practices (see Chapter 6). Thus, despite Pratibha's despair, the triple-shift is most vividly played out in this social group (Rani and Kaul, 1986; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; A.N. Singh, 2001; V. Singh, 2007) and the overburdened women sometimes just have to be somewhere else at the drop of a hat. Occasionally white lies were told because you needed a day off just to recharge your batteries.

A degree of responsivity might develop where sympathetic service-users give regular days off and accept unscheduled absences. *Urvashi* spoke with greater interest about a job where she had had 'full responsibility' of the household.

---

[152] That is, the fraught relationship is attributed to modern capitalist-style employment relations and service-providers' increasing awareness of their (non)rights (Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010).

[153] Vimla was helping with her live-in male servant's children's education.

I am polite with them, rather than nagging them, because there's no point. Perhaps this realisation has come [to me] with time. When you're younger … you get after people's lives, then you realise you yourself are a woman, it doesn't matter, it's much better … they also go from house to house, they also have a temperament, they're also human, you're also human, they also have their house. It's a monotonous job, so might as well, you know, *make it a pleasant environment* … when there is a little more time maybe do it together, things become better if you do it together with them … (Vibha)

But in dual-career households with dependent children, such as Pratibha's, absenteeism can raise stress levels (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) and stall responsivity. Responsiveness might also be thwarted in joint households: one person's proclivity towards *kichh-kichh* can negate another's efforts to forge responsiveness. For instance, *Neelam*, a part-live-out worker had established a responsiveness-like relationship with her employer but it appears from her account that she could not create this with the employer's daughter, who lived on the first floor in the same house:

Her daughter, she dislikes me. But the mother, she is like a mother … [the daughter] always speaks in a harsh way … She talks like this to everyone. Even to her mother – you love *Neelam* more than you love me. You should tell [*Neelam*] to do this work, to do that work. But auntie*ji* responds that [*Neelam*] does all the work, there is no need for me to say anything to her. … She doesn't give me a chance to rebuke her so why should I do that? Then the daughter says, but this work is still to be done, that work is still to be done. And [the mother] replies [*Neelam*] is not employed by you, she is employed by me. She will do what she can do, or she will go and take rest. (*Neelam*)

Although the mental work required for responsive cleaning seems to have been missing in the Indian service-providers' work experience, they still needed mental grit and discipline to:

• maintain quality in a repetitive task. A mind that is elsewhere and often in a state of 'tension'[154] thanks to precarious living conditions (Rani and Kaul, 1986) may find it harder to focus. Some service-users stopped using service-providers who started off by doing good-quality work but then let standards slip;

---

[154] Many women used this English word to explain their condition.

- maintain equanimity while working in extreme climatic conditions (e.g. temperatures rising to 45°C and high levels of enervating humidity); and

- have the presence of mind to resist exploitative service-users while harbouring *ressentiment* (Dill, 1988; Rollins, 1985):[155]

> Well, what happens is, first this work doesn't get done, and you are admonished for it, then that work doesn't get done and you are admonished for that as well. They will keep quibbling about one thing or another … if they tell us six jobs, one could get left, yes? … I feel irritated, but what can I do, I can't show it. […] For instance, there are four people in the house. I finish the work and come, but something will get left. And they will call me yet again '*Anika*, come back quickly, go and do that work.' Don't you know how to do it? Don't you understand what I'm saying? You have a bad habit of answering back. Do you need a medicine to make you understand what I'm saying?' This is how they speak. I mean, they just admonish me. … One day, 'uncle' said to me, 'How long have you lived her?' I said it has been a while. Then he said 'You have been influenced by the bad ways of [this city].' So I replied, 'I was influenced by it a long time ago.' So sometimes I answer back in jest, and this happens all the time, a bit of chicanery … (*Anika*)

Ironically, despite the construction of cleaning as *labour* rather than *work*, many phrases used to reprimand a service-provider refer to mental ability, such as, 'Why can't you get this into your head?'; 'Is your brain filled with sawdust?'; 'Have you lost your mind?', which hurts.

> No, [saying it was mindless work] would make me feel bad. Because when we know we have to do this work in a certain way, it is because we have gained knowledge about it. Someone has told us that this is how you need to do the dusting, this is how you need to do the sweeping, this is how you do the mopping. Now if, in that someone tells you that you don't have any sense … or you don't seem to listen to instructions, or you have become like 'this', then one feels bad about it … (*Mohini*)

Several other factors contributed towards the construction of cleaning as *labour* in India. Very few live-out providers worked in the absence of householders, and

---

[155] As in many other 'manual labour' jobs (Bremen, 2013).

when they did, they picked up and left keys in a pre-arranged place, such as with a neighbour. They could not develop small-business skills because the work was always done informally. Some had mobile phones but text messaging service-users was unheard of among my sample as many providers were illiterate. (The UK service-providers routinely messaged or emailed clients or both left notes to inform each other about, for example, swapping routine tasks with non-routine tasks, missed out work or holidays.) In sum, the Indian cleaning service-provider could not offer 'bespoke housekeeping services'. A singleton and businesswoman, who regularly travelled abroad, succinctly summarised the differences between cleaning *work* and cleaning *labour*:

> But I find that your, like my brother has help in [the United States] who charges some US$30 dollars per week … I'm amazed by the level of quality of the work which is done. It is so much more superior than that gets done in India. […] Like you know, in my brother's house, … I saw [the help working] just once, I saw, automatically, quietly [working], kitchen is sparkling, everything is in place, the slabs are clean, the cupboards also, if she has time, she's cleaning the cupboards every time. And the flooring is … and you know, the bedsheets are removed, done, machine, ta, ta, ta. Fantastic work, which here, you have to be on their heads, supervising, checking … So definitely the quality of work that is done there and also the monitoring … and this time when I went to London I stayed with one of [my business associates]. Very nice house she had […] and the bathroom was sparkling, I mean, here in my loo, you'll find that she hasn't cleaned the shower, or the walls and I have to get it done, or I have to do it myself. But there, they all … it's done as a routine, you know what I mean? (Usha)

The difference in structure of paid-for cleaning in the two research settings, however, cannot be read as a straightforward UK–India difference. Social understandings of 'women's work' as work anyone can do cross cultures, and cleaning is also constructed as 'mindless' labour in the West.[156] Taylorised systems are followed by many Western private and commercial cleaning agencies,

---

[156] Caring in the West is also delivered as *work* or *labour*. In residential care, rigid rules constrain workers' ability to do relational *work*, compromising the dignity of both carer and client. The autonomy attached to homecare rejuvenates workers' connections to their '*labour*' (Stacey, 2005:838).

with strict job-specification and labour-intensification by task fragmentation (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010; Mayer-Ahuja, 2004; Mendez, 1998), which disincentivises many workers (Goerdeler *et al.*, 2015; Oakley, 1974/1985:81). As Janet, who used agency cleaners, mused:

> [there were] differences between individual service-providers, so there's a really thorough one who'll do my kitchen window sill, which involves taking plants and knick-knacks …, whereas another service-provider another week will … look at it and go, 'Well I don't think that's in my job description' and just leave it.

Salzinger's (1991) ethnographic work helps place my findings in context. After observing the proceedings of two Californian domestic-worker collectives Salzinger realised the differences in their ethos opened up new meanings of domestic work for her. Amigos attracted newly arrived working-class Latinas with little education and saw domestic cleaning only as a stop-gap job. Thus the collective lacked interest in making the work motivating. Its members were encouraged to take on work regardless of their knowledge of American cleaning products or methods of cleaning and level of spoken English to allow meaningful communication with service-users. They were told not to resist exploitative service-users, but to charge low fees, do as many jobs as possible and move on. At meetings, members talked more about their life circumstances and tribulations rather than the work of cleaning. Unsurprisingly, there were frequent complaints from service-users. In contrast, Choices' members, also Latinas, were often from middle-class backgrounds and well-educated. They were interested in professionalising the work of cleaning rather than in 'moving on'. Choices held regular training sessions with detailed discussions on cleaning products and methods. Members were taught to be assertive and charge a respectable fee, take pride in their skilled work, drop exploitative customers and impress on their service-users their expertise in housekeeping matters.

Salzinger argued that the collectives' target markets determined their construction of cleaning as *labour* by Amigos and as *work* by Choices. Choices catered to the higher end of the market: the affluent (White) American professional middle-class, for whom hiring an 'expert' cleaner was part of the contemporary middle-class *zeitgeist*. Amigos targeted dual-earner/single mother families (as opposed to dual-career) or elderly retirees who needed external help to get on with their daily lives but who could just about afford to pay (see

Chapter 3). My data suggest Salzinger's hypothesis is Western-centric and requires fleshing out.

In India, although reasonably affluent people such as my service-user sample might pay more, it is still not enough to lift the worker out of a life of dependence (Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; see Chapter 7). In the UK, the service-providers I interviewed worked for a range of customers, from the well-heeled to those with modest means. Salzinger proposed it was Choices' members' middle-class capital that made them 'likely to conceptualize their work – even work for which they initially had little respect – in professional terms' (1991:154–155). Although my UK sample comprised mostly working-class women, given their education and work histories, their situation is comparable with Choices rather than Amigos's workers (Appendix C; see also Chapter 6).

Both my respondents' and the Choices members' approach to cleaning as *work* shows that being educated does not mean one should start disparaging domestic work, rather, educated service-providers can help transform cleaning from *labour* to *work*. For Salzinger, this manifested as Choices members' struggle to present as skilled rather than unskilled workers. My data show that good technical skills in the absence of responsiveness are not enough to lift cleaning work out of the shadows to which it has been relegated, along with many other occupations, over centuries in various societies. Rather, recognising cleaning as clean rather than dirty work[157] is about recognising the mental labour that underpins the competence of the worker with the necessary manual skills. What does this mean for the relationship between housework and feminism?

Concluding remarks

The difference in structuring of outsourced cleaning in the British and Indian settings confirms Bujra's conclusion, that the link between women's paid and unpaid housework is not a total social fact:

> pre-market skills and ideologies are not transferred unproblematically to the wage sector … what women do at work is not simply an extension of their domestic role, because domestic labour is transformed by the terms on which it is carried out (2000:85).

---

[157] Paraphrasing Salzinger (1991:158).

In other words, good paid-for cleaning is a form of *work* rather than simply a replacement of unpaid housework which can be done by anyone. It entails much learning and continued commitment. Romero (2002) contended training and certification did not improve the conditions of outsourced housework and workers' rights (see Chapter 1). For example, Mendez (1998) and Lan (2006) described how American and Indonesian agencies train women to *serve* rather than *work* in the USA and Taiwan, respectively. Based on my findings that not everyone can be a 'good' cleaner and Romero's (2002) own observation about her sample's emphasis on their years of experience as a strategy to transform the work, I do not think training in itself is entirely unnecessary. The issue that is of concern here is not that women (or men) are being taught to do what they already know, but that this training has been and often still is delivered within a discourse that privileges (White) secular middle-class values and practices around domesticity as morally superior, and assumes that the work of cleaning is inscribed on the bodies of people of a particular class, caste or racial background. The informal but streamlined training provided by the Choices collective (Salzinger, 1991) that enabled workers to 'restructure the work' by rejecting 'demeaning and degrading practices' (Romero, 2002:166; see also Rafkin, 1998) shows such societal 'norms' can be and should be challenged.

The comparison of the structure of outsourced cleaning in UK and India also shows that paid-for cleaning is not inherently mindless *labour*: it can be done as *work*.[158] Rose's observation regarding how the conditions of work influence a hairdresser's ability to exercise mental skills and feel a sense of achievement (which are vital for good work), holds true for responsive domestic cleaning in the contemporary urban context as well:

> The more enervating and demeaning the conditions, the less opportunity to enhance one's skills, display creativity, and develop satisfying relationships with clients and with fellow stylists (Rose, 2004/2014:50).

In the next chapter, I look at the meanings of cleaning as *work* and *labour* in the two contrasting research settings.

---

[158] Oakley's (1974/1985:59) analysis of what made housework interesting or a chore and a bore for her sample also revealed that perception of *unpaid* housework was dependent on factors such as having or not having the right work environment, respectively.

Chapter 6   Meanings of domestic cleaning as *work* and as *labour*

It was an epiphanic moment when two sprightly English women who had recently opened a cleaning business firmly told me they were not employees and nor were their clients' their employers. I had been self-employed for many years. Could I dismiss *their* understandings of *their* working conditions and relationships as 'false-consciousness'? From then on, I asked the UK service-providers and service-users how they defined their employment relationship. Later, these data informed my representation of the actors throughout the thesis and formed a significant theme for the analysis.

my assumption was that cleaning is something that enables people to get a bit of extra cash (Harriet)

I want to put money in a bank account so that a bank can see that I'm earning, so that one day I can get a mortgage. … So I need proof that I earn a certain amount of money. So the more that I can prove, the better for me really. (*Jessica*)

This chapter interrogates the meanings of cleaning work for the British and Indian cleaning service-providers, including for their selfhood and as kin-members. Within Douglas' overarching framework (see Chapter 2), Pollert's (1981, 1996) historical materialist analysis provided the starting point for this chapter. That is, I simultaneously considered gender and class as primary analytical categories because both in the private and public, class[159] mediates gendered oppression. This mediation is historically situated and fluid, with class experiences sometimes overshadowing gendered experiences and vice versa (Vera-Sanso, 2008). (Although I have not used a Marxist feminist framework for my analysis, it is integral to much feminist theorisation of exploitation of paid domestic workers. Thus, I also make reference to my sample's working practices in Marxist terms where relevant to aid linking my analysis to wider feminist research on paid domestic work.) Moreover, upper-class gender and class ideologies might function as the reference standard not only among working-class people as they make sense of their private–public lived experiences but also among researchers, who are classed and gendered themselves. To limit the influence of my etic understandings on my analysis of the empirical emic knowledge underpinning my respondents' accounts, I drew on Jackson's (2011) notion that reflexivity is not class- or capital-bound, and Kabeer's (2001) conceptualisation of 'empowerment'. I now elaborate on the relevance of these concepts for my analysis.

Many Western researchers are intrigued by the positive meanings attributed to low-paid work, despite the social stigma and dismal pay and benefits (Gregson and Lowe, 1994a; also review by Hebson *et al.*, 2015).

---

[159]As do race, age, sexuality, etc.

Feminists have applied Bourdieu's theory of capital[160] to explain this phenomenon. Skeggs (1997/2002) argued that working-class women's (mis)appropriation and (mis)accrual of middle-class feminine capital, in the presence of limited economic and education capitals, keeps them entrenched in society's basement. The sense of fulfilment in their work cloaks the pain of no gain in symbolic capital from doing caring labour. Hebson and colleagues (2015) extended Skeggs's argument, showing that the feminine (non)capital that drew working-class women into caring was mediated by their social (non)capital. Family or friends with experience of caring jobs act as role models and offer advice about opportunities in caring work. Conversely, access to greater education and material resources allows people to make better informed choices, in part because they reinforce embodied capital (e.g. self-confidence, self-belief) (Atkinson, 2010). That is, self-reflexivity is associated with prior access to symbolic and embodied capital (Atkinson, 2010; Skeggs, 1997/2002; Walters and Whitehouse, 2012). For instance, although most of Skeggs's respondents did not identify as feminists, she writes that several of their 'experiences and responses', such as 'public, collectivist behaviour' and 'struggles over their working practices' could be classified as feminist, 'if they [were] not forced to fit a coherent and consistent framework' (1997/2002:154). With the latter approach, the women's decisions and actions are understood having tactical rather than strategic value because they only let the women engage in 'halting losses' (Skeggs, 1997/2002:161) rather than in achieving worthwhile outcomes – where 'worthwhile' is understood as middle-class symbolic capital. Similarly, Atkinson (2010) perceives self-reflexivity as (only) possible in privileged class locations.

Jackson (2011), however, argued that late modern self-reflexivity as defined by Giddens and Beck is a specific understanding of a particular form of reflexivity. The ambiguous universalisation of this form has resulted in an erroneous perception of 'reflexive selfhood' as class-bounded, as a characteristic of symbolic capital, whereas it forms 'the basis of all sociality, of *being* social and participating *in* the social ... the ability to imagine oneself from the other's

---

[160] 'Capital' is generally understood as (a set of) resources than impact on life opportunities (Huppatz and Goodwin, 2013).

perspective and anticipate the other's responses to oneself'.[161] Those who are oppressed 'often need to be highly reflexive' even if their class (and gender and race) position constrains 'the degree to which and the directions in which' reflexivity is realised (2011:17–19; original emphasis; also Reay, 2004). Jackson's thesis finds purchase in published accounts of reflexivity among domestic workers.

In Mexico, Saldaña-Tejeda initially noted how employers effortlessly provided a narrative 'of the self as a way to justify their privileged position' whereas the domestic workers talked in terms of the constraints they faced (2015:953). Later, however, Saldaña-Tejeda realised this difference in narratives might have been a product of the way both groups positioned her in relation to themselves. The employers saw her as one of them, whereas for the workers, she was the 'Other'. On looking beyond the biographies, she found evidence of reflexivity in the workers' explanations of what their limited economic and educational resources and occupation 'allowed them to be':

> Many workers were conscious about the way traditional norms, especially around sexuality, shaped their biographies but they also highlighted how things have changed; that is, indirectly they described a process of detraditionalization and the way they saw themselves within it. (Saldaña-Tejeda, 2015:954)

Nonetheless, much theorisation of the condition of 'Third World women' has happened within 'development' studies drawing on the notion of 'empowerment' (Vera-Sanso, 2008). Kabeer's (2001) incisive analysis of this approach highlighted the problems of conceptualising empowerment as a quantifiable ability to make 'a' choice at 'a' point in time. Empowerment is better conceived as a process, a shift from a position of inability to having ability to make choices that result in 'valued ways of "being and doing"' (Kabeer, 2001:21, drawing on Sen's capabilities approach). This process of becoming empowered requires access to resources (e.g. economic, socio-cultural and embodied capitals) and agency, 'the ability to define one's goals and act on them' (Kabeer, 2001:21), although it can

---

[161] Jackson's critique draws on Mead (1934) to highlight the fallacies of globalising late modern Western-centric theories of reflexivity and individualism in relation to sexuality and intimacy practices in East Asia. The essence of her argument, however, is relevant to all spheres of everyday life.

be constrained by institutionalised values and beliefs, as are the outcomes of decisions taken. Directing the lens of 'empowerment' research on the most downtrodden Southern woman 'misses forms of gender disadvantage which are more likely to characterise better-off sections of society … and [which] among the poor do not take the form of basic functioning failures' (Kabeer, 2001:22–23). As Kabeer points out, career women often cannot deploy their resources to shift the gendered dynamics of the domestic, stop policing their public self or disrupt gendered ways of working, in short, 'to be and do' (see Chapter 3; Walters and Whitehouse, 2012). Whereas Stacey's sample of American home-based carers, despite not being 'mistresses of their own destinies, … evidently felt *able to influence the course* of their working lives' (2005:149, my emphasis), and Romero was 'struck by the way' in which the Chicana domestics made 'the most of their options' (2002:175).

Kabeer's (2001) understanding of empowerment dovetails with Jackson's (2011) position that self-reflexivity *per se* is not an inherent characteristic of privilege and I contest the need for two separate frameworks for analysing the condition of women in India and the UK. As Vera-Sanso (2008) thoughtfully pointed out, gender-essentialist feminist research overlooks the cross-border class-related issues faced by women, for example, poverty is a more likely determinant of pooling of incomes in couples than gendered power that might manifest 'differently' in different cultures.

In the rest of this chapter, I consider the meanings of cleaning work for the service-providers in relation to unpaid housework and other paid work, including implications for safety and physicality of the work, and service-providers' own domestic commitments. Then I analyse the role of cleaning work in the service-providers' construction of selfhood. Finally, I consider the material injustices in cleaning done as *work* or 'dead-end' *labour* and summarise the argument developed to this point. I start by analysing the British women's accounts.

Experiences of domestic cleaning as *work* and *labour*

'It's the same with any job really, isn't it?' (*Yvonne*)

Eighteen UK respondents were registered self-employed traders (Appendix C). Nine were working full-time and eight were still building up their business. The middle-class respondents had had one or two careers previously. The rest had a

chequered work history. The previous jobs, primarily in female-dominated areas, ranged from entry-level and service occupations to administrative and managerial work (Appendix C), and changed mostly due to structural reasons (e.g. redundancies, discrimination against pregnant women and childcare responsibilities) or altered life circumstances (e.g. moving house or divorce). These job histories reflect established working patterns (and occupations) among British working-class women (Hebson *et al.*, 2015; James, 2008; Metcalfe, 2013; Walters, 2005; Warren, 2000; Warren *et al.*, 2009). Several women also continually sought jobs with better pay prospects,[162] which underpinned their decision to 'go it alone' as a cleaning service-provider. But there were other reasons too.

> In my other job, you're a number in a factory with a lot of people. You can be friendly with your bosses, your line leaders, but at the end of the day, if you do the slightest thing wrong, they'd sack you straight away. Whereas this, it's different. Yes, it's a different relationship with them. So, no, I enjoy it … (*Olivia*)

Olivia's comment shows that a key factor in work done as *work* rather than *labour* is not becoming just another body at work (Johnson, 2002). *Nora* had felt undervalued by her employing organisation in her previous caring job, and her increased self-worth and feeling of pride in setting up her cleaning business came through strongly in the interview.

> I wanted a challenge. Yeah! I wanted to work for myself. I'd worked on the community [health team], dealing with people, administering medication, which I had to go through a lot of training for … and … I just felt I could take it on myself to go and help people and not work for a company. A big company, that didn't really … value me [Later] … The clients made you feel valued but not the companies you work for … They have too many policies and procedures that suit them. (*Nora*)

Nora enjoyed cleaning but she had no illusions about it being all 'good' work. A minority of her customers were not considerate, but '[t]hat's business isn't it? There are good days and bad days.'

---

[162] Many working-class women contribute to the household income (Damaske, 2011; Johnson, 2002; Metcalfe, 2013; Walters, 2005).

Unpaid housework is perceived as immanent (see Chapter 1): it is carried out in the same house, the same rooms, over and over again with no tangible outcome. Paid housework can be similarly experienced by a live-in domestic worker. However, several jobs done by my UK respondents were no less mundane. *Celia*, an English graduate and young mother, had just launched a cleaning business with her friend when I met them. She had found office work stifling:

> All work's repetitive! Well, like my last job was ... I told you it was in a solicitor's office but it was the same phone-calls over and over again, checking the same information over and over again, having to go to team meetings over and over again, where you're having to discuss people who've gone 30 seconds over for having a wee, so it's the same, yeah! ... whatever job we do, there's that element, isn't there? (*Celia*)

Checkout operators and general retail assistants have described their work experience as tedious and without meaning (Walters, 2005). Comments on opinion articles on outsourced cleaning suffused with liberal guilt (e.g. Dowling, 2014; Wollaston, 2015, see also Chapter 7) mention cleaning as being among the better low-wage jobs. In the early 1900s, accounts of housework as 'drudgery' by some women were contested by others who argued it was no worse than a host of repetitive jobs in 'the office, the shop, and the factory' (Schwartz, 2015). Similarly, some contemporary careworkers report care work is more interesting and varied than retail and administrative jobs as well factory and hospitality jobs, which were experienced as monotonous (Rubery *et al.*, 2011). Careers sold as 'creative' and 'elitist', with ostensibly 'autonomous' learning and growing expertise, can, in reality, include clerical-type, standardised deskilling work processes, and be experienced as dull and unimaginative: it appears mundaneness is 'an integral' feature of 'work' (Costas and Kärreman, 2016:69). Like the Latina cleaners with prior experience of live-in work (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001), my respondents said each house was different, they could vary routines and schedules when they sensed repetition.

A few respondents flatly stated that cleaning ended up as women's work. Were they just drawing on feminine capital? I sensed affront when I asked whether they considered cleaning proper work. Most declared service-providers emphasised they were neither servants nor simply 'a cleaner'. They were working women running a cleaning business – there were differences in the structure of

their unpaid and paid housework (see Chapter 5). It was demeaning when 'some customers … treat it as a joke job, like "Oh! we'll just ring up that morning, just cancel", forgetting that it's … your living' (*Zoe*). These women saw possibilities in doing 'women's work' as independent workers, possibilities that had been lacking in previous jobs.

Possibilities in cleaning work in the UK

Cleaning provides regular work and often minimal investment is required initially. *Zoe* opened her cleaning business after being made redundant. Her husband also joined her when he lost his job. *Zoe* called domestic cleaning a 'hidden gem':

> cleaning, as far as I'm concerned, has always been a pretty reliable profession. … Well, I know someone who has a PhD and she was struggling to get a job. And she set up her own cleaning business …

Ambitious *Vera* and her same-sex partner started with £50. After six months, they had a £4,000 monthly turnover. *Vera* saw cleaning as a less-risky way to finance other entrepreneurial ventures. Middle-class mother *Evie*'s parents had always employed cleaners. Eight years ago she realised she needed to work because her partner's freelance career in a creative industry was not providing a steady income. There was no economic capital to restart a defunct family retail business, and *Evie* did not want to be a teaching assistant because of the 'ridiculous hours and pay'. Seeing the demand for cleaners among her town's affluent elderly population, she opened a cleaning business.

Accounts of the UK's early twentieth-century 'servant problem' often gloss over the increase in domestic workers during the Great Depression, when 'the coercive nature of the unemployment benefits system … returned some women to service' (Delap, 2007:82); also later in the 1980s women sought this work when their husbands lost their jobs.[163] More recently, South→North female migration has built on the availability of this work:

---

[163] At Feminism in London 2015, after attending a panel on domestic slavery, I was telling a woman that my interest in the session was related to my PhD. She said her boyfriend came from a middle-class family that routinely employed cleaners. But his mother had worked as a cleaner herself during the 1980s recession when money had been tight.

> I think for women it is easier to find a job … you cannot say it's easy but you can find regular work. For example, a cleaning lady is working on Monday in one household and this for years. But if a man is renovating a house or gardening, it's only possible in the summer for a short period. Not so easy …. (Ukrainian cleaner in Austria, quoted in Haidinger, 2008:135)

In the USA, immigrant Latinas not only found work quicker than men but also found it easier to take a break (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Romero, 2002).

Cleaning franchises stress to interested parties that cleaning is 'recession-proof' (Bright and Beautiful, n.d.). In fact, the story of civilisation is not about men's progressive achievements but of the continuance of reproductive work. 'Men's work' comes and goes – the poignant story reproduced below from a study into the low-pay–no-pay cycle of life in Teeside, effectively encapsulates the long history of precarity (Gunn and Bell, 2002) of 'men's work':

> I [was] … laid off after seven months. It was just due to the way everything went, like. He was putting in for grants to expand his business and he was getting knocked back so he had to make cutbacks himself. … It was a good job. … I used to enjoy getting up on a morning to go to work. It was a proper company as well so I felt safe and secure in it. I knew everybody in there and they were good lads so it was just gutting when I got laid off (quoted in Shildrick *et al.*, 2012:136).

Women working in, for instance, factories might also suffer the consequences of unstable demand for products (Elson and Pearson, 1981).

Truss *et al.* (2013) argued that 'feminine' work involves little risk-taking, which lowers its status. My data (and other prior research) contest this claim. Starting up and running a small business involves risks (Wall, 2015). *Tamsin* was employing subcontractors rather than issuing zero-hour contracts at the risk of compromising the profitability of her cleaning quasi-agency (see Appendix E). Key-holders risk being accused of theft. Service-providers also take risks with their own safety (Lutz, 2011; see below). Migrant domestic workers encounter risks during migration such as finding a safe place to live, finding the first job and of possibly doing undocumented work (Kindler, 2008; Momsen, 1999). Indeed, the decision to be a self-employed cleaning service-provider or an informal worker could involve much self-reflexivity.

The 'managed' worker versus 'self-directed' worker[164]

Cleaning self-employment is often assumed to be synonymous with undeclared work (e.g. Bowman and Cole, 2014; see Chapter 3). Most of my respondents were declared service-providers (Appendix C). There is little previous research on this situation (but see Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Meagher, 2003), perhaps because these workers might be in minority. However, analysing experiences of the small groups that break the mould is important for a fuller understanding of social trends (Marshall, 1995; Potter, 2015), including feminist anxieties around outsourced cleaning.

In the heyday of the Fordist era, Dalla Costa and James argued that 'liberation of the working-class woman' did not 'lie in her getting a job outside the home' because '[s]lavery to an assembly line is not a liberation from slavery to a kitchen sink' (1973:35). In post-Fordist times, Taylorist and neo-Taylorist forms of management and discipline are increasingly seen across occupations (BBC One, 2013; Costas and Kärreman, 2016; Jacobs and Padavic, 2015; Shildrick *et al.*, 2012; Stacey, 2005). *Martha*, a divorcee with two teenagers, worked as a part-time bank teller. This job involved being monitored for 'how productive I am', which *Martha* found constricting and stressful:

> Banking can be boring yeah! … it's repetitive and there are times you do, you are told to do your job a certain way and you can't justify why you are doing it that way. It's the way you're told to do it.

Consequently, in her early forties, *Martha* opened a part-time cleaning business to experience working autonomously.[165] While *Martha* appreciated being part of her bank's team for two days every week, the rest of the time, she said, 'it is nice to just be … not in the team but just on my own. I'm responsible for the job, that is quite nice. … And I don't mind cleaning, I find it easy and I have no issues with it.'

Dissatisfaction with being answerable to others or 'managed' for every

---

[164] I found being an orthodontist uninspiring. I (down?)shifted to freelance copy-editing, which provided much satisfaction for several years. My (non-White) 'opt-out' experience informs my ontological position, but I have endeavoured to let my data speak for itself.
[165] A Mumsnetter, now a cleaner, also used to work as a bank manager (Mumsnet, 2013a).

action was a recurrent theme (Rubery *et al.*, 2011; Shildrick *et al.*, 2012).[166]

> Yeah! That's what's important for me. I don't want to work for somebody. I've done it. And then … one of my children's in hospital, for only 10 days. But I got disciplined at work for it even though I'd worked for *every* minute I'd missed … and I just thought I don't want to work for somebody, because my children will always come first. (*Celia*)

Kichh-kichh as reported previously (Glenn, 1986; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Rollins, 1985; Romero, 2002) was not very common among my live-out respondents (see Chapter 7). In part this was because those service-providers who were in a position to do so, dropped customers who watched over their shoulder if they could; across cultures such service-users can have difficulty finding a long-term service-provider.

My respondents were also not 'just' working-class women with familial responsibilities who select informal work such as cleaning to gain control over working conditions with little benefit for themselves (Cox, 2006; Samman *et al.*, 2016). *Sophie,* a divorcee and trained nurse turned to cleaning in her forties, long after her daughter had grown up. She left her last job (assistant retail manager) when she realised that company policies and procedures insidiously embedded unpaid overtime into her 'routine' work schedule (see also Smith and Elliot, 2012:280). Following a brief stint at a cleaning agency, *Sophie* struck out on her own, charging more per hour than she had earned as a manager.

> it has had a positive effect on my life, because I can work the hours I want. If I want to take a holiday, I can do without having to book with work, have weekends off, have bank holidays off, and I do actually have every other Thursday off as well, so I can, you know, choose my times. I'm a bit more in control of my *time* in general and *where* I want to go … (*Sophie*)

Wall (2015) found that self-employment was integral to nurses' working practices that were commensurate with their values. Similarly, many of my respondents

---

[166] Monitoring also happens at higher levels. The academics' control over their work and research interests was also constrained by numerous rules, regulations and funding (student feedback, annual appraisals, the Research Excellence Framework (REF), etc.), and the need to display 'moral' commitment (Rose and Pevalin, 2005). Gill (2010) highlights considerable frustration and despair among academics, emotions similar to the 'alienation' reported among low-wage workers.

did not want to be full-time employees. This is not a novel finding: in several older American studies the live-out multi-client cleaners working informally also preferred the vendor–customer relationship (Glenn, 1986; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Romero, 2002). Yet, the employee–employer relationship is overwhelmingly accepted as the frame of reference because researchers commonly see it as the most secure way to work.[167] Glenn (1986, 1992) contended it was the persistence of pre-industrialist traditions of personalism and asymmetry in contemporary paid domestic work that justified considering the actors as employers and employees. Romero, using a Marxist feminist framework, which assumes a clear modern–feudal dichotomy,[168] discounted Glenn's justification by asserting the domestic employer–employee relationship was 'an instance of [capitalist] class struggle … [women] employing private household workers and childcare workers share[d] the same self-interest as other employers' (2002:7–8). Romero's rationale appears to be driven by her choice of analytical framework rather than her respondents' experiences because the strategies they were using to establish 'business-like' working conditions were strategies of self-employment, such as negotiating fees and benefits individually with each client. Lutz's (2011) comment following her attempt to justify why 'employer' and 'employee' are the right terms appeared to end in confusion. She based her argument on the premise that the work is 'socially necessary "work"' (2011:187) but ended up noting 'the absence of a contract and the fact that the work is performed in the private sphere give rise to functional and terminological diffuseness' (2011:32). Her respondents did not share this idea, as she notes they often rejected the 'employee' label. Yet the research team decided to overlook these workers' view, because, as researchers, they 'knew' it obfuscated the power–dependence equation in domestic work.

Meagher (2003) acknowledged the substantive differences between 'client' and 'employer', but she elides the use of the terms in her book. I argue that the terms are not interchangeable because of the differences in employer–employee and vendor–client employment relations (Rose and Pevalin, 2005). None of the cited researchers mention discussing their decision about representation with their respondents. Moreover, the self-employed status of providers of other

---

[167] See for instance, the *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* special issue (2011) 'Regulating Decent Work for Domestic Workers' (volume 23, number 1).
[168] This binary is contested (see Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010).

outsourced home-maintenance services is not contested, and the UK's employment status indicator (HMRC, n.d.) confirmed my respondents' claim of being self-employed. Thus, I could not assume my respondents were being unreflexive and label them 'employees'.[169]

Researchers have argued that the key issue to consider in (low-wage) self-employment is whether a self-employed person would find the same work more attractive under conditions of employment (Kautonen *et al.*, 2010, cited in Cruz *et al.*, 2017:276). About seven of the 27 UK service-providers had implied they would switch jobs if they found one that could provide them the same advantages, or even not work at all, but such jobs did not include working as an employee of a cleaning agency. Indeed, as noted in other research (e.g. Cruz *et al.*, 2017), preserving one's autonomy and a preference for self-employment came across as an important condition of decent work in my research. Only three of my respondents had experience of being cleaning-agency employees, and only a few academics had experience of using one. Romero and Hondagneu-Sotelo noted that their respondents had reservations about formalising cleaning work within contemporary patriarchal work relations; nor did they want to be employees of cleaning agencies. However, Meagher (2003) and Bowman and Cole (2014) argue that formalisation of outsourced housework (cleaning agencies/franchises/companies) is the best way forward to ensure workers' rights and to minimise cultural abuse. Thus, before considering the merits and demerits of self-employment, I analyse my respondents' reasons for avoiding jobs with cleaning agencies.

The service-providers found the contractual obligations of being employed constraining (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Romero, 2002). In the case of domestic work, across cultures, feminists have shown how capitalist cleaning agencies have co-opted the 'wages for housework' debate to give back to women *their* work under Taylorist conditions, reminiscent of historical servitude. Through both personalism and depersonalism,[170] and cleaning to pre-prepared scripts, the *work* of cleaning is reduced to *labour*, resulting in disenfranchisement and exploitation (Abrantes, 2014a; Devetter and Rousseau, 2009; Ehrenreich, 2000;

---

[169] This argument does not extend to the live-in worker working for only one household.
[170] Some personalism is desirable, no-one wants to be an automaton (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Lutz, 2011:106; *Olivia*'s comment above).

Lan, 2006; Mendez, 1998; Tomei, 2011; van Walsum, 2011), as for other low-wage agency workers (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012). Perry's (1998) sample of Californian rubbish-collectors preferred rubbish collection to other work, despite the lingering smell that remained on their bodies long after, when they became company shareholders, with autonomous working conditions. Still, Bowman and Cole argue the recently established Swedish cleaning companies offer a progressive model, protecting workers by clearly structuring the work: no picking up after people and no 'potentially dangerous' tasks such as 'cleaning windows and moving furniture' (Bowman and Cole, 2014:191). Pérez and Stallaert (2016:159) also noted increased negotiation power among workers employed by Belgian agencies. However, blanket regulations may prevent development of responsiveness (see Chapter 5). In the UK, internal window cleaning forms part of outsourced cleaning and none of my respondents objected to it. The ability to decide which services to offer and which risks to take increased their embodied capital.

Some Australian firms offer bespoke housekeeping (Meagher, 2003). Here, third-party mediation of wages and job descriptions, and blacklisting of abusive households, can reduce worker exploitation. But company employees, even in state-sponsored agencies (Pérez and Stallaert, 2016), can be short-changed, because companies have to make a profit. It also means meeting prospective clients and decision-making – the negotiations where 'power' can be exercised – are removed from individual service-providers. My respondents enjoyed these aspects, it was part of doing cleaning as *work*, developing responsiveness: they became cleaning business-owners rather than just 'the cleaner'. Some respondents even regarded 'problem' customers as a challenge. *Nora* drew on her prior conflict management training to deal with disrespectful customers.

Regarding responsiveness, agencies or firms do recognise the value of a 'regular cleaner' (Bowman and Cole, 2014), although this is affected by high staff turnover, a known problem in low-wage work (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012; Sykes *et al.*, 2014). Companies can prevent poaching of customers by tying workers and users into contracts. Workers and service-users may not see such clauses as empowering, and can reflexively circumvent them.

it was in our contracts that you couldn't pinch a client, so you had to be very careful how you said things. So I just went around saying, 'I'm leaving because I'm starting my own business, so if you know anybody …' Some

clients always said to me, 'If ever you leave, I'll go with you.' Umm, so I didn't ask them, they asked me. (*Sophie*)

All the registered service-providers had professional indemnity insurance. Many had had Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. But they did not do written contracts.[171] 'Fair' contracts that safeguard workers' rights is good (malestream) business practice (Meagher, 2003). My respondents gave me thoughtful reasons why contracts were not always appropriate. They were not atomised workers and their workplace was somebody else's home. Their job was not just to hoover and spray a lot of room freshener for effect, but to leave each house feeling warm, welcoming and individual. Thus establishing rapport and, subsequently, a friendly work relationship (see Chapter 7) based on mutual trust was important. It cannot be dismissed as 'astonishingly' pre-modern (see Lutz, 2011:32).

> I want them to keep me because they want to keep *me* and not because they're tied into a contract. (*Tamsin*)

> It should be a simple communication between people, if you like the clean, you keep the clean, if you don't, then you don't. (*Vera*)

Valerie pointed out that contracts could be daunting for elderly clients:

> to tie an elderly person into a contract, you can't do that, like the gentleman who's just died, he'd been in and out of hospital since January, so one minute we're working, one minute we're not. So ... you can't tie them into a contract.

Service-providers also preferred to reserve the right to drop customers. I argue that for good providers, the 'cleaning fairy', this right can raise negotiating power. In long-term relationships, terms of service could change. Thus, usually, a few dos and don'ts were agreed verbally, such as minimum two hours' work (to cover travel time and costs), 24–48 hours' cancellation notice and advance holiday notice. These women were not behaving irresponsibly. Rather, they were participating in a considered refusal of 'good' business practices that in real terms provide only lip service to workers, particularly domestic workers, since domestic work is mostly excluded from national labour laws. For instance,

---

[171] No academic had issued a contract; Janet's was issued by the agency.

contracts that advise employers to provide their live-in workers with 'adequate food' without defining what this means still leave workers vulnerable to abuse (Varia, 2011; see also van Walsum, 2011).[172,173]

The informal service-providers were paid cash, but the rest also received cheques or direct bank transfer. Paying by cash per visit is preferred for elderly clients with health problems, who may often spend time in hospital. Indeed, cash payment does not implicitly imply 'informal' work or that a service-provider 'does not know their way around a self assessment tax form' (Mumsnet, 2013a). A few service-providers issued receipts, leaving some customers 'bemused'. This attitude assumes cleaning is not 'proper' work, and the service-providers found it belittling. Responsible service-users should expect or request a receipt for payment (BBC News, 2015; ILO, 2016).

Another reason for considering Bowman and Cole's optimistic conclusions with caution is that the multi-level subcontracting business model of the 'free' market comprises an informal market at ground level, where companies 'may register a few workers as formal employees but simultaneously hire additional workers informally',[174] recruitment may occur through social networks that favour some workers and exclude others,[175] and so on (Gavanas, 2010:27). Bowman and Cole (2014) did not ignore Gavanas' findings, but they opined that with time, because of tax-breaks on outsourcing and inventive practices, the Swedish 'in/formal' market would shrink. According to Devetter and Rousseau, (2009), however, this did not happen in France, where similar tax-breaks were introduced in the early 1990s.

At the same time, even within the 'formal' spaces of the free market, employment-linked social protections demanded by researchers of paid domestic work are becoming privileges (Hom, 2008/2010). In the 'homework economy', 'advanced' communication technologies, flexibilised working spaces and

---

[172] Some UK commercial cleaning agencies also do not issue or give copies of contracts to their employees; conversely cleaners may not read the contract or understand its contents (Sykes *et al.*, 2014).
[173] For a detailed description of how the quasi-agency owners negotiated issues with their subcontractors/employees and engaged with 'good' business practices see Appendix E.
[174] See also Tsikata (2011) for Ghana. Mayer-Ahuja (2004) describes similar corrupt practices among commercial cleaning agencies in Germany.
[175] Australian 'democratic' firms/franchises can exclude non-English speakers (Meagher, 2003).

schedules, and individualised contracts are transforming the traditional male white-collar worker into a subordinate, vulnerable 'feminised' worker through the processes of isolation, dispersal, destabilisation and naturalisation (Hom, 2008/2010 drawing on Haraway, 1991). Indeed, neo-Taylorist working conditions are increasingly seen at higher levels (Smith and Elliot, 2012; Carey, 2007; Carter *et al.*, 2011; Cooper and Taylor, 2000), with careers meandering along the 'ghost of the stable path' (BBC Radio 4, 2016a). 'Flexibility' is like a catch-22 situation, with freedom and autonomy always one step ahead of the worker (Geary, 1992):

> I don't have set hours but I have to schedule myself to suit the needs of the business … we must do a late night, we must do one in four Sundays per month, and we have to phone in and let him know when our day off is … (Smith in Smith and Elliot, 2012:680)

As regards self-employment, there are three issues to consider. First, in several industries, particularly since the 2008 recession, organisations are co-opting the principles of self-employment to avoid fulfilling employed workers' rights (Chakrabortty, 2016; Cruz *et al.*, 2017; Harvey *et al.* 2017; Rankin and Butler, 2015). Such workers are deemed doubly vulnerable (indirect government services, 2014) and these pseudo-practices have rightly raised concerns (Barnes, 2013; D'Arcy and Gardiner, 2014; Harris, 2012; Philpott, 2012). In some organisations, workforces are split into a small group of permanent employees and a larger group of floating workers who are being coerced into presenting themselves as 'self-employed' (Lalani and Metcalf, 2012; also Gavanas, 2010). Elsewhere, low-earning self-employed fitness instructors, for instance, who require the use of organisational premises as their workplace, are working under non-autonomous conditions, termed 'neo-villeiny' by Harvey *et al.*, the features of which are: 'bondage to the organization; payment of rent to the organization; no guarantee of any income; and extensive unpaid and speculative work that is highly beneficial to the organization' (2017:19).[176] This was not the situation in my research. There was no third party mediation of the self-employed service contract between the service-providers and service-users. Also, in contrast to pseudo-self-employment, where individuals may end up earning less than

---

[176] Workers are not always unaware of this exploitation (see Cruz *et al.*, 2017)

employees in the same situation (Linder and Houghton, 1990), some of my respondents had either actively given up or decided not to consider employment, not only because they were dissatisfied with the current dominant model of formalised (low)-paid work (see above), but also because they were aware that independent cleaners were earning more than they could as employees in various sectors (see also Chapter 3). That is, in Marxist terms, unlike the pseudo-self-employed person who delivers their services through an intermediary organisation that also takes a cut from the service-provider's fee or the cleaner who works for an agency which collects the 'fee' from the client and then pays part of it as a wage to the cleaner, the independent cleaning service-provider receives the full exchange-value of the service they have delivered.

Second, Cruz and colleagues (2017), while being mindful of their sample of self-employed dancers categorical preference for 'true' self-employment (despite dance clubs' flouting this work condition by making dancers sign a 'code of conduct' listing up to 58 rules for them to follow) appended their analysis with a word of caution. They noted the dancers' preference for self-employment should be viewed through the lens of wider contemporary neoliberal discourses that conveniently valorise individual workers' efforts and the entrepreneurial spirit while states and large employers withdraw their social responsibilities. Fifteen of the 18 declared UK service-providers (including three reluctant ones) had opened their businesses after 2008. Thus the same could be argued for my sample. However, first, gullibility in relation to institutionalised romanticisation of individualism is not class-bound, that is, working-class people are not being duped into self-employment because they lack self-reflexivity. Middle-class people also make similar decisions within the same wider 'thinking styles' (Douglas, 1986/1987). Parallel research shows how career women/men have been throwing in the trowel and going it alone in feminised occupations both before and after the 2008 recession (Marshall, 1995; Potter, 2015; Wilhoit, 2014). Such sociological analyses, however, take a philosophical turn when drawing on concepts such as selfhood and individualism: 'these men and women have the access and "ability" to imagine and carry out – more meaningful – work-life trajectories.' (Potter, 2015:9; also Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Marshall, 1995).

Third, the direct vendor–customer relationship, which is akin to Marx's simple commodity production rather than one mediated via a third party, is not a new form of work. The ideology of autonomy in work, to be one's own boss, existed before industrialisation and theoretically speaking, capitalism should

have obliterated self-employment (Steinmetz and Wright, 1989). But it continues to persist. Perhaps there is a genuine discomfort among some people about modern conditions of employment. LFS data also (Figure 16) confirmed that my respondents were not unusual in their rejection of contemporary 'secure' employment and work conditions; and in a survey by the Work Foundation, 73% of 1,000 people became self-employed post-2008 either 'wholly or partly' because of a 'personal preference for this way for working' rather than 'solely due to a lack of better work alternatives' (D'Arcy and Gardiner, 2014:4).

Figure 16: Reasons for choosing self-employment (Labour Force Survey, last quarter (October–December) 2014 and 2015)
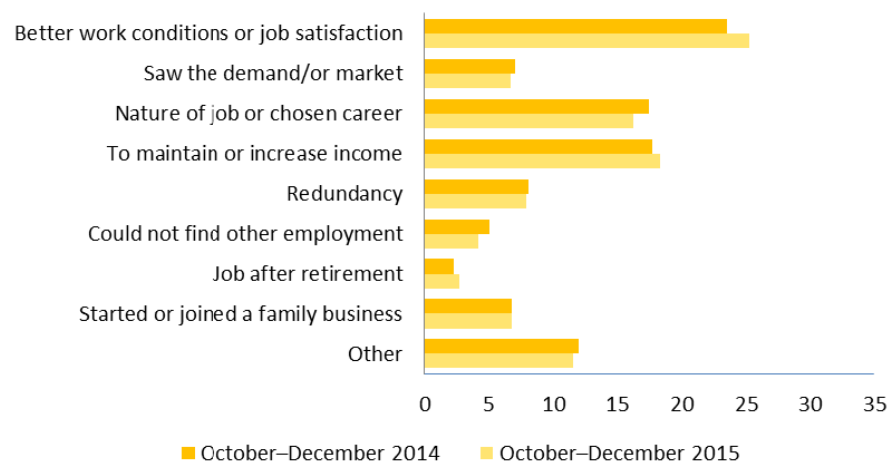
(a) Main reason for choosing self-employment – by percentage of all self-employed people
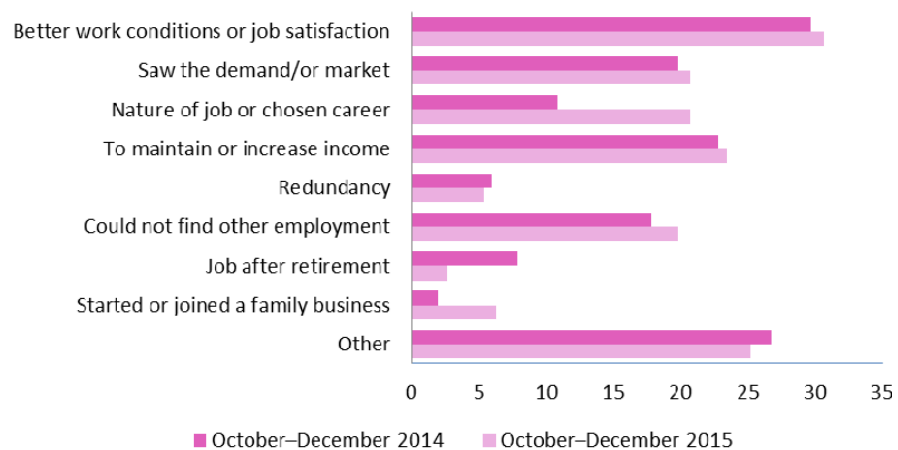
(b) Percentage of women working as self-employed cleaners/domestics choosing each reason for becoming self-employed (2014: n=111; 2015: n=101)

Data source: Office for National Statistics, October 2016.

224

Thus, although their wages were still comparatively low and their work stigmatised (see Chapter 7), like the working- and middle-class people in other research, my respondents had made reflexive decisions about 'moving on' within the constraints of their social locations. Their precarity was not due to being self-employed per se, but the low remuneration due to structural factors that maintain age-old hierarchies in 'egalitarian' societies, such as lack of legal recognition for domestic work and the artificial division of work into high and low status based on 'skill' or mental–manual divide (see Chapter 5). My findings are supported by Wall's (2015) nuanced conclusion that like gender, analysis of self-employment requires an intersectional approach to understand where exactly the problems lie.

In my sample there was also no noteworthy link between presence of dependent children or personal status and the likelihood of declaring or not declaring their income. In both groups, twice as many women had dependent children at the time they started the work (Figure 17). Women across all age groups were likely to start undeclared work. The number of women starting declared work reduced with age but this might have been due to my sampling strategy (see Chapter 3). Also, it is likely younger women preferred to declare their work as they saw cleaning as 'just another *proper* job'. The older women

Figure 17: Working status of the cleaning service-providers and age range, personal status and presence of dependent children when starting cleaning work (n=26*)
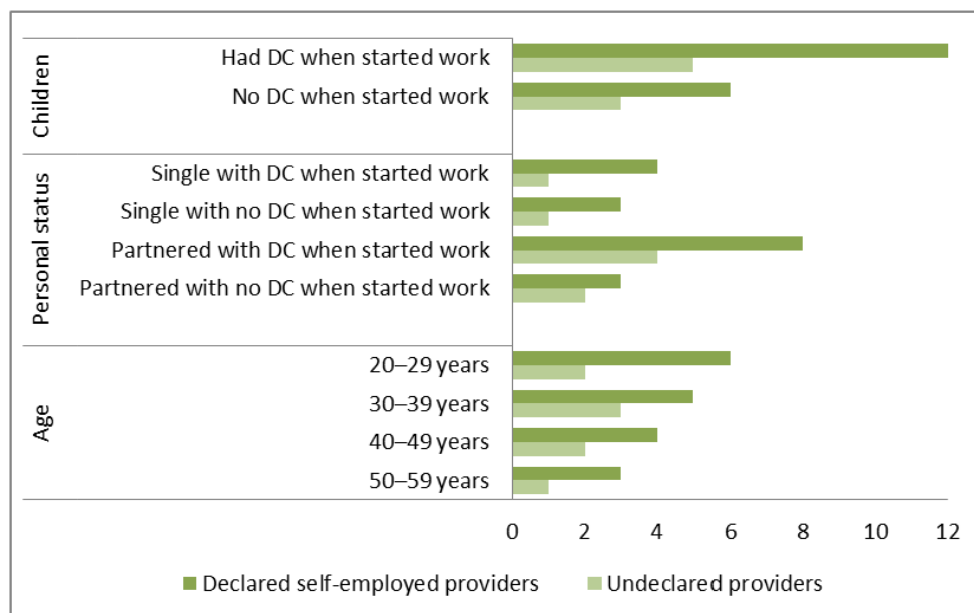
*Georgia is excluded from this analysis as she worked as an agency cleaner.

who started as declared cleaners started with the intention of doing something in the world of work *for themselves*. Still, eight women chose to work informally, and this pattern of working is said to form a significant part of the sector.

A bit of cleaning on the side

Gregson and Lowe (1994a) conjectured that abundant feminine but limited education and financial capital (thanks to the structure of the UK's welfare system) pulled older working-class women into informal cleaning jobs to avoid poverty. However, tax evasion is not a peculiarity of imminent poverty (Davis, 2012; *Financial Review*, 2014; Lodge, 2014; Wright, 2013). Consider the choices made by *Martha* and *Charlotte*, both mothers with dependent children. *Martha*, the bank-teller introduced previously, could have justified not declaring her cleaning income on the grounds that she was a divorcee with two dependent children and had lost out on earnings previously as a part-time working wife. But *Martha* was not doing cleaning work to make up her lost income, she was doing it for herself, for her self-worth. *Charlotte* was a farmer's wife and her four-bedroom family home appeared as well furnished as *Martha's*. *Charlotte* did farm admin work and ran an antique business. Her undeclared cleaning work though, was her way of doing 'right by her family', for instance, buying her children good Christmas presents.

> I wouldn't do it [if I had to declare it] because it wouldn't be worth it. Because the way we are with the books, with the farm, everything is above board and I have a certain amount of money out of the farm – I don't have it, but it's said that I have it and it goes back into the business … [so] we'd end up paying much more [tax] than I'm earning [from cleaning]. (*Charlotte*)

My findings suggest that like many other kinds of work (e.g. gardening, photography) some cleaning will happen informally. But underhand payment does not make the work demeaning per se. This point will become clearer by comparing with the Indian context.

'We are just doing it out of *majboori*'[177] (*Anika*)

Most of the Indian service-providers were working to make ends meet and educate their children in the hope that their lives would be better (Banerjee, 2015; Coelho, 2016; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Singh, 2001).

> I haven't liked any of my [about ten] employers. We are just 'passing time' ... They say *majboori* has no boundaries. And that's it, we are just working out of *majboori*. Otherwise, the best place is one's own home. But we couldn't manage by being in our own house [in our own village], we had to migrate. We have come to fill our stomachs. Otherwise, we don't have any home here, or house, or anything. That's it, we just do the *jhaddhu-pochha*[178] and survive. (*Anika*)

> [In the village] we had great difficulty making ends meet. My mother-in-law was alone, so she could not look after our children and me as well. We need to think about the future, that our children should study and be upwardly mobile, they bring pride to the family name. If they work like us, doing *jhaddhu-pochha*, then what will their life be? That is why I'm doing it ... for my children. (*Madhu*)

Of course, the UK respondents were also concerned about providing for their children, for their family. Despite feminist gains and the development of Western societies more generally, socially acceptable standards of living have been falling among low-income groups as wages have not kept up with inflation in recent years, particularly after the 2008 recession (DeSilver, 2014; Padley *et al.*, 2015). Thus, many White and non-White working-class women continue to work out of necessity (Damaske, 2011; Dill, 1994; Glenn, 1992; James, 2008; Johnson, 2002). Still, being a working woman is often part of today's Western working-class women's subjectivity, because of the widely co-opted feminist belief that education and paid 'productive' work is crucial to women's empowerment (Johnson, 2002; Metcalfe, 2013).

In India, however, the male breadwinner family model remains symbolic of wealth and status. Thus, even though poor[179] women are more likely to be

---

[177] A state of haplessness or having to do something out of compulsion.
[178] Sweeping and mopping.
[179] Shortened form of 'poor and vulnerable' (see Chapter 2).

working (Desai *et al.*, 2010; Raghuram, 2001), several respondents did not see their working self as integral to their selfhood (see also Bali, 2016; Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) or self-empowerment. I will expand on this later. Here I show that like the UK service-providers, these women were not being unreflexively pushed into domestic work simply due to their lack of middle-class/caste capital or the singular 'failure' of patriarchy's promise to women in their social position (Mattila, 2016; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010:26; Singh, 2001). That is, the Western feminist lens often ignores classed/caste oppression of men that is invisibilised by the simple hegemonic–pathological dichotomisation of middle-class (alpha-male) and working-class (good-for-nothing) masculinities, (Vera-Sanso, 2008).

Nearly two-thirds of the Indian service-providers said their 'failed' breadwinners were decent men concerned about their family's welfare (Figure 18). But like themselves, the men also had limited education and cultural/social capital, and their hard work was rewarded with dismal wages that have remained static or declined in recent years (Bremen, 2013; Gill, 2009/2012; Singh, 2007; Vera-Sanso, 2008).

> No, … we both need to work. By pooling both our incomes we will be able to do everything easily, food, our other expenses, clothes for the children. He is also uneducated, so when he came from the village, someone helped him get work for Rs1,200–1,300 [£12–13 per month]. Then slowly, slowly, as he worked, he came to know more people and he used to tell them, if you know of any work let me know. In this way, he moved on to other work and finally to this shop. (*Sanvi*)

> when my husband can't earn enough, then both of us have to work – otherwise how will we cover our living costs? … Who can bring up four children by oneself [in this city]? … Nowadays one doesn't earn anything driving a cycle rickshaw … the customer prefers the tempo [autorickshaw] or then people have four cars in their houses … [So] I came here, so I will be able to bring up my children, and when they grow up we will have support in our old age. (*Neena*)

Figure 18: Indian service-providers' need to work disaggregated by husbands' breadwinning ability as reported by the women

Working because has time to spare in the day (husband works full-time)*

Working only since widowed to support self and children†

Working because responsible husband's wages too low to support family‡

Working because 'irresponsible'/alcoholic husband 'not bothered' about the family's future‡§
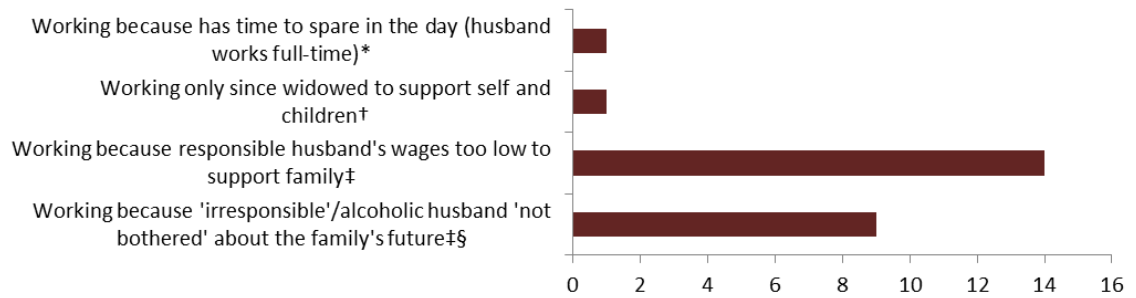
*_Asha_ had not done paid work when her husband had been alive.

†_Divya_ had spare time in the day when her child was at school as her 'home' became converted into her husband's ironing shack.

‡_Kalpana_ is included twice since her first husband was an irresponsible alcoholic but her second husband was a responsible low-wage breadwinner.

§Two of the women with alcoholic husbands were now widows. Both husbands had died young, probably due to their alcoholism. The women had continued to do domestic work in preference to other work in their village to enable their children to avail the greater educational opportunities available in cities.

Thus, most Indian service-providers' bitterness about failed patriarchy was not an 'anti-men' tirade. As _Rashmi_'s response to my question about her husband's contribution to housework indicates, it was about (hegemonic) patriarchy's crippling of both working-class men and women (Bhasin and Khan, 1986/2005):[180]

> No, I don't let him sweep. He is like me in constitution. Do you know what daily manual labour is like – it is such hard work. He is like me, thin, very thin, his stamina is poor. ... He is also very thin. But like if I am ill, and I am not able to look after the children, he will cook and feed everyone.

The 'decent' husbands worked long, six- or seven-day weeks, often doing physically and mentally gruelling work in poor, unhealthy environments (Bharati and Tandon Mehrotra, 2008; Bremen, 2013; Soni-Sinha, 2006). Roy's ironic observation of the material reality of the digital superhighway succinctly illustrates how the condition of 'servanthood' still extends far beyond the domestic sphere:

---

[180] Even in the UK, fathers and/or partners of comparatively disadvantaged working-class women share their socio-economic characteristics, and which have been linked to the women's (non)-chances of upwards social mobility (Warren, 2000).

> Every night outside my house in New Delhi, I pass this road gang of
> emaciated labourers digging a trench to lay fiber optic cables to speed up our
> digital revolution. They work by the light of a few candles … (Roy and
> Barsiaman, 2004:30).

Such men, then, are vulnerable to alcoholism and other addictions (Gamburd,
2003; Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) but how valid is the
stereotype of 'irresponsible' working-class masculinities?

> I have lived in *jhuggis*,[181] I have slept on the bare ground, on mounds of
> pebbles. … Somehow we have to pass our day. My [alcoholic] husband is also
> uneducated. … He doesn't have brain either. Like, I have this much sense
> that we *need* to work *this much* to educate our children. My husband says,
> never mind, if they study, it's okay, if they don't, they will continue to live in
> poverty like us. What is it to us? And I feel that my children should earn
> enough to eat well, dress well, so I want to educate them well. So whether my
> *gharwala* [householder] earns or not, I am earning, I am doing it for my
> children, I am determined to do it. (*Anjali*)

The prevalence of alcoholism in my sample (Figure 18) was largely similar to that
reported in previous studies carried out in the same regions.[182] Besides the
factors noted above, marriage, producing sons and being the breadwinner remain
male rites of passage. Moreover, wider research shows many poor men
understand that illiteracy is equated with being 'naturally deficient and shiftless'
(Bremen, 2013:91), but they are also aware of the limited usefulness of the
education available to their children. I elaborate on this point later. Here, I focus
on their powerlessness in changing their class position: when limited access to
resources prevents earning a family wage, as described above, men feel the
shame of 'failed patriarchy' and sometimes this means 'harsh consequences for
their families and themselves' (Palriwala and Uberoi, 2008:43; also Bremen,
2013; Soni-Sinha, 2006; Vera-Sanso, 2008).[183] Moreover, women are not
'naturally' immune to substance abuse. In South Asia women are less likely to

---

[181] Temporary tenement.
[182] Singh (2001) found 20% and 22.7% of husbands were problem drinkers and
gamblers, respectively, and Duggal (2010) reported half of slum-dwelling men were
alcoholic.
[183] This may happen anywhere, but in communities where divorce is less stigmatised,
male alcoholism may present as part of an impoverished single woman's history.

succumb to alcoholism and addiction (Benegal *et al.*, 2005; Hettige and Paranagama, 2005) because 'good' women go straight home after work. In that enforced sober state, some women then, like some researchers themselves, unfortunately also accept the top-down myth that 'unreliability' is a 'natural' trait of such men rather than perhaps a symptom of despair (Sen and Sengupta, 2012). Singh (2001) suggested introducing drug counselling services in slums. How successful would this be without improvements in work and living conditions? In an analysis of paid domestic work in Jaipur, Mattila interprets alcohol use by men as one of their many 'personal needs', rather than investigating it as a concern linked to her female respondents' work experiences (2011:265). Mattila's study also exemplifies a particular problem in feminist research that conflates gender with women (see Chapter 1). As Vera-Sanso argues (2008), this focus can lead to contradictory conclusions. For instance, individualised consumption and non-pooling of incomes are seen as signifiers of 'empowerment' in poor women, but when men do the same, it signifies patriarchal control. Such approaches then miss out a key issue in paid domestic work. That is, all the Indian service-providers hoped their children would not follow in *either* parent's footsteps: if they did not want them to be exploited, demeaned domestic workers, they also did not want them to be exploited, demeaned *dhobis*, floating agricultural or daily labourers or gardeners and so on like their husbands (also Bali, 2016; Singh, 2007). Indeed, even Western working-class women's understandings of domestic work require taking into account working-class Western men's experiences of being 'flotsam and jetsam … faceless numbers, not individual brothers and sisters struggling for a small piece of the pie' (Johnson, 2002:184; Shildrick *et al.*, 2012). Unfortunately, I only realised during my analysis that I would have liked to probe this aspect more deeply.

Given the Indian women's social condition, most had no prior experience of work as an employee. However, they did not do paid domestic work because the only capital they possessed was feminine capital or because it slotted around their family responsibilities (as claimed previously, see Vasanthi, 2011). What would a shiny tap or sink mean to a woman who does not own one herself (see Chapter 5)? Rather, their *labour* was commonly exploited based on social and religious ideologies that have inscribed 'polluting' manual labour on *their* bodies because of their caste and class position (Chigateri, 2007). Also, working middle-class women often expect service-providers to come before they themselves leave

for work – probably because of a perceived need to supervise the 'incompetent' worker and, given the vast material inequality between the two, the plenteous circulating stories of pilfering that create distrust (Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010). Service-providers who work two shifts,[184] morning and mid-afternoon (see also Mattila, 2011) have 'forced' leisure time if they live at a distance, as they have to still do their own work later. Considering both UK and Indian data, I argue the White British and Indian (local and/or in-country migrant) domestic workers did not always work around their childcare responsibilities. In fact, they worked as part of their responsibility for their children's material welfare.

Some respondents had considered alternatives. But unlike housework, where they could train on the job, home-based tailoring had to be learnt first. Also in *Chetna*'s experience, it was irregular work and the piece rate too was low to make a reasonable income after overheads. Roadside hawkers are often 'shooed off' by local officials and their wares confiscated. Becoming a fruit and vegetable vendor required initial investment that they mostly did not have.

What possibilities were there, then, in domestic work for these women?

Possibilities in cleaning work in India

Women domestics' income is often the 'most stable component in the income of poor urban households' (Sen and Sengupta, 2012:71).[185] Many women returned to their village for 2–4 weeks every year or so. During this time, their service-users would use other providers. When the women came back, previous service-users could refuse them work if they were satisfied with the substitute's work. But steady demand meant that they could find other clients or substitute themselves.

The work required no investment except travel costs, as service-users provide the materials. But this is not a 'possibility' as in the UK. Rather the contrast between the two sites shows that some investment, such as indemnity insurance, is necessary to transform cleaning from *labour* into *work*.

---

[184] *Jyotika* worked one shift because she feared her children might fall into bad company if she left them in the care of her community.
[185] Gill (2009/2012) found that waste-picking was an economically better alternative to other low-wage occupations because it included sorting *regular* domestic waste.

Indian domestic workers are also considered as employees by researchers, however, again, this requires rethinking.

Employment status of the service-providers

All the Indian women worked informally but this is cannot be simply translated as 'employees' working under-the-table (see Chapter 2). Ray and Qayum (2009/2010) used 'servants' because the 'employers' they met referred to their service-providers as such.[186] Mattila (2011) used 'workers' as 'servanthood' had no place in her Marxist feminist analytical framework, but she was sometimes compelled to use 'maid' because that seemed more appropriate. Like Raghuram (2001), these authors do not mention discussing this aspect with their respondents. Neither did I, as during my Indian fieldwork I was following prior practice. While transcribing, however, I noted that in reply to my question regarding numbers of clients, the women often replied in terms of the number of houses they had 'caught' (*khothian pakadi hai*) and referred to the clients simply as *kothiwaale* (householders), implying that they did not consider their multiple service-users as employers. In Ecuador, where paid domestic work has many similarities with India, De Casanova's respondents did not self-identify as employees (the term preferred by middle-class Ecuadorians) but as 'remunerated household workers' (2013:570).

Moreover, while telling me why returning in-country migrant service-providers might have to find new work, *Divya* said, 'it was not a *sarkari* [public service] job, it was *private*. The *kothiwaale* could use anyone's services. *She* [the substitute] has to earn, I have to earn.' *Divya* was conflating private–public division with self-employment and employment. This is because 80% of paid work in India happens in the informal sector (NCEUS, 2008, 2009). It ranges from the 'backyard industries' – the core production units of formal organisations in several industries[187] – and small manufacturing enterprises to paid and unpaid domestic work. Much 'self-employment', which *Divya* called 'private' work, largely happens within this informal economy and is often unregulated. Sometimes self-employment in India is also conflated with 'home-based' work

---

[186] But did the workers see themselves as servants? (see Chapter 1).
[187] For example, traditional *haute couture*, where the weaving and embroidery is done by (mainly) home-based women ostensibly working as either own-account workers or 'helpers' of male family members (Raju and Jatrana, 2016a).

(Raju and Bose, 2016). All the workers here experience insecurities: employment insecurity, because they can be hired and fired at will; health insecurity due to lack of decent work conditions; and social insecurity (see later) (NCEUS, 2009; Neetha, 2016). Is this any different from the zero-hour contract pseudo-self-employment currently seen in the UK and wider West? Finer details might differ, but essentially the process is the same: the principles of legitimate self-employment are being exploited to benefit the bourgeoisie. Domestic worker organisations such as the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) are developing an empowerment-as-process model of self-employment within India's informal economy by encouraging workers to adopt practices that develop their self-worth as a first step (Bali, 2016).

As in the UK, no Indian service-user issued a contract. In the UK, contracts may not be disregarded blatantly in the wider context but re-fashioned as, for instance, zero-hour contracts, to circumvent the law. In India, however, contract-less work arrangements at the bottom end of the informal economy are common in many industries (Raju and Jatrana, 2016a). The problems with contracts noted in the UK setting also apply here; also when one party is illiterate, the legitimacy of the contract is anyway questionable.

None of the Indian women had ever worked for a cleaning agency and I only heard of one cleaning agency in my research sites, run by a religious organisation. Indian cleaning agencies generally have a dubious reputation, exhorting fees from both parties or colluding in worker abuse and exploitation (bonded labour, trafficking) (Neetha, 2009; Neetha and Palriwala, 2011; Tandon, 2012).[188] Tandon's (2012) comparative analysis showed private workers in Delhi were more likely to be self-assured (whereas agency workers were self-effacing); earned almost four times the hourly pay of an agency worker; were better able to negotiate time off;[189] and had greater access to supportive social networks. The agencies usually contracted a worker with one service-user for a year, after which they were deployed elsewhere or sent 'home'. If the client demanded the same worker, they had to pay more for the now 'trained' worker. Newer Western-style cleaning agencies (Neetha, 2009) – unsurprisingly – reduce the service-provider's

---

[188] See Tsikata (2011) regarding similar concerns in Ghana.
[189] Agency workers universally work long hours (e.g. see Anderson, 2000; Constable, 2007; Lan, 2006).

agency by mediating the negotiation between them and the service-user. Tandon's (2012) additional analysis of the practices of two recently formed domestic worker collectives led her to conclude that collective formalisation of the work would improve work conditions. Note that both Bowman and Cole's (2014) favourable view of cleaning firms and Tandon's conclusions were based on comparison with informal private service provision. Two aspects that I have not addressed here are isolation and safety considerations, which are particularly pertinent here given that many women were lone workers.

Isolation and safety considerations

Many working-class women work to avoid the social isolation created by modern living conditions (see Chapter 1). But loneliness in isolated live-out house-cleaning work is sometimes assumed from a privileged position: 'We can tell that they need to see us. It's not much fun on your own', said a French feminist on behalf of migrant cleaners (Molinier, 2009/2012:295). The service-providers I interviewed indicated that the issue is not that simple. *Sheila* missed having work colleagues but not enough to go back to waitressing, which she had found dehumanising (see Chapter 7). She put on the radio or television while she worked. *Jessica* and *Charlotte* liked the quiet time on their own; in their lively households no two days were the same. Quasi-agency workers (Appendix E) often worked in pairs. Some of Meagher's (1997) respondents preferred the isolation of house-cleaning to doing emotional labour in face-to-face service jobs. Being *alone* is not a necessary condition for feeling isolated. Time-and-motion working conditions in factories discourage communications between adjacent workers, inducing a sense of isolation – sometimes in the same women who are there for a natter (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001). Contemporary 'flexible' working conditions in white-collar occupations are also isolating workers even when in company (Hom, 2008/2010), whereas other high-status workers can be surrounded by people and still feel lonely (Marshall, 1995; Wilhoit, 2014).

However, the isolation of the domestic workplace might endanger *her* safety (Lalani, 2011). In the UK, only three instances of concern were described to me but in all the danger had been averted. The Indian women to whom I put this question denied any personal experience of harassment. Some said men often left the room where they were working to avoid being implicated. It is possible the women were reluctant to talk about this issue for fear of compromising their respectability (Mattila, 2011:79; Ray and Qayum,

2009/2010; Tandon, 2006). Some women considered domestic work safer for this same reason. For instance, *Bela* said it was 'not nice' for a woman to be seen seeking work on the roadside as a daily labourer, it was better to work unseen in someone else's home (see also Sun (2008) for similar justifications by in-country Chinese migrant domestic workers). The two widowed part-live-out service-providers said their vulnerability to exploitation would have increased in various ways had they returned to their marital villages.

I am not underplaying safety concerns in paid domestic work, but they need to be considered in a wider context. Many Indian lower-caste (Dalit) domestic workers are vulnerable to heinous exploitation not just because they are women doing domestic work but because they are *Dalit women.* If these women or Dalit men try to assert their rights, upper-caste men (and women) reclaim their privileged position through these women's physical debasement and then denying them social and political citizenship and legal routes for redress: the enacted protective legislation has little worth in the face of continued social segregation in a soft state (Chagar, 2011; Irudayam *et al.*, 2011). Is any place safe for these women? In the UK, commercial cleaners often travel in the dark, traversing empty carparks to work early or late shifts, sometimes alone (Sykes *et al.*, 2014:viii). In contemporary interactive service work, sexualised affective labour has become part of the (female worker's) job description (Brunner and Dever, 2014; Good and Cooper, 2016), while women in other occupations self-police their sexuality through dress, body language and behaviour codes. When incidents happen, they might ignore them or blame themselves (Brunner and Dever, 2014). These research findings indicate that the (migrant) live-in domestic worker is more vulnerable, due to several intersecting vulnerabilities, but live-out domestic workers might not be the most vulnerable. Safety is a concern everywhere. Even so, domestic work is physically demanding.

Physicality

> I could never do a job where I was sat in an office anyway, I like to be busy, I like to be doing stuff. (*Sheila*)

The physical demands placed on domestic workers since antiquity have been shown to be linked to classed/raced notions of the Other body as non-consequential (De Casanova, 2013). Today, cleaning involves hard graft as well as use of chemical products. Occupational hazards thus range from skin

problems to respiratory conditions to musculoskeletal wear and tear (Smith, 2011). Few UK service-providers mentioned prior health problems, and most travelled to work by car (Appendix D). They used gloves for tasks such as toilet cleaning or when using bleach. Those with sensitive skin used eco-friendly products. Generally, they did not move heavy furniture and few worked on their hands and knees. Modern cleaning products reduce elbow grease somewhat, but if there is too much dirt to remove, adequate time and appropriate rest periods are necessary to factor into the fee.

Indian domestics often come to the work anaemic or under-nourished due to poverty and unhygienic living conditions (Bharati and Tandon Mehrotra, 2008; Chatterjee, 1990; Duggal, 2010; Singh, 2007). They mostly walk or cycle to work. Floors are swept and mopped, and often clothes and dishes washed, by the service-provider working in a squatting position. They also might hunch when doing housework in their own low-roofed tenements (Rani and Kaul, 1986). The health consequences of these postures have received little attention but they may have long-term musculoskeletal effects (Chatterjee, 1990). Pratibha gave up outsourcing for several reasons, including feeling uncomfortable with using the labour of women who were clearly in poor health:

> One has to be extremely insensitive to ignore and overlook the human problems with which they are beset. And if you choose to address their physical and social problems it is almost impossible to make them work hard to keep my house spick and span (Pratibha).

Many of the service-providers I met fitted Pratibha's portrayal of the Indian female domestic worker. None of workers mentioned wearing gloves and some women had developed skin problems and swelling following prolonged contact of hands/feet with modern detergents and water (see also De Casanova, 2013; Singh, 2007). Coelho (2016) noted similar problems among commercial cleaners in India. Still, some Indian women said domestic work was less strenuous than other work available to them, for example agricultural labour, commercial cleaning, factory work (Coelho, 2016; Singh, 2007; Vasanthi, 2011:85). This may be because much manual work in India is still done using traditional labour-intensive methods.[190] Similar comparisons were also made in the UK. While some

---

[190] See, for example, Hawksley's (2014) account of brick-making.

full-time service-providers said doing cleaning was like 'having a long work-out', the other jobs they had done, such as childcare, retail and care work also involved considerable physical labour. American data show home-care and nursing aides are most likely to suffer musculoskeletal disorders (Stacey, 2005). As different households have different needs, some UK respondents organised schedules such that the work was not 'strenuous all of at once' (*Sophie*). Yet tiredness in cleaning work was often outweighed by autonomy and understanding 'busy' as a manual rather than mental quality:

> I'd rather be doing something physical than working in an office, and sat and being miserable. And it keeps you fit as well, don't have to go to the gym! (*Grace*)

> It's improved my physical health, yeah! Because I had a slipped disc, sciatica, down my leg. Because it's more physical and I'm moving about a lot more, it's been a lot better. So it is good if you keep busy and exercise ... (*Nora*)

That is, my data revealed more to the physicality of cleaning work than simply hard graft. In the view from top-down, busyness implies 'a relentless competition' between those with greater 'human' capital, about who can sit for more hours on the office chair or about who can 'pull more all-nighters' (Slaughter, 2012:n.p; Gershuny, 2005; Levine, 2005). *Sheila, Grace* and *Nora* showed me that these ideologies were class-bound,[191] and that the materiality of domestic graft cannot be assumed to be an exceptional 'problem' (a similar account was published by a gardener (Anonymous, 2015)). Overall, in the modern urban context and in the absence of abuse, the physicality of domestic labour was of concern when:

- the worker's health is already compromised;
- the amount or pace of or method of doing the work put undue strain on the worker (De Casanova, 2013; Glenn, 1986:148);
- the work is done under duress or mental stress due to other aspects of life.

Still, feminists argue domestic workers are worse off because they do two lots of housework, doubling their gendered oppression and physical labour (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003; Hochschild, 1989/2003). This sweeping conclusion, as I

---

[191] Oakley (1974/1985:46) quotes a woman who observed her husband stopped doing 'real' work when he was promoted to office manager.

show below, misses nuanced class–gender intersections in women's oppression in relation to outsourced cleaning.

Cleaning service-providers and the 'double shift'

Despite outsourced cleaning, the academics were doing considerable housework (see Chapter 3) and conversely not all service-providers were doing all their own housework. External window cleaning and house-maintenance were often outsourced by the latter group. *Yvonne* was also outsourcing *her* weekly clean. *Rebecca* had done most of the housework until 10 years ago when her husband retired and took over. Among those doing a double shift (paid work and their housework), this was not simply a matter of cultural reproduction. Some qualitative research shows working-class men are more likely to share housework than middle-class men (Shows and Gerstel, 2009: emergency medical technicians and physicians, respectively). Yet *Sheila*, who had in part been inspired by her father (who also was a cleaner) to open her cleaning business, did not let her partner do much housework as she was 'good at it'. *Tamsin* was a compulsive cleaner. So even though her brothers and father were all good cleaners, and one brother had worked for her, she would not let anyone else, particularly a man, clean her house.

The Indian service-providers in contrast were doing most of their own housework. But, again, this was not simply because men could not be bothered. Many men did the 'outside' work: the groceries, fetching water and firewood, taking children to school. Those who had lived alone, for instance, when they first migrated or when wives were away then could have done 'inside' work as well (Gamburd, 2003; Soni-Sinha, 2006). As *Jyotika* explained, it was not doing housework that was the problem for her husband, but to be *seen* doing 'inside' housework when *she*, the wife, was present:

> [When I first got married] if by chance I asked him to do something in front of my parents-in-law he would not have done it. As such I didn't tell him to do things that time but even now when we visit his parental home, even though my mother-in-law is no longer alive, he would not do it if I asked because what if someone else saw him? They would laugh at him and say 'Oh! look he's doing his wife's work'.

In both cultures I also heard of men who did not share the 'inside' work because of their own long hours of work. Also, not all the service-providers saw their paid

work as an extension of their unpaid work (see Chapter 5), and the double shift did not prevent their engagement with feminism, like their historical counterparts who were committed suffragettes (Schwartz, 2014, 2015). This raises the question then about the meanings of their work for their selfhood.

Selfhood and doing domestic cleaning as paid work: empowerment as 'process' (Kabeer, 2001)

Some studies have stressed that working-class women's social networks have a negative effect on them because they encourage them to take up 'feminine' low-wage work (Hebson *et al.*, 2015). However, several of my respondents' social networks helped them think about cleaning in terms of *work* rather than *labour*.

> People always like first want to know why you don't charge hourly. That's always the first question. But the reason I didn't charge hourly in the first place was because my mum's really good friend is a cleaner, so before I set it up like I met with her, and got loads of advice. And she said to me, she said don't, just don't charge ... like have set prices. Go in, have a look, she said otherwise people will just take the mickey out of you, you'll just be on rubbish money, and it's just not worth doing. (*Sheila*)

Ruby's friend guided her on setting up as a business, on insurance matters and designing marketing flyers. Other studies also report newcomers received support from cleaners' networks which, for instance, signpost exploitative service-users and advise on negotiating strategies (Dill, 1988; Hom, 2008/2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001; Momsen, 1999; Romero, 2002; Salzinger, 1991). Wider research among low-income indigenous and migrant populations shows that social networks, while influencing occupational choice are also positive spaces which provide much-needed support and entrepreneurial know-how (Gore and Hollywood, 2009; Pinkster, 2007[192]). Raghuram's (1999) observations on the social networks among in-country Indian migrant domestic workers in Delhi revealed both facilitative and constraining influences and these were also evident in my research. For instance, the decision to migrate to a particular area is facilitated by prior knowledge about it (job opportunities, wage rates, living spaces, etc.) gleaned from people from the same village (usually extended family)

---

[192] See also Pooley (2009) in Chapter 1 in the historical context.

who have already migrated. Women already doing paid domestic work influence other women's decisions to take up work and often help them find the first job, negotiate fees etc. (Mattila, 2011; Sen and Sengupta, 2012) and networks might take control over servicing particular residential areas (Srinivasan, 1997). They might help each other with childcare and cover each other's work so that service-users do not look elsewhere when they are on leave. But these acts might also create resentment (e.g. when *Kalpana* was a single mother, her sister, despite helping with childcare, was also suspicious of *Kalpana*'s intentions towards her brother-in-law, and *Kalpana* was under pressure to marry again). Also, by helping each other in their own domestic responsibilities, women lower the chances of men breaking gendered norms in the home (Raghuram, 1999).

The UK service-providers also had other channels of support, such as advice on starting up provided by local councils, banks and/or the internet. A service-provider started a discussion thread on Netmums (2009–2014) to 'to swap tips with others who have a similar business … ideas of how to … increase business, how to deal with difficult cleaners or clients, just generally exchange ideas'. These were not mentioned by the Indian women I interviewed, although I am aware that some local religious and women's groups in the areas of my research offer similar advice and support.

The education capital of my UK respondents (see Figure 7) was greater than that of Hebson and colleagues' respondents and the cleaners interviewed by Gregson and Lowe (1994a). Those with vocational qualifications were not downgrading, they had drawn on their education and training and subsequent work experience to transform 'pushing a hoover around' into proper work. My small sample's experiences are supported by a British Household Panel Survey-based study aiming to capture the effect of broad social structures on pathways to business creation (Jayawarna *et al.*, 2014). Despite the study's broad conclusion that people in privileged locations were more likely to start a business and succeed at it, the authors noted:

> [e]ntrepreneurship also involves skills that are not commonly developed in education … There may be a pathway in which under-privileged children create businesses due to application of entrepreneurial competences developed from families and communities rather than education. … Overall, it seems that getting a good level of education early in life is fundamental for start-up. We did also find a positive relationship with higher school leaving

age, but this may include vocational education (human capital specific to businesses) rather than general education. (Jayawarna *et al.*, 2014:300–301)

Some women had websites while others used Gumtree and Facebook to promote themselves. *Grace* always watched out for marketing opportunities. When she overheard people sitting at a neighbouring table in a restaurant discussing outsourcing cleaning, she handed them her business card on her way out (see also Chapter 7). Some service-providers had accountants. Indeed, the registered self-employed women identified themselves as business-owners rather than 'cleaners'.

Some women had ambitions to grow their business, open a laundrette or do sewing and alterations. *Gloria* wrote: '[cleaning work] has made me fitter through the physical demands and it has made me appreciate what I have got in my own life.' *Kate*, a young single mother of two, mustered much courage to open her own business:

And then I like cleaning. … I wanted to do it for a while but I just didn't have the guts to start up. And I've tried looking for other work but couldn't get anything. So I thought I'd just try … set up on my own.

Four informal and four declared service-providers who considered themselves feminists also said they had gained in self-worth by doing cleaning.

I think there's … a bigger thing about feminism, which for me is about women helping women. And if you can, as a woman, as a feminist woman, if you can give another woman a helping hand without too much – obviously you don't do it to the detriment of your own life –… that has a huge resonance with me. That's to me what feminism is most about. It's about reaching out and helping another woman. And if that two hours a week of my time, which would help me because I would get paid, but actually would help my sister infinitely more because she would come home to a tidy house and some clean washing, it seemed to make absolute sense – kind of on a practical, emotional and political level. (*Carrie*)

Several other women said if their children did the work as a cleaning business, they would encourage them:

I'd have an issue if … she just thought it was an easy job and had no aspirations with it. If she said I'm going to set up my own cleaning company,

I'm going to work X amount of hours and here's my plan, I mean, I'd be really proud of her! (*Celia*)

It was not all plain sailing, however. The women faced competition from undeclared cleaners 'out to make a quick buck' (*Jessica*), as well as cleaning agencies. Most had to contend the time-bind that caring and cleaning agency workers also struggle with (Rubery *et al.*, 2011; Sykes *et al.*, 2014; see Chapter 5). A minority were clearly struggling to set up. If some women played down the social stigma of being 'just a cleaner', others clearly said they found it painful.

Lotika: So does doing cleaning conflict with your feminism?

Evie: Not at all … If anything … it's good because I'm probably going to be able to support myself. It could be a bit of a scrimp and save … yeah! but *I* did it, you know and I've got good clients who want me because I'm *me*, I'm not just the 'the cleaner' … so I have, I *do* have self-respect, although I'm not keen on walking down the street with my bucket. So there's a, what's the word, a dichotomy … Yeah! it's a tricky, it's a tricky one. And as I say, I feel sad that my son can't tell his girlfriend that I'm a cleaner, because that's how I earn my money. Funnily enough, … [the manageress here] was saying 'Lucky you, you know, you earn £10 an hour, [which is] more than a *lot* of people earn, doing a lot more hours', and I'm my own boss, and my own person.

A few said they would like their children to have the educational opportunities they had missed. Another few also justified their lack of engagement with education in terms of 'It isn't for the likes of me', a typical response among working-class people that is interpreted sociologically as reluctance to acknowledge or unawareness of the real cultural and economic barriers facing them (Atkinson, 2010; Johnson, 2002, see Chapter 1). To understand this better requires looking at the Indian context.

While social networks have a key role in Indian service-providers' decision to take up domestic work and in securing the first job, the women were acutely aware of the role of their own and their husband's illiteracy in shaping their lives (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004). These women also clearly saw their illiteracy as a consequence of their social condition, their poverty, and their desire to educate their children was a strong motive for seeking paid work (Mattila, 2011; Neetha, 2004; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Sen and Sengupta, 2012; Vasanthi, 2011).

There was no 'misplaced' sense of individual shortcomings as a reason for lack of education capital,[193] as articulated by Western working-class people (Atkinson, 2010; Johnson, 2002). Their comments revealed the heightened reflexivity of the under-privileged self (Jackson, 2011). I was taken aback by the number of times I heard the English word 'tension' and the phrase '*bus* timepass *kar rahein hai*' ['We are simply passing time']. 'Timepass' is 'a sign of resentment and … an expression of pain' that both men and women use to indirectly question injustices related to caste/class location (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004:981). 'Tension' indicated their desperate awareness of the everyday economic and social pressures (their fragile daily lives; keeping their children safe from addiction and alcoholism; financial debts; etc.).[194]

> Nobody thinks about the poor. […] I have a lot of trouble with my eye. But [private] laser treatment requires a lot of money. That is the problem – we don't have that kind of money. And in the state hospital also, nobody heeds us. Nobody listens to the poor. Yes, we went to the government hospital, you sit there and you keep sitting, [waiting in the 'so-called' queue], the high-status people are looked after, nobody asks after the low-status person. We were get knocked about and nothing happens. (*Rashmi*)

As *Rashmi*'s remark indicates, the absolute need to work and show servility towards those higher up the social hierarchy was present in all spheres of both her and her husband's life (Bremen, 2013; see also Khare, 2001 and Chapters 5 and 7). The main difference between them was that she would have also shown servility to him. Thus for my respondents, domestic cleaning as paid work, as *labour* rather than *work*, formed part of their wider oppression. As many said, it had made no difference to their lives, except that they were able to educate their children and have two square meals a day instead of one.

Those for whom the work had made some difference had sympathetic service-users or had less volatile domestic circumstances, with husbands who were supportive and shared their ambitions for the next generation. Such women

---

[193] See also Bali (2016).

[194] Western manual workers may also be insightful about how they are positioned *vis-à-vis* the middle-class by the middle-class. Many do not agree with middle-class values being the gold standard for a 'good life' (Lucas and Buzzanell, 2004; Torlina, 2011). In fact, as Roy argues, state support staunches reflexivity: 'If you want to control somebody, support them. Or marry them' (Cusack and Roy, 2016:50).

more clearly had a sense of their own selfhood. *Kalpana*, a domestic worker since the age of six, a survivor of domestic physical and mental abuse and attempted suicide, now happily married to her brother-in-law, specially dressed up to meet me, and scoffed when I said that had not been necessary. *Urvashi*'s critical observance of every detail of her service-users' lives unnerved me somewhat while she talked to me. I watched with interest as *Neena* ignored the 'well-meaning' advice given to her by one service-user when she decided to stop working for their neighbour who was exploiting her. Like *Jyotika* and *Urvashi*, she selected service-users carefully and felt better for living away from the even more constrictive village society (Srinivasan, 1997:94):

> In the village we have to wear *saris*, do farm labour and then sit inside the home. We also have to wear a veil over our faces. When the village women see suits[195] [*salwar kameez*] they make fun of us – hey what are you wearing? … So it is nice here. It is very nice here. [In the village] people are narrow-minded. We can't wear a suit in the village. I wear a suit to travel but then I change into a *sari* before entering the village. (*Neena*)

Through their access to middle-class private spaces they observed how the other half lives, even if their squatting position made them 'invisible' to those people. However, as in the West, this reflexivity might be limited by the hegemonic middle-class values and beliefs that are accepted as 'total social facts' for a 'good' life. These norms, when applied in a situation of social exclusion and poverty, result in the continuous chasing of losses, a life starting and ending in the hamster's wheel as described by Skeggs (1997) in the case of White British working-class women working as carers. In this situation, it was hard to hear the women's hopes about the power of 'education'. The education available to their children is often poor quality[196] and those who get through it then face a restricted and plutocratic job market, where young people who do not have the appropriate cultural (including caste), social and economic (e.g. the ability to pay a bribe) privileges, frequently encounter disenchantment as they aspire to and look for 'better' jobs (Cross, 2009; Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004, 2005; Sen and Sengupta, 2012; Singh, 2007). For decades now, India's job:population ratio has been

---

[195] English word as used by participant.
[196] Perhaps the Western working-class people who say 'It isn't for the likes of me' are also subconsciously rejecting uninspiring 'education'.

skewed, its 'emerging market' status being based on 'jobless growth' (Dasgupta and Singh, 2005, cited in Gill, 2009/2012:5). There is fierce competition for coveted higher-education courses and jobs in the limited formal economy (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2004, 2005; Sen and Sengupta, 2012). For instance, the 10,000 students who gain entry to the prestigious Indian institutes of technology after a gruelling two-year preparation schedule, comprise only 2% of the applicants (Mayyasi, 2013). Applications for a 'peon's' job, a position akin to a servant (except that it is office-based and offers some security), run into thousands. A substantial proportion of applicants are graduates (Chandra Mohan, 2015). Thus in their study of a rural region in north India, Jeffrey *et al.* (2004, 2005) found some people from the historically underprivileged Dalit social group have been withdrawing children from school after Class 8 (when free education stops), preferring apprentice-type options.

My respondents hoped that their sacrifice would be rewarded by care in old age:

> If we can educate our children, they will support us in our old age. They will earn and give us food, isn't it? But if I'm not able to bring up my children, then what will happen? The neighbours aren't going to feed us. […] I have brought up my children, my life has passed. (*Neena*)

However, in the slums at least, daughters still may be married as soon as possible (Desai *et al.,* 2010), in part because in that milieu, young single women are seen as particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and violence outwith the domestic sphere. The pressure to marry and have children also increases the burden for sons. For instance, *Bela* and her husband, a *dhobhi*, both of whom were around 60 years, were still working to make ends meet and still living in the 'ironing-table-converted-to-shack-at-night'. All their four children were married with children of their own. Their meagre family incomes did not allow them to care for their parents.

In the current global 'aspirational' culture, what 'common' sense can we make of the UK and Indian service-providers meanings of their work for themselves?

> There's something satisfying about a clean house after you've done it. That's true. But there's not going to be much of a sense of development in it. (Patricia)

Patricia's comment, I argue, falls in the trap that Kabeer (2001) cautions against: seeing empowerment as simply a state of being middle-class or never stopping climbing a career ladder that stretches to the moon. A growing body of research is showing how middle-class people themselves are rejecting notions that embed self-actualisation in paid work and searching for it either outside of work by downscaling work commitments (because they can 'afford' to, Hebson (2009:35–36)) or choosing to do 'low-status' work (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005; Potter, 2015; Wilhoit, 2014). Their decisions are not read as instances of volitional disempowerment, rather, the process of rejection of the 'position of power' becomes an 'opportunity'. Still, Skeggs (1997/2002) asserted that challenging powerlessness does not suddenly provide working-class women with greater symbolic capital, which is partly because they had fewer material resources. The UK service-providers' decision to do house-cleaning might not eventually propel them into positions of power. But when the work was being done as *work*, I argue their claims of self-development should not be measured differently simply because of their fewer material resources. Such an interpretation makes middle-class status a 'natural' resource whereas it is a product of historical social changes. It might be more helpful if researchers concerned about social injustices focus on understanding the implications of this development (while being mindful of structural constraints) for challenging middle-class hegemonies, as they are not necessarily morally right. What about when the work was done as *labour*?

Ambedkar (1916/1979/2004:144) showed how it is the performance of socially constraining practices by more powerful groups that maintain caste hierarchies. For instance, dowry originated as a high-caste Hindu practice (Narayan, 1997) and requires material resources. So when middle-class status, values, beliefs, and careers are considered fixed entities and the only ticket to self-actualisation, the problem for those at the bottom is not just their exclusion but that participation in these negative practices is necessary for inclusion, and require resources they lack. Thus, the poor Indian service-providers' selfhood became imprisoned in their maternal role (see also Coelho, 2016), [197] because their need to work was driven by their desire to claim some status through their

---

[197] This has been suggested to be an attribute of kin-based societies, opposed to individualist societies, but sweeping generalisations are problematic as Western research also shows that 'work-family' conflict is a major feature in the lives of Western women (and men) (Damaske, 2011), and underpins the twenty-first-century demand for 'family-friendly' work policies.

children, including by educating them. Money is thus often borrowed[198] from reasons varying from daily expenses to 'status'-enhancing but materially impoverishing practices, such as celebration of festivals and marriage dowries (Neetha, 2004; Sen and Sengupta, 2012; A.N. Singh, 2001; V. Singh, 2007). Although many women were making decisions such as using contraception, rejecting child marriage, giving up exploitative employers when they could, taking control of household finances (Kabeer, 2001; Vera-Sanso, 2008), and urbanisation had led to improvements in their material and cultural condition (also Raghuram, 2001:616; Srinivasan, 1997), many still largely remained in a culturally subordinate position to their men (Gopal, 1999; Neetha, 2004) and the socio-economic distance between them and their service-users still appeared considerable over their working life. I will now discuss the material conditions and their associated injustices in cleaning done as work and labour in more detail.

Material injustices in outsourced house-cleaning as *work* and *labour*

A key factor for UK service-providers who had decided to do cleaning as a business after working in other industries was that it was better paid. *Nora* said 'I got six pound fifty for my care work and I'm taking eight pound an hour from this' after accounting for business overheads. Still, this latter fee is also comparatively low and my interviews, as well as the internet discussion started by a cleaning service-provider (Netmums, 2009–2014), revealed both material and cultural dimensions to the exploitative politics of fees/wages in cleaning work. Thus before proceeding further, it is useful to review some Marxist notions of exploitation as relevant to the self-employed person selling a service.

In Marxist theory, self-employed service-providers who sell services that they produce themselves using means of production which they own would be termed 'petty-bourgeoisie'. They receive in fees the exchange-value of the service provided (Steinmetz and Wright, 1989). Practically though, describing individuals doing work that is dependent on others' custom, often for part of rather than over their entire working life (and in the case of domestic work, work that historically was and contemporaneously still is low paid and stigmatised), as 'bourgeoisie' is inappropriate and risks deepening their 'atomized disempowerment' (Linder and

---

[198] From service-users, money-lenders, relatives, etc.

Houghton, 1990:734).[199] But an analysis that bears in mind that this theoretical category straddles traditional class categories derived from the situation of doing waged work in a factory (Steinmetz and Wright, 1989) can still (i) usefully unpack the realities and singularities of exploitation (in the Marxist sense) of particular *proletarian* petty-bourgeoisie groups, and (ii) suggest possibilities of reducing this exploitation without assuming that the relationship itself is a problem when people clearly prefer it.[200] See, for example, Cruz and colleagues' (2017) suggestions for reframing of legal frameworks that would ensure decent work conditions for self-employed dancers without compromising their self-employed status instead of recasting the dancers as employees of dance clubs as suggested by previous researchers but not desired by the dancers themselves. As regards the selling of services, Tregenna argues that in the Marxist approach, whether an activity is analysable in terms of capital depends on 'its location in the circuit of capital and its relationship with the production of surplus-value' (20011:297). Activities that comprise the services sector can thus be divided into three groups, those that also produce commodities, 'circulatory services that facilitate the transformation of capital between its various forms, and non-capitalistic personal services that are exchanged against revenue rather than against capital … [that is] laid out in a capitalist circuit of capital' (Tregenna, 2011:297). Domestic cleaning then falls in the last category because it stands 'outside the circuit of capital', particularly when it is delivered directly rather than through a commercial company (Tregenna, 2011:281) because, '[i]n meeting the needs of the purchaser of his [*sic*] services, the worker depletes rather than expands the mass of surplus-value' (2011:294). From a feminist perspective it still has 'exchange-value' because it is paid for, value which a self-employed service-provider receives in full, rather than being partly appropriated by an agency. Furthermore, the 'use-value' includes more than just a clean house as it frees the service-user to do better-paid work. Outsourced personal care and domestic help might enhance quality of life of an elderly person to a significant extent.

---

[199] The UK service-providers could draw on other people's labour, for example, for external window-cleaning and house maintenance. *Jessica* had outsourced house-cleaning in the past and *Yvonne* was presently doing it.

[200] Capitalist societies also include other subordinate forms of exploitation, which 'can still provide the material basis for secondary forms of class relations' (Wright, 1988:91).

The range of fees in the UK varied from <£7 to >£15 an hour (average £10/hour; Figure 19) with no regional differences. Internet discussion threads confirmed these findings (e.g. Mumsnet, 2014i). However, these rates clearly do not provide cleaning service-providers middle-class living conditions and service-users often try to extract maximum work for a given fee, for instance, by overlooking that service-providers have to factor in work-related *costs* into their hourly rate.

> I think things could be better for this profession as a general – this is not just for myself but for cleaners in general – if the customers would definitely give you more time to clean properties and I think also if customers would be aware of why you have to charge them, because I think some do feel that you're a bit expensive, but they're not taking into account any of your costs, you have to advertise, you have insurance, and your cleaning materials ... they just look at it as a set price ... [whereas each house presents different costs]. (*Zoe*)

Figure 19: Hourly rate for outsourced cleaning in the North East, North West and Midlands (data collected in spring 2014)[*]
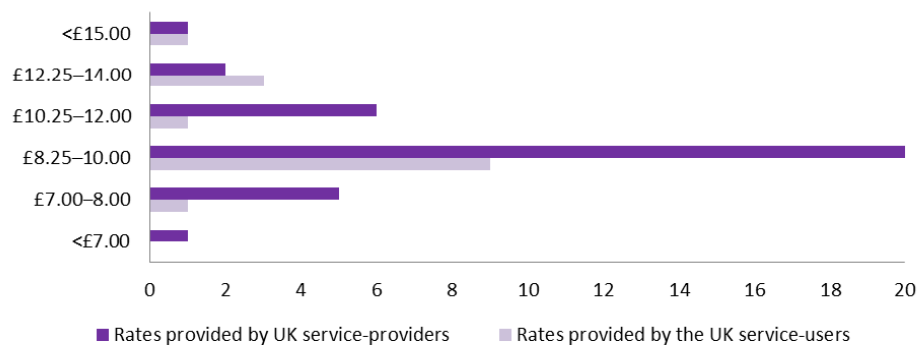
*Since some service-providers charged different rates, for instance, for new and old customers, the total entries for service-providers in the figure exceeds the total number of service-providers interviewed. The service-provider charging >£15 (*Sheila*) worked to a flat fee. To allow me to compare with the rest of the rates, she told me she charged £40 for a smallish flat that took her about 1.5 hours to clean. This comes to £26.00 per hour but I have put it as >£15 to allow for errors in estimates.

The hourly rate that can be commanded is subject to various structural influences: the 'market rate', gender, race, etc. When people check their neighbourhood 'going rate', they do not realise that the same rate applied to two different households can lead to different outcomes for one service-provider or two different service-providers working for the same two households. A bigger or dirtier house means cleaning cloths wear out faster. Service-providers working in

the same area may have different travel costs depending on the distance travelled, wear and tear of vehicle or public transport costs.[201]

My respondents mostly used an hourly rate and often did not charge for small periods of overtime, tending to inform the client only when their overtime approached 30 minutes. Some, however, had started to charge separately for tasks that can take almost the whole of the allocated time, such as oven cleaning. As *Zoe* points out, the labour contract relation assumes that the worker is simply being paid to do what appears to be primarily a physical task within a period of time that can be predetermined by the 'employing authority'. This kind of material injustice is seen across domestic outsourcing as well as commercial cleaning and caring services, where 'time and motion' labour contracts mean workers are constantly battling against time to provide a meaningful service for a very low wage (Rubery *et al.*, 2011; Sykes *et al.*, 2014). In *Sheila*'s experience, these problems were overcome by charging flat fees (as advised by her mother's friend) and she was earning considerably more than the rest. A service-provider on Mumsnet also commented that a male service-provider in Harrogate, North Yorkshire who charged by the job was earning 'about £18' per hour (Mumsnet, 2013). Romero (2002) showed that charging by job work rather than an hourly fee was an important factor in how the Chicana workers in Denver were modernising domestic service. However, Patricia paid a flat fee to *Enid*, and this translated to around the lowest hourly rate in my samples. Since I did not have enough flat-fee accounts in my UK sample, I cannot comment further on how this form of payment might counter material injustice. The Indian case, however, showed that the flat-fee method would benefit the service-provider only when cleaning is done as *work* rather than as *labour*. Live-out Indian service-providers, who usually work 6–7 days a week for each client are paid by the job, commonly on a monthly basis. There was wide variation in the rates, which has been attributed to work fragmentation (see Chapter 5), influence of the general socio-economic status of a residential area on the 'going rate' (Neetha, 2008, 2016), as well as the (limited) ability of a domestic worker to negotiate around, for instance, size of the house, number of rooms, number of household members (as this impacted on the number of dishes to be washed or amount of laundry to be

---

[201] Libby had paid her previous service-provider travel costs when Libby moved homes.

done). The fee/wage thus negotiated was still comparatively meagre, a point that many academics were aware of:

I personally feel we are underpaying, because the work that they are doing – but again, you are governed by the market … the number of times I get cursed by my neighbours: 'You are paying more so they are also demanding more from us.' … That is why … I'm helping in kind. Giving bags, books, pens … (Kajal)

Dekho aisa hai ki – ek to [See it is like this – for one] it's because of the market forces only, because here the workers are available at lower rates. And they also have no option … So that way we are actually exploiting them. I am not being shy in saying this because … now I'm alone I'm paying Rs500. But even if I had my family here, they would be paid … maybe another 100 rupees a month, which comes out to be Rs20–23 for [about] … one and half hour's work each day. So I find it is low paid, … [but] because they are accepting it, we are doing it because it suits our pocket, and finally we are doing it because lots of people are available. (Lata)

Several Indian academics were paying above the 'going rate' as well as helping out in kind as Kajal mentioned or paying directly for some expenses incurred by the service-provider (for example, children's education, hospital costs). All these efforts, as well as the ability of some service-providers to negotiate better fees were, however, still associated with a much lower general standard of living among the service-providers compared with the service-users (see Chapter 3, see also Chapter 7 for a fuller discussion of this point), and thus I have not shown the actual rates quoted here. Three of the six part-live-out workers were not paid at all. They were provided the outhouse in exchange for their work (Raghuram, 1999:217). That is, they did not pay rent or utility bills. Their husbands' income covered other expenses. As in other industries (Desai *et al.*, 2010; NCEUS, 2008, 2009), women are paid less than men in domestic work (Raghuram, 1999; also personal observations), but when the men's wages are too low for a meaningful existence, concerns about a 'gender gap' seem pointless (Vera-Sanso, 2008).

In the UK, both service-users and service-providers notions of a 'fair' fee also had complex underpinnings informed by wider structural discourses around skill, gender and market forces. Some academics' justifications included feelings of guilt (see Chapter 7). The highest hourly rate was paid by Lily, who wanted 'to be honourable' with someone doing unskilled and demeaning work. Others had

no guilt, paying more than the minimum wage meant they were not exploiting the service-provider. Most however, were not willing to pay significantly more for this work and simply paid the amount quoted by the service-provider.

> We didn't negotiate! She just said what she expected … it was slightly, very slightly more than what I had been told, and I thought it was absolutely fair. If anything, I do think it's underpaid … if you look at the kind of skills that they have – you know, I would recognise them as skilled, and I don't think, you know, there's wider recognition of the types of skill involved in cleaning. Umm, because definitely you can do it well or badly and they do it very well. So, but on the other hand I'm not going to turn around and say do you want £15 an hour instead? I don't want to do that. But I get quite annoyed when people sort of assume it shouldn't be paid for. (Pauline)

Such variations in remuneration (see also Anderson, 2000:152–153) however, are not peculiar to domestic work and reflect irregularities in wage setting in informal and formal 'regular' waged jobs within and between countries. Commercial cleaners directly employed by public-sector organisations in the UK are paid better (£6.30–£9/hour) than private-sector employees (£5–£7.50/hour), in part because the former more likely fulfil workers' rights (Sykes *et al.*, 2014). Wages of construction workers in Kerala, India, depend on various factors including regional citizenship status (local or in-country migrant), caste, union membership status, employee/casual labourer status and gender (Prasad-Aleyamma, 2017).

No UK service-provider expected to be paid for time off work as they understood this to be a condition of self-employment. At the same time some were claiming welfare support. This seeming contradiction does not indicate lack of reflexivity – rather it indicates the opposite. Income support is a common theme in the low-wage sector (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012,[202] and many providers had worked as employees – they knew what that entailed. *Evie* had trained as a teaching assistant but she changed her mind when she saw a friend doing 'silly hours'. The friend received holiday pay, 'but pay is awful and she ends up doing extra hours that she doesn't get paid for, which … doesn't make sense to me.'

---

[202] It was introduced to 'help' corporations pay low wages. Further discussion of this mind-boggling logic is beyond the scope of this chapter.

The benefits of 'paid leave' in other permanent jobs are also questionable. Leave may not be claimed because of lack of cover, or not applying 'in the right period', or because several days cannot be taken off at once (Smith and Elliot, 2012; Sykes *et al.*, 2014). Unlike many of their UK counterparts, none of the Indian service-providers I met took 'holidays' per se. They visited their marital/natal village of origin – some were paid for this time and others were not. The monthly pay pattern meant the few days off per month were often paid for, but this is more so in theory[203] because of the low fees.

Most UK service-providers were reluctant to raise fees annually to avoid losing customers because at the time of the interview, austerity cuts and pay freezes were being implemented across the regions. Some quoted higher rates to new customers and then dropped lower-paying customers where responsiveness had not been established. They offered different cleaning packages to avoid working overtime (basic clean, deep clean, separate oven cleans, etc.), some more successfully than others. The Indian women's penurious circumstances made them less shy of asking for a raise themselves. The minutest price rises affected them and any wider rumblings of slowed economic growth were of little concern to them. The established and more confident women dropped exploitative service-users when an opportunity arose (Singh, 2001).[204]

No UK service-provider referred to pensions when I asked about disadvantages of their work. Given their low fees, clearly this matter, which is a key part of workers' rights and necessary for a decent standard of living throughout one's working and post-working lives, requires attention. However, at the time of writing, these concerns appeared to be more widespread than affecting only domestic workers. The vast majority of self-employed people in the UK do not have private pensions and there appears little difference in pension concerns between self-employed and employed low-wage earners (Blake, 2016; D'Arcy and Gardiner, 2014; Hu and Stewart, 2009; Warren, 2000). Thus, is an employee situation always better? *Corinne*'s pension accrued during her long-term teaching career was insufficient post-retirement, which is why she was

---

[203] The Indian working week commonly includes half/full Saturdays. Thus domestic workers probably cannot expect more than four days off a month but many are permitted only two days.
[204] Such households are often among those who complain how difficult it is to find a long-term domestic worker 'nowadays' (Singh, 2007).

working as a (declared) childminder and (undeclared) cleaning service-provider. *Vera*'s pension entitlements linked to her wage of £15,000–16,000 per year for work she had enjoyed would have again been meagre. She saw greater benefit in being able to claim her petrol costs against her tax return which she had not been able to do as an employee. The same situation was also evident in the Indian research despite the astounding extent of work-related insecurities in India: only 12% of the active workforce 'has a formal pension or social security plan' (Joshi, 2012:n.p.; see also Hu and Stewart, 2009). Consequently, a detailed discussion of labour laws around self-employment in domestic work requires taking into account general concerns around low wages and how services that are delivered on the market but 'outside the circuit of capital' can be decently remunerated to incorporate realistic pension and holiday/sickness cover. According to Pape (2016), the ILO convention does not apply to self-employed service-providers, and as Cruz *et al.* noted, 'straightforward arguments for the use of [existing] individual labour law claims' (2017:275) are problematic when people clearly indicate that a high degree of autonomy at work is important for them.

Another illuminating example is Meagher *et al.*'s (2016) discussion of differences in Swedish and Australian care workers' perceptions of their work. The thrust of that analysis was macro-level comparative institutional theory, through which differences in the structural make-up of the two market economies (Swedish socialist/co-ordinated versus Australian liberal) were shown to be responsible for the differences in the way caring work was experienced in the two countries. The Swedish employment conditions on paper were much better, but the Swedish workers were less satisfied. While they did more personal (body) and professionalised work (e.g. giving injections) and had guaranteed rights such as holiday pay, they worked longer and inflexible hours and more often reported they could not deliver the care a client needed, who, in turn, also usually had many different workers visiting them. The Australian workers had comparatively poorer employment conditions but were more satisfied with their work. They had greater autonomy and work–life fit and engaged more freely in the social aspects of their work.

Fraser (1996, 2013) argued that the politics of distribution more generally is intricately linked with the politics of recognition. Thus before completing this analysis of material injustices in paid domestic work and the academics' reconciling of their outsourcing of domestic work with their feminism/gender

sensitisation, I will explore the cultural dimensions of cleaning done as *work* rather than *labour* in Chapter 7.

Concluding remarks

Truss et al. (2013) declared secretarial work was a 'dead-end' job because of overwhelming manifestations of feminine capital, which they argued was 'just an extension' of the boss's job. Wrapping up their conclusions, however and drawing on McNally (1979), Truss et al. wrote: 'we must pay heed to the voices of secretaries themselves, who emerge as substantially more satisfied with their jobs than a large cross-section of workers in a range of other jobs' (2013:361). McNally, following research on the work experiences of 1970s temporary secretaries, had critiqued feminist theorising that, while presenting a 'corrective' to gender-essentialist malestream sociological analyses also generated a 'deterministic model of women at work' (1979:187). 'From the remote and lofty observation platform of the sociologist, routine non-manual work may seem a colourless enclave of boredom and monotony' (McNally, 1979:38).

As I endeavoured to let the voices of my participants guide my analysis, I came to two conclusions. First, I could not apply the phrase 'ghetto occupation' to my respondents' situation. Many men and women worldwide are 'ghettoised' in more extreme ways than described in the Northern feminist ethnocentric definition of 'ghetto' occupation (Truss et al., 2013; see Chapter 1). In India (and I assume more widely) domestic work is not a peculiarly vulnerable form of (gendered) employment but one of a range of male and female occupations; it is not always the worst possible job for women (Raju and Jatrana, 2016a; see also Hatton's (2015) intersectional analysis of continuums of social and legal vulnerabilities between different occupations in the private and public spheres in the USA). No work is inherently 'dead-end' – the working conditions make a significant difference to how work is perceived and experienced. Some middle-class men and women are downshifting in search of 'meaningful' work, having failed to find self-actualisation in elite careers (Marshall, 1995; Potter, 2015; Wilhoit, 2014). In the presence of sufficient education and financial capitals, 'kaleidoscopic' non-linear careers (like mine) and mucking out on the farm after graduating from Harvard (Kimball, 2010) are even lauded as a feminist 'choice' (Mainiero and Sullivan, 2005).

Second, feminist arguments about 'evident continuities in women's continued performance of caring labours, albeit as waged workers in the market and sometimes in the public sector, rather than as unwaged workers in the

home' (McDowell, 2014:832; also Lan, 2006) require contextualisation on a wider level. The oppressive characteristics and insecurities of domestic paid work, which are not inherent in cleaning but are consequences of the conditions of work, have been present in other manual work such as agricultural work since pre-industrial times, and today are increasingly seen across a range of occupations regardless of gender (Hom, 2008/2010; Raju and Jatrana, 2016a). Consequently, my respondents' understandings of the work in two contrasting cultures indicate that the problem with paid domestic labour is not commodification per se, but the way the work has been commodified, both historically in the form of slavery and servitude and within the contemporary neoliberal work narratives as low-value, unskilled or low-skilled work. Rather than starting from a position that assumes everyone wants to or should be an employee, it would be useful to further explore the employment relations people themselves prefer. The service-users and service-providers I met out there showed me that formal self-employment has possibilities in making cleaning *work* as opposed to *labour* (Romero, 2002). This transformation would include appropriate fees that would allow service-providers a good standard of living and ensure social protections for themselves. Unfortunately, this model of work, which is ideally closest to being a process towards empowerment, regardless of gender, is being exploited and its advantages chipped away so that it appears as if an (unfree, non-autonomous) job/'career' in a neoliberal organisation is the only way forward. In reality what is happening is the maintenance of the hegemonic position of (White) middle-class values, culture and models of home and work as the Ten Commandments for 'the good life', the rejection of which is only condoned when the people rejecting them are (White) middle-class people.

Some people, however, may not have the nerve or the ambition to 'go it alone' in the first instance. Here, the collective form of self-employment appears to offers an alternative to an exploitative employee–employer contract. The ILO (2013) is mapping how in these spaces domestic workers worldwide are gaining much from each other's experiences and knowledge about how to do cleaning as *work* rather than *labour* (see also Smith, 2011; Tandon, 2012).[205] Although none of my respondents had experienced being a member of a cooperative, it merits further research. In the next chapter I analyse the social relations between the service-users and service-providers to complete my argument.

---

[205] Although as Salzinger (1991) noted, it depends on the cooperative's mission (see Chapter 5).

Chapter 7   Cultural injustices in the occupational relations of domestic cleaning as *work* and as *labour*

In April 2016, at a sociology event[*] 'Everyone a winner? Being and becoming socially mobile', Diane Reay's talk on 'individual success at the cost of collective failure' described her own struggles with class barriers. She argued for a discourse of social mobility in which she could rise with her class rather than above it. Later I asked her how this could happen without revaluation of occupational hierarchies as first, jobs done by those at the bottom are considered necessary for society to function, and second, while market regimes are inherently pyramidal in nature, Western 'policy makers [and some feminists] continue to propose a narrow vision of clean, high-skilled and "better" work for all' (Simpson *et al.*, 2012:1–2). I mentioned how the British service-providers in my research were challenging established hierarchies by doing cleaning as *work*, by approaching it as a business. On hearing this, Diane twisted her mouth. Despite wanting to challenge the class structure, she appeared to endorse (middle-class) negative notions of 'manual' labour.

> Some months previously in India, I had met Bhavna, a divorcee, whose mother managed their household with the help of domestic workers. As Bhavna talked about her relationship with the workers, the contextual nature of institutionalised misrecognition became apparent:

> in India, it is very different. It is *not* possible to eliminate that kind of social thing … A good friend of mine … is a house cleaner in Canada … I met her when I went to California … we hug … I mean, she's just like … you and me, … she's absolutely equal, my equal, there's nothing like she's a house cleaner … But in India it's not possible … because it is so deeply embedded

in the social structure here ... abroad the living standard more or less is the same everywhere ... even the cleaners, everybody has good living standard, everybody has a car, everybody can go to the same restaurants ... But here, the difference in money is *so* much, so extreme, and then people think that money brings them power and that gives them power to be able to say anything to them. ... [so] if I invite him to have lunch with me, he'll stop working for me. I can't ask him to do any other work for me.

Bhavna shared Diane's rejection of cleaning as a 'respectable' occupation within her own social world, but outside it she saw a cleaner as a person just like herself. But even within a single-country context, brief moments revealed possibilities, as Bindu's reflections of her relationship with her late mother's service-provider show:

There's this one person whom I connect with more ... one day she was telling me how the lady in one house got angry with her because she ran late, so I [told] her, 'Yeah, my boss also gets angry when I run late, but they sometimes don't understand that it's not deliberate, and, you know sometimes it happens', and I ended up saying something [about] ... sometimes I don't want to show up at work, sometime I want to laze around. She started laughing and she said, 'Yeah I also feel the same!' And ... for a moment [I] felt – okay, we're just two people, just talking to each other about our work situations, nothing to do with class, nothing to do with the fact that she's a domestic worker ... we were like totally equal in an equal setting of work situations and we were dealing with the same things, there was no really difference there ...

The socio-cultural processes of power shaping the occupational relations of paid domestic work have been extensively elucidated (see Chapter 1). As my service-user and service-provider samples within each research site had largely similar racial backgrounds (see Chapter 2), my intersectional analysis of cultural injustices concentrates on gender and class/caste. After elaborating the theoretical framework that primarily informs this analysis, I describe how the respondents constructed their relationship with their service-provider or service-user; how the feminist and gender-sensitive service-users (inadvertently) perpetuated cultural injustices; and how the service-providers negotiated these injustices when doing cleaning as *work* or *labour*. Through this analysis I will show that (middle-class) feminist ideologies themselves might be implicated in the cultural injustices in paid domestic work. Finally, I discuss how my findings might aid the reduction in exploitation in outsourced cleaning work and how my conceptualisation of housework fills some of the theoretical gaps in the 'problem' that is paid domestic work.

Two factors determined my choice of theoretical framework. First, the UK respondents' class identities were not in absolute opposition. Five academics were first-generation middle-class and Libby's service-provider also worked for her working-class grandmother. Four service-providers identified as middle-class. In India, a few service-providers identified as higher caste, and socially mobile lower-caste people also outsource domestic work (see Chapter 2). Second, the bases of misrecognition are not ahistorical but fluid, as the journal extract above illustrates. Therefore, I draw on Fraser's (1996, 2013) two-dimensional approach to social justice whose application previously in Australia (Meagher, 1997, 2003) and India (Chigateri, 2007) indicated its cross-cultural usefulness. In both situations the authors demonstrated intersecting tensions in the politics of distribution and recognition in class/caste reproduction. Sociologists more generally have highlighted the same points (Crompton and Scott, 2005; Devine and Savage, 2005; Lawler, 2005; Hebson *et al.*, 2015).

Fraser argues that material and cultural injustices are mutually constitutive and their simultaneous redress is necessary for people to function as 'full partners and participants' in all their social relations – 'formal legal equality' is not enough (1996:32,48–49, 2013). Such an approach demands transformative distributive and non-identitarian recognition measures, that is, measures that aim for de-differentiation of social groups along all axes of subordination (e.g. gender, race) in both spheres, rather than respect for a particular identity, for

example, Dalit identity (Chigateri, 2007). Remedial measures that rely on putting people into boxes or on self-assertion of group identity leave in place the power relations behind the injustices. Using a medical analogy, such affirmative strategies simply treat the 'symptoms' rather than the underlying pathological process whereas transformative strategies aim to tackle the core pathological process to ensure participatory parity (Fraser, 1996, 2013) in public and private. I use this framework in conjunction with the theoretical concepts used in prior chapters to analyse the cultural injustices in the occupational relations of outsourced housecleaning in the UK and India.

'ultimately you're there to do a job' (Zoe)

Two UK service-users and two service-providers said they were friends with a provider or user, respectively. These claims cannot be analysed as I did not interview dyads, but other data lend credence. Una's first service-provider had been a relative and Peggy's had been a neighbour (see also Metcalfe, 2013). *Nicola* currently cleaned for a neighbour and *Carrie* for her sister. Most UK respondents, however, described their relationships as 'friendly work relationships'. That is, the client treated the service-provider as equitably as possible in a structurally unequal situation, for example by being courteous and tidying up before the cleaner was due. From the academics' accounts it was mostly themselves, the women, who were responsible for the relationship. However, as the quote below illustrates, their understanding of the relationship was class-bounded due to not only socio-economic but also cultural differences.

> my background … wasn't [as] working class as hers … she's a sort of archetypal … [Northern] woman who's managed to get rid of her husband, bring her kids up, … will sometimes come out with views that are quite bigoted … you hear a lot of what she's read or heard about on the radio … but I suppose I tend to be a bit more liberal and middle-class … [and] sometimes … I just want to get on with my work on a morning … she likes going out and going on holidays where she'll probably be going and drinking quite a lot and have a great time … I would like to go walking in the countryside … (Peggy)

The relationship was further shaped by factors such as age difference, assertiveness and sense of self-worth, presence or absence of responsivity and shared interests outwith the work relationship (see Chapter 5; du Preez *et al.*,

2010). Thus most respondents had different relationships with different service-providers or service-users (Figure 20).

> The ones that are always in … they lock themselves away in their bedroom! The one that I go to twice a week, yeah, me and her have a natter when I get there … [But] they would never be … somebody whom I would become friends with, because they're not … my type ... then the ones that have been there the longest, their home is ... probably the most similar to my home and it's got a few old things and … when we were going to an old penny arcade auction and I told them about it, they went as well. (*Charlotte*)

Figure 20: Pictorial representation of relationships between service-providers and service-users. The lines indicate the length of the time of service provision and the different sizes of circles indicate the level of the relationship from the perspective of (a) a cleaning service-provider and (b) a service-user

(a)   (b)
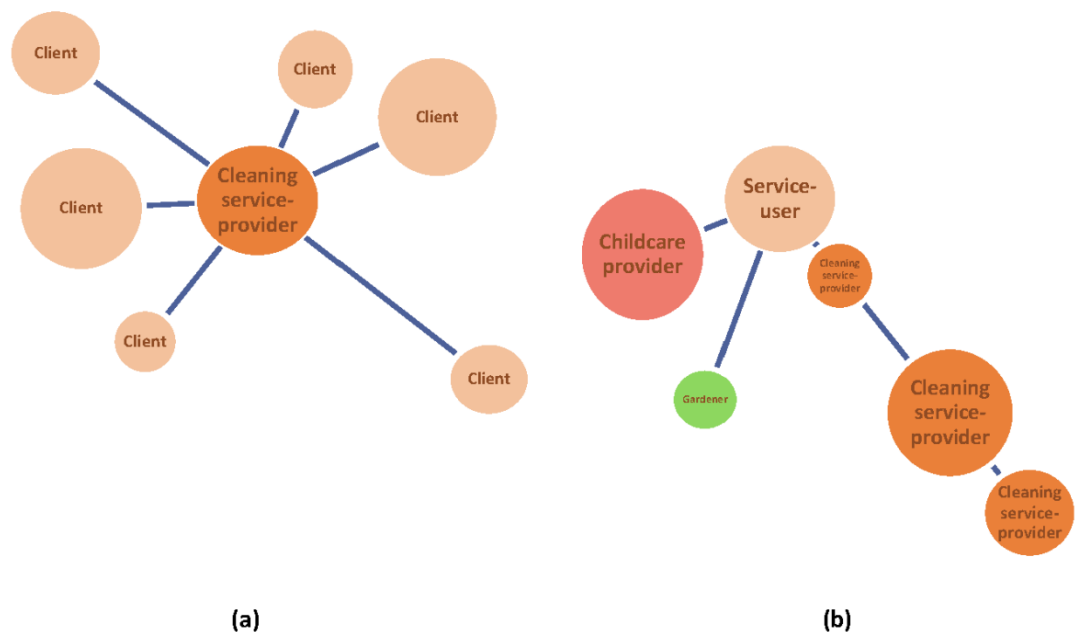
In the most superficial of these relationships, the user and provider rarely met, with communication limited to service requirements through notes and texting. Elsewhere, some academics understood what I describe as responsivity as an 'intimate' relationship (*cf.* the 'maternalists' in Romero's (2002) typology of American employers). That is, they said they had a '*friendly* work relationship':

> So actually I would feel much, much closer to *Rita* actually, than [anyone in the academic workplace] – and I think our relationship is very different. … this thing about the nurturing-ness and the taking care and the intimacies – so we've [*Rita* and I] bought Trevor [Clare's husband] a load of new pants … (Clare)

Others, however (*cf.* the 'contractors' in Romero's (2002) typology), and the service-providers who were declared workers, mostly emphasised the second word: 'friendly *work* relationship'. For instance, *Tamsin* encouraged her subcontractors to 'speak' with the clients but 'there's a fine line though, … you got to be careful because there's that line that you're still working for someone.'

Although Lutz also could not define the relationships 'unequivocally', she argued they varied because of 'fluid transitions between friendship, loyalty and professionalism' (2011:85). Molinier's focus group of French feminist employers agonised about being 'caught between the reciprocity of care and the desire for depersonalisation' (2009/2012:113). Both these arguments are based on researchers and/or service-users situating the relationship fully within the private sphere. My findings contradict this line of thinking and are supported by Schwartz' (2015) analysis of frictions in the definitions of paid domestic work between early twentieth-century British middle-class feminists and domestic workers (see Chapter 1). That is, if some service-users' understanding of the relationship took 'home' as a starting point, others as well as many declared service-providers located the relationship in the workplace more generally.

Journalistic accounts imply that housecleaners have access to and are interested in the 'dirty' realities of people's souls. For instance, the blurb for Rafkin's (1998) book salaciously focuses on cleaners' gleaning information through the things her service-users left lying around (also BBC Two, 2015b; Gee, 2005). My interviews suggested that working against the time bind (see Chapter 5) when time *is* money, the inclination – *if* it was there – to rummage through drawers is likely to be ignored. Also, people are as likely to bare souls to doctors, lawyers or hairdressers (see Cardoso, 2012). Why the assumption about cleaners then? Because service-users do not consider the workplace as a workplace. None of the service-providers appeared eager to spill any beans in the one-off interview even while describing unreasonable behaviours among some clients. In contrast to the service-users, they saw their workplace, like doctors or lawyers, as '*a* workplace'.

In India too, the quality of relationships varied between the same service-providers/users and their different service-users/providers. Few respondents, however, described a 'friendly work relationship'. The socio-economic gulf and/or caste differences between the user and provider often reduces the domestic

worker to 'those people' (from another planet) or a non-person[206] (Dickey, 2000a; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010):

> I am like this, that if you ask me to stand the whole day I will. But when she asks me why have I not done this work, I don't know what to say. What should I say why it was left. Then when she says do it now, I feel a bit humiliated. Also like when guests come and she tells me to clean the table in front of them I feel bad because it implies I haven't done my work properly and I feel demeaned. We are also human … (*Mohini*)

Some but not all service-providers mentioned being served food and drink in separate utensils (Mattila, 2011), and they rarely sit on the same level (usually on the floor or a low stool) in the presence of service-users. These practices are articulations of not just caste but also race and class because high-caste servants are not excused from them and they occur in other contexts too (see De Casanova (2013) for a South American context; Parreñas (2008) for a Western context).

Service-users who also had a live-in worker (Appendix D) were more likely to talk about that relationship, especially where live-out cleaning service-providers changed frequently. Most service-users saw themselves as employers of 'domestic help' even though feudal imaginaries were evident in several interviews: 'maid' and 'servant' slipped in the conversation as it proceeded. Most service-providers saw themselves as casual labourers, referring to service-users in a detached way – *'kothiwaale'* (see Chapter 6). In addition, disinvestment in the work and awareness of the public–private continuum of their second-class status (see also Chapters 5 and 6),[207] could have made it difficult for some to isolate the subordination in the work relationship:

---

[206] Male domestic workers can be reduced to asexual beings, their presence in bedrooms of little consequence (Ray, 2000). At other times they are hypersexualised (Mattila, 2011; Ray, 2000): for instance, by nuclear households with daughters or by single-women households. But is this different from the unease around sexuality that more widely pervades society? The same people might also not wish their daughter or themselves to be alone with a certain kind of man in certain public spaces. These fears are also present in the West (see Chapter 5).

[207] For example, re-settlement housing for Indian slum populations is often designed as 'studio' flats, leaving poor families feeling as unwelcome as in the slum (Teotia, 2013; personal experience) – would the strategists and architects with families live in such flats themselves?

> We [women] just have to listen to all admonishments and bear up – admonished by the big house and admonished by our husbands. Isn't it? We have to bear being admonished by everybody, what can we do? (*Anika*)

Other factors that precluded a 'friendly work relationship' were *kichh-kichh* (which prevented developing responsivity, see *Mohini*'s comment above and Chapter 5), lack of trust and abseentism (see Chapter 5). Also fragmentation of work meant live-out workers sometimes spent comparatively little time – often less than an hour – in one client's house. (Toilet-cleaners in Noida attended 15–60 houses daily (Raghuram, 2001:611).) Overall I discerned two types of work relationship: a fraught relationship, a tug-o'-war, in which each side is trying to get the most out of each other with minimal investment, while in the other, care and concern were evident. The mutual tension in the first kind is palpable in Pratibha's description of a first encounter and *Jyotika*'s account from the other side.

> This was one interview where the employer had to answer more questions than she could ask, because the would-be employee knows the indispensability of her position and takes full advantage of that. I have been asked about the number of rooms in my house, number and age of family members, frequency of arrival of guests, types of gadget in my house, availability of colour TV and cable connection. After this, haggling over wages, mutual agreement on service conditions, leaves allowed, festival bonus, increments and time slot, ultimately completes all the rituals. (Pratibha)

> some houses are like that isn't it? They will extract maximum work but pay little for it … and some people will follow you around, look over your shoulder, and I don't like that. Nor do I like it when people quibble about work. You tell me what to do, I will do it. … So for these reasons I just drop houses [where this happens]. And money – if they are asking for more work and suggesting less money, and I am saying that this much work will mean this much money, and if they say you are asking for too much, I don't like it [and I don't work there]. (*Jyotika*)

The caring relationship appeared a 'friendly work relationship' but in India's overtly hierarchical society with large socio-economic disparities, it remained grounded in the feudal 'patron–client' relation (Mattila, 2011; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; Tellis-Nayak, 1983).[208]

> the economic difference makes that huge, everything else becomes different, so your take-off point becomes very, very different … because they don't have the means, they are not educated … their awareness snowballs into so many other things … but, you know, … I realised that, with my mother gone, certain womanly issues … you can actually share with them … the kinds of maybe bodily changes that you may experience … the larger philosophies of life or values of life, … and they themselves say that, you know, you should do this and you should not do this, you know, they also, you know, give you advice yeah! (Vibha)

> They treat us kindly, they respectfully offer us tea and water. On every major festival they give us new clothes, we don't need to spend our money on clothes. And if they ever see us outside the house, from the back or from ahead, they acknowledge us respectfully: 'My *Urvashi*, where are you going?', '*Beti* [daughter] where are you going?'. Now, who asks after someone like this in a city? But they ask us. That's why I feel that this is like my family. In all four houses. [Lotika: have you ever worked where you have not felt like this?]. No, because I've been working in this area of 12 years and I know [this part of town] – what is happening around. When you get out of your home, you learn to become worldly-wise [through the cleaners' network], so why I should I work where I know [I won't be treated well]. (*Urvashi*)

But the considerate behaviours described by *Urvashi* could be constrained by practices of separation, that is *Urvashi* was not likely to sit next to her client while having the cup of tea she was provided (see also Mattila, 2011; Dickey, 2000a; Frøystad, 2003; Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010; also De Casanova, 2013, for Ecuador; Parreñas, 2008, for the USA).

---

[208] Very few respondents in either country talked about the worker as 'part of the family', possibly because they were not live-in workers. The problematics of this claim have been discussed at length previously (see Chapter 1).

In sum, my data suggest that if cleaning is done as *work*, the relationship between the user and provider can be located within wider work relationships. When cleaning is done as *labour*, this is less likely – as would be the case for other casual labour situations. Still, full participatory parity was also missing in the UK. One reason was that service-users' thinking often was embedded in mainstream feminist understandings of unpaid and paid-for housework (see Chapter 1).

The 'hidden' cultural injustices in outsourced cleaning

> I think it is degrading to the individual to have to clean up after somebody else. So in a perfect world, everybody would feel equal and be treated with equal respect. And just the nature of the job prevents that really. Yes, umm … also it can give you an inflated view of yourself. That you could make a place quite messy and dirty and not have to take responsibility for that. (Phoebe[209])

All UK academics with working-class backgrounds, some of whom had a familial history of domestic service, expressed guilt in employing another woman to do their (read: the woman's) dirty work. Three middle-class women expressed similar sentiments (see also Romero (2002) and Molinier (2009/2012), as the quote below reveals:

> I still have felt guilty … perhaps naively because I don't feel it's – you know, there are two jobs A and B and one chooses to do A and one chooses to do B. Now I know it's not as simple as that, so this woman I was talking about, she didn't have qualifications to get another job. But clearly the woman I've got now, the problem is that she's choosing to do the cleaning for her 36 horses! That's her choice! I can't understand it but that's her choice. (Lily)

Lily paid her service-provider a good rate (see Chapter 6). Besides class-consciousness inculcated in childhood, her thought processes behind her decision revealed an internalisation of social – and feminist – constructions of housework as low-value work. Thus her material generosity would not help her service-provider achieve participatory parity.

---

[209] Pilot interviewee.

> I just didn't see it was my … life to spend … you know, to, to … I hadn't, had not achieved those educational qualifications to stay at home cleaning. And I don't mean that in a snobbish way, it think it's, it's about choice about what you *can* and *want* to do. And, umm … and I didn't choose to spend my time cleaning. (Lily)

When Beverley invited *Natalie* to a family party, *Natalie*'s daughter joked about 'going to the big house'. Beverley decided that 'Because I *think* she was aware and I was aware that people would ask her "How do you know Beverley?" and she'd say "I'm her cleaner" … I said you're my friend, end of story.' Such constructions of equality by the service-user (see also Groves and Lui, 2012, Mitra, 2012) – or even co-constructions (if *Natalie* had a role in the origin of the decision) – also impede participatory parity because *Natalie's* work was not acknowledged in that construction. Elsewhere at least, workers recognise this and some feel uncomfortable rather than 'grateful' (Pérez and Stallaert, 2016:161). Pseudo-egalitarian attempts can border on absurdity (e.g. Lutz's (2011:86) respondent Iris's guilty tip-toeing around her confident cleaner *Maria*), and service-providers are not always passive recipients of such overtures. Pogrebin's (2004) nanny woes well illustrate the farcicality of feminist 'guilt'. She entrusted a nanny with her bank debit card. When the nanny helped *her*self to Pogrebin's money, Pogrebin set out to damn *her*. Responses to Pogrebin's sob-story published in the *New York Magazine* indicated the readers were amused rather than sympathetic. Pauline described how her current service-providers' demeanour and work attitudes had squashed her guilt:

> They struck me very much as professional women, that they'd decided [cleaning] was going to be their job. That they had certain expectations and really were quite clear about it. And I much rather prefer that, I felt much happier with this sort of arrangement … I feel like we're equal partners in this job, or in getting this task done … they don't make me feel like an employer.

In sum, Western 'guilt' and 'moral' reluctance (see Chapter 1) around outsourcing appears more about middle-class hyper-reflexive self-indulgence, rooted in historical feminist disdain of housework (Johnson and Lloyd, 2004; Schwartz, 2015) than a service-provider's reflexive understanding about *their* work. Such guilt reinforces the devaluation of domestic work and prevents participatory parity.

Other UK academics justified their outsourcing in terms of spreading, sharing, their (hard-earned and higher) income. Their notions of fair pay for cleaning were also grounded in mainstream social constructions of work. The difference was that while 'guilt' primarily built on notions of cleaning as drudgery or 'dirty' work (see Chapter 5), the 'sharing of wealth' discourse chiefly drew on hierarchies of skill and the institutionalised misrecognition of cleaning as less-skilled *labour* – which also then falls short on delivering participatory parity (Fraser, 2013).

> As far as I'm concerned, I work very hard. I earn a lot of money. I pay tax on the money. If I can turn some of the money that I earn into jobs for other people locally, I'm very happy about that. I don't think that they're being badly paid or badly employed, well, umm, the gardener gets £15 an hour, cleaner £12 an hour, dog walker … it was £11 for a walk, it might change into £12 for him. It's not a lot of money but it's helluva lot more than minimum wage. A lot more than people without professional qualifications would be earning. And provided that you can give them some security, some paid holidays then they can actually earn a decent wage. … And that's the way I think about it – I may be naïve, but I've never thought differently. If I was looking for people, and wanting them to be paid the lowest possible amount of money and treated them badly then I would find that was in conflict [with my feminism]. (Orla)

All academics except Janet preferred independent service-provision as they were concerned about agency exploitation of workers (see Chapter 6). Many also displayed unease around the legitimacy of low-wage self-employment.

> I've treated him as a small business, rather than me as an employer. So I see him in the same way that I would the gardener who goes and does Alec's … But actually a social injustice perspective might turn that on its head and say I am an employer, what about things like sick leave and paid holidays and you know, national insurance and stuff. So in some ways I would say I haven't taken the social injustice view far enough probably. (Felicity)

When I remarked that Felicity's service-provider was a small business, her reply revealed that since she considered cleaning 'drudge work', she could not reconcile to *Gary*'s self-employed status, regardless of his opinion.

[One might want to question the] UK way of thinking about small businesses … given the power dynamics in the way … it is different being a remedial massage therapist, for example, who can charge me £33 an hour and can tell me through his business when he's put up his fees than being a self-employed cleaner who's considered pretty much at the bottom of the pile.

Similarly, when Clare's self-employed service-provider, *Rita,* refused her offer of a raise and holiday pay, Clare's conscience pricked her. *Rita* cleaned Clare's house on Mondays and Clare circumvented *Rita*'s refusal by insisting on paying her for bank holidays, while bearing the inconvenience caused by *Rita*'s right to take holidays as *she* pleased.

Some academics also tolerated poor-quality work, because they saw the service-providers as doing work that was not 'proper' work. But the service-providers said a good provider–client relationship included feedback on quality of work. So when service-users avoid this, they reduce the provider to 'just a cleaner'. In sum, the UK academics often inadvertently hindered cleaning service-providers' attempts to do cleaning as *work*.

In India, no service-user expressed guilt in the way it was expressed in the UK, although many were concerned about various aspects of their service-providers. They also justified outsourcing housework in terms of helping a needy uneducated person to earn a living, sometimes within a discourse of 'mutual' dependency.[210] That is, in return for service-providers' manual *labour,* besides cash payments, many Indian academics helped them in various ways: from interest-free financial loans to paying for medicines, children's education, wedding expenses and providing guidance on saving money.[211]

Suppose I have a lot of … if I can afford it, why not to hire a person so that that person can also get employment. After the Sixth Pay Commission, you know, our salary shot up … so I have a very good salary. On the other hand these women are very poor. We call it feminisation of poverty, right? So if I can employ a person why not? They will also get something out of it. Not only in the form of cash. Like, when she is at my home, she will have tea, I will give her fruit, some lunch … (Kajal)

[210] Todd (2009) mentions prevalence of a similar discourse in early twentieth-century Britain.
[211] These accounts were validated by some service-provider accounts.

I've never thought about [guilt], no, I would say I am creating a space where that's her domain of work … I used to always cook myself earlier, and I realised with one of them that that it's very important for them to cook. … Interestingly, I've really learnt a lot. In the manner of how to deal with them also. You know, instead of saying *ki bachhe hain* [they are children], one would also view them as lesser privileged, one is kind of doing things for them, with our, whatever backgrounds we come from … But I feel that if supposing she was not working for me, and I was not giving her this kind of, so to say, whatever freedom or comfortable place – she says she has no light in her village, that's why she comes back, she doesn't have a room – I've built a special room for her and a bathroom for her. And that's for her, it's her space. And the way she wants to keep it … except that I don't buy her a separate TV because I know what she's going to do, and in summer she comes inside and sleeps in the AC. So no, I'm not guilty about that at all. In fact I think it's an opportunity for them, in fact they all learn so much in our homes. All the women my mum [employed], and men, whoever, their lives have changed, because my mum took them to get their hysterec – their tubes tied after two babies, and taught them how to be clean … (Navita)

Navita's account reveals the discourse of 'mutual' dependency is also grounded in feudalistic patron–client relations, in which the enslaved or servile manual worker is also often constructed as 'infantile' (Tellis-Nayak, 1983). This cultural injustice has been described variously, and in depth, as maternalism, paternalism, (p)maternalism and pseudo-maternalism (see Chapter 1). I have not aimed to explain my findings in these terms because my point of departure for the analysis is not just service-users' understandings of service-providers' positioning but also the latter's own view. Ray and Qayum (2009/2010) observed how domestic workers described remaining dependent on their employers (*paradhin* lives) in contrast to workers in other occupations (*swadhin* lives). Grover (2014) contested their findings, arguing that today's Indian live-out worker has agency and negotiates successfully. I am not convinced, however, given comments such as Pratibha and *Jyotika*'s, and because the pay is so low (and state support insufficient), it still leaves service-providers directly dependent on empathetic service-users for empowerment. I also contest the 'mutual

dependency' discourse because it underplays the service-users' advantage in the power game (Emerson, 1962).[212] Unlike the UK, where a few service-providers talked about discovering pleasure in 'helping' others (a common finding in care work more broadly (Hebson *et al.*, 2015)), no Indian service-provider framed *their* dependency in 'mutual' terms. The maintenance of distance from manual *labour* that is essential to middle-class status (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) socially legitimises payments for manual labour at a level that prevents the labourer from becoming financially independent (Tellis-Nayak, 1983:73) – and so becoming middle-class themselves and no longer available to do manual labour. As Fraser argued, 'people cannot participate as peers in social life in the absence of certain material … and … cultural prerequisites'; in material terms, a person has to have 'freedom from deprivation and from the sort of dependency that renders one susceptible to exploitation', a condition that is inevitable when 'great disparities of wealth and income' are institutionalised (1996:54). So the discourse of 'mutual dependency' is one-sided, and similar to some UK service-users' explanations of wealth dispersal, the Indian service-users' altruism constituted an affirmative action (Fraser, 1996, 2013; Roy, 2014a,b).

In the Indian situation, the question of service-providers desiring feedback on their work did not arise. The UK service-providers desired feedback to improve their services when doing cleaning as *work*. In India, where the work was constructed as labour that required no particular skills, the service-provider may not expect the work could be done any better than they were doing it (even though they had learned several elements of it on the job, see Chapter 5). Along with the insensitivity of some service-users to this, feedback could became *kichh-kichh*.

Within both cultural settings, the feminist and gender sensitised service-users were rationalising their moral engagement with outsourced domestic work within wider class-based 'institutionalised thinking styles' (Douglas, 1986/1987). Consequently their actions and decisions bolstered existing classed altruistic notions, which also reduced the chances of participatory parity of both sets of

---

[212] '[S]ocial relations commonly entail *ties of mutual dependence* between the parties' and '*power resides implicitly in the other's dependency*' (Emerson, 1962:32; original emphasis).

service-providers. I now consider the attitudes of the service-users to cleaners in their workplace to substantiate my claim.

Cultural injustices in outsourced cleaning and wider occupational hierarchies

> what do you call the relationship between academic staff and professional, technical and secretarial staff? … you can say it straightforwardly there's a hierarchy and the academics are in charge except it doesn't always feel that way! But it's still the case, the academics … come together to buy presents for the office staff at Christmas, so this, I think is an … an interesting dynamic, cause it is a kind of … thing you do for a subordinate isn't it? Even though quite a lot of the time we would … I'd like to *think* we work together as … colleagues, and … asking somebody to do something as a favour goes both ways, but then the academics are paid quite a bit more! (Tanya)

In line with other organisations, many UK universities have undergone restructuring in recent years, including staff roles, open-plan offices and other 'horizontal' ways of working. Thus, as Tanya says, people appear to be working *with* each other rather than within a hierarchical order. Everyone is a 'colleague' and those higher up the pecking order may find it 'easier to work with people when … they have a sense of that, of their own job and prepared to set limits and tell you, you know, "No I don't do that" or something' (Patricia). Old wine in new bottles? All academics acknowledged that professors Jane and Joe and higher managers have more influence than professional support staff Jane and Jane (rarely a Joe), and in this 'egalitarian' workplace, office cleaners Jane and Joe are becoming more and more invisible. The professional support staff are still 'wives'. For instance, their employment contracts remain labour contracts or a mix of labour and service contracts (Rose and Pevalin, 2005), they often need to be available in the office in 'usual' working hours, and their wages are comparatively low. They are also mostly women while lower-paid ground staff are still mostly men.

Cleaning is frequently outsourced, and cleaners float around departments and buildings, working in strict time and motion shifts, commonly early morning and late evening. This leaves them little opportunity to engage with other staff, to be part of a 'departmental team'. Nor are they, as in the past, included 'on anybody's email list' (Harriet), or likely to be included in university-wide

273

consultations, like, for example, catering staff. Most academics were courteous to cleaners when they saw them, a few had become friendly. But the boundaries of these 'friendly work relationships' were set by the academics 'against the background of being *frightfully* careful not to be patronising' (Patricia) (Molinier, 2009/2012:296,297). Clare was happy to have a quick chat with her office cleaner, but one morning when the cleaner sat down in Clare's office and appeared to 'get cosy', Clare became worried. At another university, when cleaners shared the staff room some academics might have 'join[ed] in their conversation … but it would be harder to sit and read the paper or anything like that that you might do' (Patricia). Cleaners are not usually invited to departmental events or parties, and, as Tanya said, gift-giving at Christmas is often an unequal exchange.

In India, as in most workplaces (public service or private organisations), universities have peons and cleaners at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy. Many of them are on daily wages (equivalent to zero-hour contracts). Like runners, peons frequently make/bring and serve refreshments to other staff and their visitors (e.g. me) or lay out the boss's lunch and so on:

> the interaction [with cleaners] is [may be] not so much, it is less. But they know what I want – because the cleaner knows that whenever I have water, I like it to be lukewarm. So he keeps the water [ready] before I come (Sarika).

These public-sphere jobs also remain caste-segregated (NCEUS, 2009; Raju and Jatrana, 2016a). Ray and Qayum (2009/2010) had limited their thesis – that servants were indispensable to maintaining middle-class status – to the private sphere but I argue that the same people who practise middle-classness in the private space also practise the same in public, because status has to be displayed everywhere. During departmental or wider celebratory events, cleaners are the last to join in after being especially 'called' and then they will sit separately. But the boundary between cleaners and the rest is not a sharp boundary, as hierarchies are complex and evident at each step of the ladder, which itself has one foot in the public and one foot in the private, as Sarika's comment shows. It is worth mentioning here that use of first names in India as a form of address is quite limited both in public and private across classes. People often do not refer to spouses by name, particularly in company, but as father or mother of their child (e.g. *Sonu ki ma*). Elsewhere, senior colleagues or teachers or even customers are addressed as 'Sir' or 'Ma'am'. As Meenakshi showed me

around her institution after the interview, several students touched her feet, while she called them 'children'; the students were showing her the same respect they would show to elders in their family.

Thus, the academics in my sample were not engaging in a politics of cultural exploitation in their homes in a distinctive way: domestic workers share the material and cultural 'injustices they experience in paid household work with workers in a range of other service sector occupations and work contexts' (Meagher, 1997:202), a point also made by early twentieth-century British domestic workers (Schwartz, 2014). Finally, no academic expressed guilt over the practice of someone else cleaning up the mess and dirt created in the public space by the same humans who create it in the home.

> it's more like we all have jobs at the university but some are more socially valued than others, so I feel uncomfortable about the fact that the world works like that, but less like I've actively helped create that situation (Felicity)

Nor did the guilt extend to outsourcing of domestic 'men's' work such as gardening or house-maintenance, or using rubbish-removal and processing services, at the frontline of which are primarily men (see Chapter 4). Thus I argue that the guilt attached to outsourcing domestic cleaning among the UK feminists, as well as the discourses of spreading the wealth and mutual dependency are located *within* internalised societal prejudices about certain kinds of work across the private–public divide and hinder rather than help cleaning service-providers' individual or collective struggles against cultural injustices.

Cleaning service-providers' struggle against cultural injustices

> my mum [an occupational therapist] knows that I'm a clever girl and she'd prefer me to do something more academic I think. … [later] I think I'm conscious any way … I don't want people to look down on me, because there is … like a bit of a stigma attached to being a cleaner and people think, 'Oh, you know, you're a cleaner, you're thick, you're stupid.' Umm, and I know I'm not any of those things and I don't want people to think that of me. So sometimes I'll even get embarrassed, if like I go to a work thing with [my partner's] work and people'll say 'What do you do *Sheila*?'. And I just feel really, yeah! embarrassed saying … Even though it's my own business and I

know I probably earn better money than they do. And I've got better hours, more flexibility and stuff, I just … don't like saying it all the time, yes. And I shouldn't be ashamed of it, that's the thing. I should be able to say 'cleaner' and I've got my own cleaning business and feel *proud* of it. (*Sheila*)

Several UK service-providers felt stigmatised. The work itself is stigmatised as 'brainless' labour, with children, particularly middle-class children, being 'threatened with having to get a job as a cleaner or a bin man for poor exam grades' (Mumsnet, 2013a). The vertical design of occupational classifications is linked to a hierarchy of formal educational qualifications and 'skills'. These constructed classifications reinforce cultural notions that the occupations at the lower end do not require mental labour (Rose, 2004/2014; Torlina, 2011). The cleaner also faces embodied stigma, played out in the societal understanding that someone who cleans for a living must by default be 'thick and stupid', and forms part of historical pathologisation and demonisation of the working-classes by the middle-classes: they are people with a particular kind of body (e.g. 'they smell'[213]) and diminished mental faculties, they lack the ability to be reflexive (Reay, 2004; Schwartz, 2014:180, 2015:42; Skeggs, 2004; Wright, 1867). The UK academics whose service-providers came across as bright thought each of these women was an 'exception' (see Chapter 3). Yet *Sheila* and *Sophie* aspired to be writers. Other UK service-providers were also conscious of the cultural myths around domestic cleaners as downtrodden, 'less-intelligent' women/people and displayed reflexivity in their effort to do cleaning as *work* (see Chapters 5 and 6).

I don't [find it embarrassing] but I must admit one of my daughters didn't, didn't like it: 'Umm, that's embarrassing mum, you're a cleaner.' I said it's not embarrassing, I have my own business and I work hard, and it's the same, same type of importance as my other job. It's just that I don't go to work in a suit. (*Martha*)

---

[213] The fixation around 'dirt' and 'cleanliness' is not just a pervasive Indian (Hindu) peculiarity. The discourse of 'cleanliness is next to godliness', which was a cultural marker of Victorian middle and upper classes (Davidoff, 1995), later evolved into a secular fixation (Douglas, 1966/2002), in which those lower down the pecking order are considered unclean (Skeggs, 1997/2002) (see also Chapter 4).

Corinne, the retired teacher who did cleaning to supplement her pension explained how she resisted the stigma she had been subjected to by academics in her social circle:

> At first I felt a little bit … I didn't mind it for myself but when I was talking to people because I, I mix with a lot of academics, I felt a little bit, when people asked me what I did, I tended to say I was an artist, rather than saying I was a cleaner. And same with the child-minding, I tended to say I was a teacher and not – but now, I quite enjoy confronting them with it, because they don't know what to say when I say I do cleaning and child-minding. That's the end then, and I like, I sort of enjoy watching them feel uncomfortable. I am more confident with what I do and what I am I guess.

Some providers dropped clients who made them feel 'inferior'. Others participated in boundary setting, taking their cue from the service-user:

> it depends on how they speak to you. If they treat you with respect then obviously, I'm more than the same with them because obviously you're in their house … (*Yvonne*)

But this is not a passive move. Once rapport was established, the service-providers were discerning in their communications with different clients. *Valerie*'s long-term clients knew about the breakdown of her marriage. However, when asked how she was doing, *Valerie* did not give the same answer to everyone, depending on how she perceived her relationship(s). Live-out service-providers can also gain from service-users' ignorance of their private life.

> I have actually reduced people's hours because they mess me about, like she was a four-hour client, and she used to just cancel at the last minute, and she was four hours a week, so I did actually find client number 9, and I told a bit of a fib actually, I told her I had to be somewhere, so I could only do two hours. Because it's a lot of money – when you're self-employed – to just lose at a moment's notice. So you can, you know, you've got that power to rejig, yeah! (*Sophie*)

A few felt vulnerable to the stigma and consequently were detached from their work and experienced it as *labour*, disempowering and demeaning. *Abigail* gave up her school catering manager post when government policies conflicted with her values regarding nourishing food for children. She could not find another job and her experience at the Job Centre left her feeling humiliated. She took up

cleaning but her confidence hit another low when a few early clients behaved disrespectfully, and her children and some acquaintances displayed discomfort with her decision. Despite having acquired business skills in previous jobs, and declaring her work, she did not actively attempt to turn her cleaning *labour* into *work*.

In India too, stigma is attached to 'manual' labour per se as well as being embodied, regardless of gender (Coelho, 2016; see Chapter 6). My findings fit in with prior observations in that, similar to the UK, a few users who said their providers came across as intelligent people implied this was not the norm. Unfortunately, service-providers can internalise the stigma attached to their work (Chigateri, 2007; Coelho, 2016), regardless of the presence or absence of embodied stigma. However, as *Shilpa*'s comment below illustrates, this internalisation is not always unreflexive, rather there may be considerable mental conflict as a worker wrestles to live with cultural injustices (the state of mind described as *ressentiment* by Rollins (1985) and self-repression by Elson and Pearson (1981:95)):

It is hard work but we have to do it for sustenance … to bring up our children. So that's why we have to do it [because] what else will uneducated people get? They will only get the work of *jhaddhu-pochha*. They aren't going to get anything better than that. But, at least we're doing our own work, earning our own bread. If we were educated, we would also be sitting on a chair in some office, doing some 'good' work, but since we remained uneducated this is the work for us. But there is no shame in doing this work, it is stealing that is shameful. No, there is no shame in work, whatever work we do. And we will do what we are capable of doing. Yes, now see this, we think, 'Oh! those high-status people have come and here I am doing this mopping, doing sweeping, but when this is the work that is assigned to us – you think about this, what is everyone's work? Now you [Lotika] are doing this reading and writing work, some other person is doing *jhaddhu-pochha*. Someone else is doing something else. … In that educated world, there are many high-status jobs, but there are lower-status ones too. And there are some high-status ones as well in which some people feel shame, but that also has to be done. Everyone has been assigned some work [in society] – this does not mean that *jhaddhu-pochha* was inscribed in our fate. No. Okay,

> I am uneducated, but my daughters have studied, the younger one to class
> 10. She doesn't think she is going to do this work ... (*Shilpa*)

Many women had not told their extended families about their working status, although some deliberately decided to do domestic work to take advantage of notion of 'mutual dependency'. As *Urvashi* noted, the Indian state didn't have time for the likes of her. The only people she could depend on for support were the people she worked for.

> I thought about it – that the amount I could earn working in houses, I would not be able to earn in a factory. Here we get clothes on festivals, we get money, perhaps a box of sweetmeats. In other work, nobody will ask after us, they will call us just like any other worker and I wouldn't like that. I haven't had to buy clothes, nor do I have to buy sweetmeats on festivals. Yes. This much I am sure that this is okay for me. I don't have to go the shops, I don't have to buy clothes. In what I earn, I am able to ensure we have sufficient food [for the family]. (*Urvashi*)

Thus the Indian service-provider's detachment from *her* work was not simply a mirror reflection of middle-class rejection of manual work. The structural conditions under which *she labour*ed had a significant role to play (see also Chapters 5 and 6). Elsewhere, employees, particularly those doing housekeeping jobs, have reported a preference for domestic work due to the harsher conditions of work in their organisations (Coelho, 2016), and Balmiki toilet cleaners have said that working in modern urban areas had led to some material gains as well as reduction in embodied stigma (Raghuram, 2001:614).

An aspect of embodied stigma that crosses cultures is social invisibility of domestic workers. On the macro-level, since a large part of the work is carried out in the informal economy, numbers of domestic workers are notoriously underestimated (Ehrenreich, 2002/2010:57; ILO, 2013; Neetha, 2009:490). On the micro-level, domestic workers might go about their work 'unseen' and treated as non-persons (see e.g. Anderson, 1993).[214] Service-providers in their turn might respond by doing their work as quickly as they can and 'shooting off' as *Anjali* said. But this is not a unique problem: workers doing housekeeping jobs in organisations have reported not being allowed to use front-of-house lifts (Coelho,

---

[214] Commercial cleaners also describe being made to feel invisible (Sykes *et al.*, 2014).

2016). Having domestic workers wear uniforms is said to further invisibilise the individual worker (De Casanova, 2013) when cleaning is done as *labour*. My Indian respondents did not wear uniforms,[215] although the visible condition of their clothes (often dingy even when bright, compared with service-users) could be implicated in their embodied stigma.

When cleaning is done as *work* this interpretation needs re-evaluation. Among the UK service-providers working in partnerships and running quasi-agencies, some had chosen to have uniforms. *Nora* and her partner deliberately wore their uniforms and drove their branded van to public places such as supermarkets: people often made enquiries. (Subcontractors of quasi-agency owners might view things differently.) Women in high-powered jobs wear 'uniforms', except the business suit is read as a signifier of 'dedication to work' (Wilhoit, 2014:268), instead of embodied stigma. So is it the uniform or the conditions it is worn under that make it a problem?

Service-providers doing cleaning as *work* were also visible in several other ways. 'Reluctant'[216] service-users often make themselves scarce when the cleaning service-provider is working (also Molinier, 2009/2012:297), by 'hiding' in the study or going out. This arrangement suits some service-providers as they prefer to work in the absence of the service-user. Interpreting it as a visibility 'problem' (e.g. Lutz, 2011) is patronising, given that many people desire privacy for better productivity in higher-status jobs (Cain, 2012; van der Voordt, 2004). The part-time self-employed cleaner in the UK is also commonly a 'key-holder' for at least some clients: they often work when the client is not in the house. However, giving access to one's home to another person is not an action taken lightly: 'it's quite a big thing having someone in your house and who can go through all your private belongings ...' (Peggy).[217] Lutz has interpreted the trust in friendly work relations in outsourced cleaning as an 'astonishing phenomenon in a society characterized by high functional differentiation in which working relationships are defined by written contracts and contractual compliance is

---

[215] Uniforms for service-providers are prevalent in the upper-most echelons of Indian society. Thus, among lower-status men, such as chauffeurs and peons, a uniform can become a status symbol, of a better job in some ways.
[216] To borrow Jones's (2004) term.
[217] When cleaning agencies hold the keys though, their employees are not visible in the same way as the independent service-provider, because the responsibility for the key lies with the organisation rather than individual employees.

governed by an extensive regulatory system' (2011:81–82). My respondents challenged the 'high functional differentiation' (see Chapter 6) and therefore I cannot agree with Lutz' view that a foundation of trust is antithetical to modern work relationships.

Also, most UK service-providers (declared and undeclared) who had started their business more recently had a presence on the internet (see Chapter 6) and some were Facebook 'friends' with some clients. More established service-providers did not clean for anyone or everyone. Caitlin had had several service-providers because 'we are so untidy, and they don't like it'.

> I've learned over the past year to become more, a lot more picky with my customers ... when I first started out, I did some really disgusting places. Whereas now I can gauge it a bit better as to ... if these are nice people, if they are going to treat me well. If they've got high standards anyway themselves, you know what I mean. (*Sheila*)

Many service-providers visited a potential client's house before committing themselves, when an unspoken mutual assessment took place. Later, customers often tidied up before they were due. This courteous act on the part of the customer is indicative of the service-provider's presence in their mind. Many UK service-users leave 'thank-you' notes or send appreciative text messages after the weekly clean. This was not reported in India, but not just because of the taken-for-grantedness of – often illiterate – domestic workers. Etiquette around appreciation and gratitude is generally different from the West across the social spectrum, as Deepa[218] notes (also personal observations):

> Indians are not known for their encouraging attitudes. That's a rather sweeping statement, but I feel the difference more now that I am in the UK. There, your best is your duty. You get a word from your supervisor when you do something wrong, not when you do it right.

With regard to affective labour as distinct from responsivity (see Chapter 5), my findings indicated that its conceptualisation as a 'problem' is contextual. The UK service-providers' accounts of their work history revealed that affect was desirable in any work relationship, or else the worker was reduced to an

---

[218] Pilot interviewee.

atomised being (see Chapter 6). Many service-users also talked in terms of affect in relation to their own work. Academic work has three facets, teaching, research and administration. With all three competing for attention, 'you see it almost more as a calling than as a job' (Felicity). Indeed, the language of love and passion for the work is often used to play down the exploitation (Gill, 2010) in the 'moral commitment' that is the basis of the 'service' employment relation of higher status jobs (Rose and Pevalin, 2005:15) as opposed to the 'labour' relation in low-status jobs. Also, particularly when cleaning is done as *labour*, affective labour is expended by the service-user as part of the 'mutual' dependency discourse. *Georgia* (who had been an agency employee) and *Pallavi*, both of whose experience of being a cleaner had been largely negative, explained how service-users' affective labour was important for being 'treated like a human being really and not a skivvy':

> you'd want to do more for her because she treated you like a friend ... and she'd chat with you and she'd sometimes work alongside you. So if you were cleaning a room, she'd come in and do some ironing while you were there. And she'd chat with you. She'd treat you like an equal. You know, but these other women, they'd be sat in the garden with their friends ... And they don't ... her house was always clean when you got there. So obviously you start to clean it but she wouldn't leave knickers out and the toilet not flushed and horrible things like that. She would have a bit of respect for you. And she'd say 'You don't mind doing the windows do you?' She'd ask you nicely and just say if you don't like, don't want to do that and she was so polite, so lovely. So you do, do more for her ... (*Georgia*)

> And now when my son was going abroad, *bibiji* [ma'am] gave me much support, she talked to me and said it was hard to let go of one's children. She helped me understand this a lot. In such a time when someone talks to you like their own, it makes a lot of difference. ... But with some people you can develop greater affinity. ... Now whenever he calls he asks after *bibiji*, because she also talked to him. He was also full of trepidation just before he left and she encouraged him a lot. Just saying something is not enough, but taking time to make someone understand – there is so much difference [between service-users]. (*Pallavi*)

The practice of 'parallel houseworking' as explained in *Georgia*'s comment though is not without problems. Given that this is not possible in many situations, for

example in restaurants, hotels or paid childcare, these performances retrench housework as low-value 'women's work'. Thus a feminist perception of housework would take into account the mental *labour* that is expended by the service-provider and the responsivity associated with outsourcing it (see Chapter 5). It might even help more women who do 'jobs' rather than have 'careers' to engage with feminism. Like Skegg's sample, two-thirds of my UK service-provider respondents were ambivalent about feminism even though they prided themselves on being working women. Several others acknowledged there was sexism 'out there', but they also wanted to be feminine at times, and so were unwilling to identify with a movement that in their view 'had gone too far' and threatened their space between traditional notions of gender and modern ideas of equality. Doing cleaning in their own house in the setting of an unequal division of labour (see Chapter 6) or as paid work did not diminish their sense of seeing their paid cleaning work as proper work.

> I'd like to do whatever I'd like, when I'm young now, go where ever I want to go, … and get it all out of my system. Then I would like to meet someone and have kids and settle down and have marriage and everything. … I'd like to have my own business or something and be a housewife to be honest. Do both, still be independent … I won't like to rely on somebody else, like … my husband's wage and things. I'd like to want to do stuff on my own and have my own business, but then obviously, still, have my husband and my kids and house and everything and still be, like cooking, cleaning things. I don't think it's a, I don't think it's women's role, I think men or women *can* do it. I think it's just a men thing that women … are supposed do it and they're not. I mean anybody can do it, it doesn't say anywhere that's the [woman's role], I mean obviously some women like to look after family and things like that. I don't think that's anything – there's nothing wrong with that. (*Ruby*)

One reason for this may be because most of these women inhabited the same social spaces as other women working in other domestic work, namely childcare workers and carers. They did not see their position as unique simply because they worked in the client's private space.

Eight service-providers identified as feminists and two had an academic feminist background. They argued that even if they were doing traditional 'women's work' it was to ensure their financial independence, so it did not conflict with their feminist ideals. This is correct in my view because the point of

departure of (Western) feminist ideology is that the road to women's emancipation goes through the office (see Schwartz, 2015:45).

> [Being a cleaner] gave me an insight into how other families live, that was very interesting. And err, how different families viewed cleaners and how society in general views cleaners and feminist friends like, 'Oh […] how can you do that! How can you be a feminist and go and clean someone's toilet?' I said, 'I'm working, and I'm doing a valuable job and I'm getting good money for doing it. And cleaning yeah! I'd give them back their argument and say, patriarchy demeans women's work but you're a feminist allegedly and you are demeaning women's work. How does that make you a feminist? And they wouldn't be, they wouldn't be able to answer. (*Nicola*)

Many were not averse to the idea of outsourcing their own cleaning, but most had not done so because it was unaffordable or because they were fussy about their own standards or because they had subscribed to the 'failed woman' myth – that if a woman does not keep her house well herself, she is a loser as a woman (see accusations on Mumsnet, 2012a, 2013a, 2014a,c,f,l).

> I'd love to! I'd love to [outsource my own cleaning]. I just … I keep saying I'm going to get one of the girls to come in and do it for me, but then I keep thinking when me and Gaby come home, like today I was at home at half past ten, so there's nothing stopping me really from – it's about being idle isn't it really? (*Valerie*)

Jessica had outsourced cleaning in the past but not been happy with the work of the cleaning agency staff who had come. Thus presently she preferred to do it herself. Only a few articulated awkwardness along the lines of traditional feminist class-consciousness.

None of my respondents were activists or belonged to an organisation or union. The suggestions they offered for better work conditions were primarily based on their singular experiences but there were common strands in their responses. Those towards the top of the game, the UK respondents who identified as business-owners, did not put holiday or sick pay at the top of their list (which the academics had been more concerned about in terms of being conscientious customers). They wanted to clean free from cultural injustices that labelled them as deficient and fit only for *labour*. I will now bring together the two analyses of

material and cultural injustices to consider whether it is possible to do domestic cleaning as *work* instead of *labour*.

Addressing material injustices in outsourced cleaning through their intersections with cultural injustices

> I'm sort of, I've been having a think about that, it'd be about £8.50 an hour, which is, it's above the minimum and it's above the living wage. It isn't fabulous number, but if I paid Sandra £10 an hour it would be better and I may be moving to that by the end of ... the point is that if I start feeling guilty as an employer, which I'm capable of doing, I think then where do I stop? What should I be offering? (Maggie)

Doing any job as *work* rather than *labour* requires ensuring both material and cultural dignity of life for the person doing the job (and their dependents). While paid work is inherently exploitative (Weeks, 2011), clearly a substantive difference in the material and cultural aspects of life because of one's occupation is concerning, and domestic work can only be done as *work* if such differences are markedly reduced. In both countries I asked several women about the similarities and differences between their service-providers/service-users (the women) and themselves. A common answer about similarities was 'We are both working women'. Narayan (1998) argued that such assertions of 'sameness' maintain subordination because they allow privileged persons to benefit from 'progress' among the disadvantaged, who also may be carried away by the discourse. For instance, *Yvonne* asserted that her work had made her 'independent' women, no longer needing a man's support. However, *Yvonne*'s holidays abroad and a living standard that was closer to her service-users' compared with the Indian service-providers was only in part due to her own earnings. *Yvonne* and some other service-providers were claiming family credit or income support. A woman's private dependence on a man is clearly different from public welfare dependency. But even in the British welfare state, the population is divided into support-receiving and support-contributing factions because low incomes more generally do not constitute a 'living wage' (Shildrick *et al.*, 2012). Therefore, when continuing reading Fraser's argument cited above, that 'although some ... disparities are inevitable and unobjectionable, they must not be so great as to constitute "two nations," undermine equal standing, and create second-class citizens ...' (1996:54) one cannot simply think of India from my two research sites. The level of material (dis)comfort at which a citizen becomes a

second-class citizen is a moot point, and certainly, materially in both countries the service-providers were disadvantaged compared with the service-users. The question then arises, how does one address this issue, particularly when the condition of being *paradhin* (dependent) extends far beyond domestic work. That is, domestic workers' dependency is not unique but rooted in wider top-down understandings of the value of work, (spurious) divisions of mental and manual labour and 'skills' (Torlina, 2011; Chapter 1).

Much of the discussion around exploitation of the workers and solutions offered draw on Marxist feminist theories of exploitation because the relationship is considered to be an employer–employee relationship (with added racial/gender exploitation) (see, for example, Romero, 2002; Cox, 2006; Mattila, 2011, 2016). To condense my findings into a coherent theory, I will continue to draw on Fraser's (1996, 2013) ideas because first, the predominant employment relation I found, and preferred by the UK service-providers, was the vendor–client relation, and the relation in both countries was shaped by cultural notions about housework and about who can do this work in a paid capacity.

As regards the service-users' reconciliation of their outsourcing decision with feminism, in the UK, generally most academics either explicitly or implicitly appeared to draw not only on feminist understandings but also wider sociological/social trends towards living in a more egalitarian society, as follows:

- decision to use the services of an independent service-provider was mostly due to their conscious belief that any person doing domestic work must receive the full use-value of their labour. Janet, who chose an agency, said their decision was based on the belief that their worker's employment rights were more likely to be realised if *she* was an employee;
- decision to pay more than the national minimum wage or the going rate;
- have a friendly work relationship with the service-providers;
- use a male cleaning service-provider;
- reinvesting their wealth in the local economy;
- tidying up beforehand or leaving the toilet essentially clean.

In addition, most UK service-users did not enquire whether their service-provider was working as a declared trader or under-the-table (in India this was not necessary, see Chapter 2). Asking such a question could be seen as belittling for those who do declare their work as they are not likely to be asked of plumbers or gardeners. However, sometimes the service-users were left uncertain about their

own status as employer or customer and thus uncertain of their responsibilities and rights. Imogen had taken out third-party insurance herself – given that all declared traders in my research had the necessary insurance, perhaps this might not have been necessary with her current service-provider. Gayle was of the opinion that such matters only came into question with cleaning agencies, and not with the sole trader:

> [*Amber*] comes sort of out of the what I would say was 'an old-style cleaner'. She made her services available to individual people through personal contact and, and knowledge. She's, she's not part of a company that, you know, come and deliver …' (Gayle)

For Gayle, any sole trader was 'old-fashioned', a label that the majority of my service-provider sample would have protested against. Some service-users had thought about paying for holiday periods and offered a raise themselves while others waited to be asked.

In India, the issue of reconciliation with feminism did not arise in the same way. Middle-class Indian women's liberation is in part historically rooted in the social reform movements of the late nineteenth century, in which the focus was often reform (of women's oppression) within the family, rather than as intersecting with caste oppressions in the wider society (Ambedkar, 1936/2016). Still, decisions were often informed by the more modern notion of gender sensitisation and a general humanitarian consciousness:

- paying more than the going rate and raising rates annually;
- allowing days off without forfeiting pay;
- helping the worker and their family in various ways, including trying to ensure the woman had a proper meal by providing this at her workplace, advice on how to set up saving accounts and how to do this while living with an irresponsible husband (Seema's long-term live-in housekeeper and wife of an alcoholic, had, in her view, gained self-esteem through Seema's advice and support, and also purchased land and build a small house); and
- in the case of Pratibha and Bindu, resisting the requirement to distance oneself from manual labour as a marker of their middle-classness (also by others such as Taruni, who did the work herself when her daily service-provider was unable to come).

In both countries, however, all the above-listed decisions were more likely to be taken at the individual level. This has been noted elsewhere too. In a study

investigating guilt among Polish employers of domestic services, Kordasiewicz (2015) argues this feeling is a 'personal sense of guilt' constructed around an individual domestic worker's situation – she was doing domestic work because of her individual unfortunate circumstances. (And it is limited to middle-class people as the upper classes considered it their right to have help and working-class people saw the work as just another job.) Kordasiewicz further argues this micro-level guilt delegitimises the 'systemic, structural and collective dimensions of the processes of social polarisation behind it' (2015:68; also Romero (2002)). My findings could have similar implications. As this chapter has shown, individual-level service-user solutions, however reflexively thought through,[219] did not always challenge the wider social construction of housework as low-value 'women's work'. Also, because the UK service-providers themselves were not engaging in any significant collective action (except through advising each other on how to do cleaning as a business and trying to follow usual self-employment principles) their efforts to do cleaning as *work* also remained in the shadows. Some 'individual' acts, such as pre-tidying and leaving the toilet clean do challenge higher-level ideologies as they show respect for the person doing cleaning, but their significance is diminished by the moral angst around outsourcing.

A recent review of state-level policies for domestic work showed that all the policies so far[220] are:

> 'strongly consumer driven … the regularization of domestic work per se does not always benefit workers. Precarious work is preserved particularly through regulations regarding the employment relationship … [and] persisting undervaluation of paid domestic labour. Until these issues are addressed when developing the domestic services sector, it is unlikely to see any significant changes in the employment conditions of domestic workers. (Jokela, 2017:298–299)

---

[219] Middle-class reflexivity is not boundless, it is shaped by the 'institutional' thinking styles of the wider society (Douglas, 1986/1987; see Chapter 3).
[220] Tax and social contribution exemptions (e.g. the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden); tax-deductible voucher schemes (e.g. Belgium, France); regulation of domestic work by structuring the work as a low-paid, flexibilised 'mini-job' (e.g. Germany, Austria); issuing legal work permits for migrant workers (e.g. Canada, Korea, Taiwan).

This conclusion could be taken a step further through my delineation of specific issues in the undervaluation of domestic work as evidenced in the work of outsourced cleaning:

- not everyone can do quality domestic work for a living – this is an important corollary of the established feminist position that this work is not embodied in particular racialised, caste or class or gendered groups;
- paid domestic work is not a simple extension of unpaid housework that is largely performed by women in many cultures such as the UK and India – (supports Bujra's (2000) claim);
- it requires both mental and manual skills; and
- just as customers in other situations are not 'always right' but have to agree to certain terms and conditions, those outsourcing housework need to expend some energies in establishing a responsive relationship with their vendor.

My hope is that if such social assumptions were dismantled, and paid domestic work offered on a self-employed basis either by a lone trader, a partnership or a collective of workers, then policies such as tax exemption for household services could benefit the worker as well. And if the service-provider is earning enough to have participatory parity with her or his client, they will be able to ensure their own rights as workers and a dignified retirement as might middle-class self-employed people. There have been suggestions of calculating fees/wages on the basis of a service-user's income (Foreman, 2014) but since the latter varies widely (Anderson, 2000:22) within and between countries such individual measures do not address the structural injustices in paid domestic work. My research also provides further evidence that that 'fair' remuneration needs to be demanded alongside work conditions that ensure adequate autonomy for the service-provider so that they have participatory parity in the control of the work process. Such conditions should make the work attractive to local workers and perhaps only attract those migrant workers who are committed to do this work rather than anyone doing it simply on the basis of hoping to make a better life for themselves or their families or because of restricted access (due to race/citizenship) to other kinds of work.

However, exploitation in paid domestic work cannot be resolved in isolation; it would also require applying similar thought to other low-wage work because exploitation does not occur along a single axis of discrimination (Fraser, 1996, 2013), and rich–poor divisions within and between countries are grounded

in the legacies of historical colonialism and contemporary imperialism (Anderson, 2000:196). In India, the problem is compounded by the persisting caste traditions. (See, for example, the investigative report on *Swachh Bharat* [Clean India] campaign (Sagar, 2017)[221]). Finally, I address the implications of my analysis for the relationship between feminism(s) and paid domestic work.

Concluding remarks

The myriad cultural injustices faced by domestic workers are key to Western feminism(s)'s angst about the commodification of domestic work (see Chapter 1). Yet the service-users, who were committed to feminism(s) and gender issues, attempted to redress these injustices largely through affirmative strategies (Fraser, 1996, 2013) only, both when cleaning was done as *work* and as *labour*. This may be because feminist ideologies of women's emancipation have developed within prevailing institutionalised forms of (mis)recognition (Douglas, 1986/1987; also de Laurentis, 2007, cited in Molinier, 2009/2012:288), which continues to denigrate certain kinds of work, such as cleaning, across the private–public divide in which the cleaner is constructed as a non-person lacking intelligence.

The current *zeitgeist* is also plagued by identity politics (Fraser, 2013), which means that service-providers' shared struggles for participatory parity also fall short. Instead of demanding transformational changes based on de-differentiation of group identities and valuation of different kinds of work, many domestic workers' unions and collectives have situated demands for fulfilment of workers' rights (e.g. hours of work, holiday entitlement, etc.) in a discourse of 'essential' or 'necessary, invaluable social labor' and for recognition of workers' gender and ethnicity as part of their broader worker identity. The Si Se Puede! domestic workers' collective in New York 'was founded … to bring together *immigrant women* to create a *women*-run, *women*-owned, eco-friendly housecleaning business' (Cooperative Programme, 2011:7, my emphasis). (See also Bradshaw, 2015:n.p.; Chigateri, 2007; Cooperative Programme, 2011; and Soni-Sinha and Yates, 2013, for similar issues in the commercial cleaning

---

[221] This report reveals how caste remains contentious in the efforts to ensure adequate toilet facilities for all Indians: problems range from siting of communal toilets to their funding, use and maintenance in caste-ridden social enviroments (Sagar, 2017).

sector.) Similarly, the ILO (2010, 2011) approaches domestic work as 'work like any other' but also 'work like no other', that is while it recognises the workplace as just another workplace and the employment relationship as a legitimate one, it also deems it as a peculiar *personal* service relationship, which again obstructs achieving participatory parity. For instance, the UK refused to ratify the convention because it argues that health and safety legislation or inspection regulations devised for large organisations cannot be applied to a two-person 'special' employment relationship agreed in a private household (see Chapter 1 for the historical background) (Albin and Mantouvalou, 2012:77). Finally, the professionalisation practices of third-party employers such as cleaning agencies and European state-supported programmes also re-entrench misrecognition (see Chapter 1; Pérez and Stallaert, 2016). King sums this up eloquently: '[we] cannot legislate to give dignity, self-esteem or worth, this is only realised in the way we treat one another' and '[w]e all have to ask is there a dichotomy in what I practice to what I preach. A simple way forward is to treat people how they ought to be treated rather than our perception of what they are capable of' (2007:190). My analysis of cultural injustices and their importance for resolving material injustices shows that if King's advice is followed, a 'friendly *work* relationship' in the domestic space of the service-users would be possible alongside participatory parity for the service-provider.

In the final chapter I consider the implications of all my findings for the relationship between paid domestic work and feminism.

Chapter 8   Concluding the project, continuing the journey

In the introduction, I stated that I grew taller in the process of this research. In other words, I realised my list of possible 'career choices' when I was 18 years old was not a sign of a feminist ability to fly, to make informed choices, but of a closed mind. Class per se *is* constraining, although I am not the first one to grow through an examination of the 'mundane' from bottom-up:

> The constant discussions [about cleaning as skilled work] at Choices [a cleaning service-providers' collective in California] … changed my vision of housework as necessarily demeaning. I began to question my underlying assumptions … (Salzinger, 1991:159; see also Bujra, 2000:191, cited in Chapter 5)

Producing situated knowledge: post-script

In Chapter 1, I argued that theorisation of paid domestic work is underpinned by some epistemological assumptions and researchers' own ontological positions. My analyses are also products of my location and outsourcing of housecleaning in a specific context: contemporary urban living in two cultures. Therefore, my position and findings may not be generalisable. However, they offer some fresh perspectives on meanings of paid domestic work, meanings that have significance for a movement whose chief, more privileged, protagonists in its earliest waves found time for it because someone else was doing their domestic work as well as marching shoulder-to-shoulder with them (Schwartz, 2015).

My goal was to understand the meanings of the work for local and/or in-country migrant service-users and workers in two contrasting cultures and consider how that could inform the relation between Western feminism and paid domestic work. This aim might have been better served by an ethnographic methodology, but applying this in two settings within my doctoral timescale was not possible (see Chapter 2). My primary data included qualitative semi-structured interviews with four groups of women. Even though such conversations are not 'natural', they often provide rich descriptive data, through which researchers can glean a sense of the context of people's lives and experiences, and the meanings people ascribe to them (Miller and Glassner, 1998; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). Also, by interviewing more women than I intended and exploring the social worlds from which my samples were drawn – media reports to internet discussions, and talking about my work to anyone who showed an interest, I was able to collect sufficient evidence to do the analysis. Everyone I met – from the respondents to chance acquaintances – had a story to tell about 'mundane' housecleaning – from disproval of outsourced cleaning to having a cleaner or knowing an 'interesting' woman who cleaned, or about their notions of cleanliness and cleaning. As time went by, the repetition of themes in these real-life accounts strengthened my confidence in my analysis.

I have pointed out several drawbacks of my research and the research process at various points in this thesis (Chapters 2–7). The one that remains is also the most noteworthy. In retrospect, I should have interviewed the UK service-providers first as many significant issues came to light in these interviews, and I regret not being able to explore those in greater depth in India or in the interviews with the service-users. '[T]he most critical questions about

the status quo' are more likely to spring from viewpoints of less privileged groups (Harding, 1993, cited in Letherby, 2003:46). This was not the only reason for my regret. While these women were less privileged than the academics, they themselves were privileged compared with the Indian service-providers. Thus their experiences of doing what is generally referred to as 'dirty work' appeared to challenge Western feminist orthodoxies. That is, while they were dealing with dirt in a classed society, it is a society in which 'class' itself has become a 'dirty' word (e.g. see Hebson, 2009). This situation, in which people – whatever their attitudes – at least overtly try to behave in an egalitarian way, revealed possibilities and meanings of work that might have been difficult to discern in situations complicated by racial/caste exploitation or vast socio-economic disparities.

So can paid domestic work be reconciled with feminism? The question is as old as feminism itself and in every wave of the movement some feminists have argued for the marketisation of domestic work (see Bowman and Cole, 2014; Hardyment, 1988; Magnus, 1934a,b) while others remain unconvinced (see Chapter 1). My findings also do not supply an answer that can be signed, sealed and put away as yet, as they raise further questions. First, my research indicates, people's notions of 'personal' work, on what can and cannot be outsourced and why vary. Second, beyond a point, many respondents desired order and/or cleanliness, coming home to a clean house felt good, that is, the outcomes of housework were much valued, even by those who considered its processes mundane. These aspects require further research among other samples, including men, to understand better the social meanings of care work. My thesis also raises further questions around commodification of housework. For instance, in an 'advanced' society such as the UK, what kind of formalisation/regulation would be attractive for women such as *Charlotte* and *Corinne* to work above-board? Is it possible for cleaning to be done as *work* in more than one way? What happens when a declared service-provider working alone has ambitions to grow *her* business? What about the prospects of *her* subcontractors? Although the quasi-agency model that I found showed possibilities, it was not without problems (e.g. three of the four women were using zero-hour contracts; see Appendix E). What can we expect to pay for housework/care *work* in a just society? How can (low-wage) self-employment become a legitimate option to employment, since everyone does not want to be an 'employee' (see Chapter 6)? Are contracts enabling or disabling? Answers to these questions would feed into broader debates about social understandings of dirty–

clean work (see Chapter 4) and the emancipatory potential of cleaning done as *work* in marketised and/or social protectionist regimes (Polanyi's two 'poles': see Fraser, 2013).

In a gendered rewriting of Polanyi's *Great Transformation* (double movement), Fraser argues emancipation does not fully map onto social protection, because the latter shields against exposure and not domination. Rather, emancipation is an 'ambivalent' third force that can align with either social protection or capitalism, depending on context and the social group whose emancipation is at stake. Fraser sees feminism's task as 'envision[ing] arrangements for re-embedding markets that simultaneously serve to overcome domination' (2013:237; see also Folbre (1995) for a similar debate on pro-/anti-marketisation of care). Therefore, despite its limitations, my research suggests possibilities for reconciliation between feminism and paid domestic work. '[P]art of the magic of the women's movement is to undermine established ways of thinking' (Smith, 2002:203), and feminist thinking itself is not immune from this 'edict' (Ahlander and Bahr, 1995; Fraser, 2013). My findings show that both the feminist unease around paid domestic work and the gaps in the research prevent recognising that the exploitation in this work is not fixed and stable but contingent on certain societal assumptions of ourselves, others and work. In the rest of this concluding chapter, I summarise my findings to support my proposition.

The case for reconciliation

My findings suggest that first, paid domestic work per se is not a 'problem' that can be wished away; for various reasons people continue to outsource and provide domestic services, including desiring some order and cleanliness in private (and public) spaces. Current feminist understandings about the association between outsourced cleaning and gender equality and class/race divisions among women are Western-centric as they often are based on a particular group of service-users: middle-class nuclear dual-career households (see Chapter 3).

Second, separating out the various forms of paid domestic work (Neetha, 2009) should enable consideration of transformative feminist solutions[222] to the paid domestic work 'problem'. My findings confirm prior observations that live-out work is the way forward. In addition, I have shown that a particular form of live-out work, declared self-employment, enabled transforming domestic work from *labour* into *work* (see Chapters 1, 5 and 6. Appendix G provides a summary of the findings). Bailly and colleagues, who favour the organisational fragmentation-for-efficiency approach[223] note that the 'complexity and specificity of individual households are likely to be obstacles to [Taylorised] industrialisation' (2013:316). My findings show that this same reason underpins the need to recognise that good-quality paid-for housecleaning incorporates responsivity and has better chances of being realised when cleaning is done as *work* rather than as 'professionalised and industrialised' *labour*. Moreover, if live-in work specifically was discouraged, some concerns at least might be alleviated. Albin (2012) notes the areas where the ILO convention for domestic work falls short (because it tries to follow the Fordist model of regulation) is mostly in areas that concern live-in workers, such as being on call 24 hours and immunity from prosecution of diplomats who abuse their employees. Thus, while agreeing that domestic work needs to be considered as 'work like no other' in the present, she argues the ILO's stance is half-hearted. For real benefits for domestic workers the ILO needs to look beyond mainstream regulation models. Even if Albin's proposal came to fruition, I am sceptical about its uptake by states. For instance, why should Arab employers be allowed to bring their domestic help when they come to holiday in the UK (BBC Radio 4, 2016b)? Why should they not draw on local documented and declared service-providers when in the UK? Is it because such state policies are not simply about ensuring the welfare of domestic helpers of the UK's wealthy Arab guests or tourists but about wider UK–Arab relations? Moreover, the convention does not comprehensively address injustices of misrecognition, for instance, it remains ambivalent over payment in kind (Albin and Mantouvalou, 2012). This form of payment is rooted in cultural understandings of paid domestic work as an extension of the service-user's

---

[222] Adopting Fraser's (1996, 2013) terminology.
[223] As also Bowman and Cole (2014) and, in part, Meagher (2003); see Chapter 6.

unpaid work,[224] and the power-maintaining discourse of 'mutual dependency' (see Chapter 7). Thus Albin's suggestion and other UK feminist advocacy regarding the legal status of foreign live-in workers (e.g. Lalani, 2011) fall in the category of affirmative solutions. Exploitation of other live-in (or live-out) workers in Saudi Arabia (Varia, 2011) would still be of concern. Since practices of exploitation are similar across the world (Mattila, 2011; see Chapter 1), a global feminist theory of domestic work, which builds on prior context-specific analyses is timely.

Third, the condition of live-out work as the way forward depends on how much participatory parity it affords the service-provider (see Chapter 7). In India, the illiterate (but not necessarily uneducated) live-out service-provider with scant resources, doing cleaning as very-low-paid *labour* (see Chapter 5) within a market with a predominantly informal configuration, had little control over the structure of *her* work. Certainly many women were able to stand up to exploitative service-users and assert themselves in their patriarchal private spaces. Cleaning as *labour*, however, allowed few possibilities of participatory parity as *her* reflexivity remained trapped in the web of the 'mutual dependency' discourse, social understandings of manual work as incompatible with middle-class/upper-caste status (Ray and Qayum, 2009/2010) and patriarchal hierarchies in private and public spaces. In contrast, in the UK, the literate and educated cleaning service-provider with prior work experience who was trying to do cleaning as *work* within a social space with comparatively less-rigid hierarchies (see Chapter 7), was able to offer bespoke housekeeping services (Chapter 5). By bending malestream 'good business practices', such as refusing to do written contracts, they were able to achieve some participatory parity (see Chapter 6). Full expression of cleaning as *work* will be possible only when cultural injustices such as those discussed in Chapter 7 are addressed to allow distributive parity as well as parity in the control of the work process.

Fourth, some feminists have been arguing for recognition of care work for decades (e.g. see Fraser, 2013; Glenn, 2000, Tronto, 2010). But the desired impact is taking time because this body of work jostles for space with other feminist stances which denigrate the same work and argue that women's self-

---

[224] Which it is not; service-users often expect more from their service-provider. Nor is it an extension of the service-provider's unpaid housework (see Chapter 5).

actualisation can only happen in the privileged echelons of the (male) public space (e.g. Slaughter, 2012). My findings agree with Johnson and Lloyd's (2004) position that feminists need to challenge the notion that care work comprises only immanent activities that do nothing for the development of the self, as well as challenging the myth of independence (see Chapter 3; also Glenn, 2000:93). How is this being done? In my research, none of the women belonged to a union or collective. But published research on domestic workers' unionisation report some success in efforts to improve work conditions (Bapat, 2014; Bernardino-Costa, 2014; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2001)) both on an individual and collective basis. In Brazil, these efforts drew on feminist principles. Alliances with parallel feminist struggles, however, have not always been successful, because feminism views domestic work as inherently oppressive (Bernardino-Costa, 2014). Also, feminism supports the male model of unionisation, where hierarchies persist and can prove detrimental to workers (Chigateri, 2007). In an account of two case-studies of American child-carers' advocacy projects, Macdonald and Merrill (2002) noted that if the workers had used a combined vocabulary of skill (to address redistribution) and virtue (to address recognition) rather than either/or, they would have been more successful. However, skill itself is a socially constructed concept whose boundaries and meanings keep shifting to maintain certain selves in a privileged position *vis à vis* disadvantaged Others; it is a concept of division rather than cohesion between people (Cockburn, 1991). My elaboration of the structure of paid-for cleaning in the UK and India suggests both recognition and distribution can be addressed with one vocabulary, the unifying vocabulary of *work* as opposed to the divisive vocabulary of *labour*.

When the unit of analysis is *work* instead of labour, its 'invisible' component, mental labour, such as responsiveness of the live-out cleaning service-provider, becomes visible and more valuable.[225] Moreover, the link between paid and unpaid housework can be broken as responsiveness becomes a property of the space between the service-user and service-provider, rather than 'just an extension' of nurturing feminine capabilities. It can be argued that my suggestion will negatively affect undocumented people's access to work or increase the vulnerability of undocumented domestic workers to underground

---

[225] Also in other situations, for instance, the emotional intelligence of the care worker (BBC Radio 4, 2015).

exploitation (Anderson, 2001:32). My concern here as a diasporic person is why should an undocumented status exist? Keeping channels open in care work for undocumented workers is not helpful for either the status of the work or for the workers themselves, whose status is a consequence of wider political decisions. While helping those who are caught in the situation (see Lalani, 2011), rather than advocating piecemeal cures or affirmative strategies with limited benefits, broader-level feminist activism should aim for transformative preventive measures as described by Fraser (1996, 2013), such as calling for state policies that would improve work conditions for local people (Anderson and Ruhs, 2012).

Fifth, participatory parity will require rethinking of the predominantly gendered 'dirty' or 'ghetto' conception of paid domestic work, taking into account factors such as: (i) besides the fact that men also do paid domestic work (see Chapter 1), many women who do it live and work alongside men (fathers, brothers, husbands, partners) who are also comparatively disadvantaged, and their situation also impacts on the women's (non)-chances of improving their life situation (Johnson, 2002; Warren, 2000; see Chapter 6); (ii) as the example of cleaning shows, misrecognition and feminist conundrums around it are largely grounded in beliefs and views of the demand side rather than the lived experiences of service-providers; (iii) the notion that the work is unique because it is situated completely within the private sphere is not unequivocally shared by service-providers (see Chapters 1, 5–7); (iv) as my findings show (in support of previous research, e.g. Du Preez *et al.*, 2010:407; Milkman *et al.*, 1998), class mediates racialisation of domestic work; and (v) emphasising race as the analytical category essentialises race as a 'natural' attribute and risks erasing the material and cultural class divisions in 'homogeneous' appearing social groups.

Sixth, the meanings attributed to their work by the service-providers (see Chapter 6) extends the contribution of my research to the wider literature interrogating the meanings of work, as well as the sub-set that challenges the top-down ideologies we take for granted today (Lucas, 2011; McNally, 1979; Rose, 2004/2014:25; Torlina, 2011:54). My findings are in agreement with previous feminist arguments that in the case of housework, it is not the work itself but the conditions of work that make it 'dirty' (Delphy and Leonard, 1992; Magnus, 1934b; Romero, 2002; see Chapter 4). However, fulfilment of workers' material 'rights' within prevalent malestream models of work is not good enough

here – what is required is the dismantling of dichotomies of whole areas of work into *work* and *labour*.

> Many of our depictions of physical and service work – popular accounts but more than a few scholarly treatments as well – tend toward the one-dimensional. Work is seen as ennobling or dehumanizing; it is occasion for opportunity or exploitation; it functions as an arena for identity development or class consciousness' … but 'work' has 'complex meanings … in the lives of people like [my mother the waitress]. (Rose, 2004/2014:25)

Also, cleaning, like many other kinds of work will remain a job that can be done in a variety of ways: unpaid, paid, as a favour for a friend or family or even for pocket money. So complete eradication of the injustices of recognition would require appreciation of both the unpaid and paid versions of the work as well as the differences between them, including thinking about whether paid versions of such work can be done by anyone seeking to earn a living.

Thus, I conclude that the issue at stake for feminism(s) is not just some women doing the demeaning work of other women but the classed evolution of the very meanings of work in contemporary marketised and/or protectionist societies. And to the Mumsnetters who thought housecleaning was a stupid research topic, I can firmly say: 'Not until the meanings of cleaning work and the conditions under which it is done are duly transformed from conditions of *labour* to conditions of *work*.'

Appendices

Appendix A: Recruitment tools

Emails sent to potential respondents

UK service-users

Dear _____

I am a PhD student at the Centre for Women's Studies, University of York. I am looking for participants for my PhD research project 'The problem that has a name: can "paid domestic work" be reconciled with feminism?' from among female academic staff at UK universities who have an academic interest in feminism/gender who may have used or use the services of a domestic cleaner. The attached information sheet provides an overview of the study and participation details (the interview will require about one hour). Background information on the study is also available on my webpage at the University of York website (http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/researchst/lotikas.htm) and is reproduced below for your convenience.

I'd be grateful if you could let me know whether you are able to help me or you cannot participate in my research.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Lotika

Lotika Singha

PhD Student

Centre for Women's Studies

University of York

Heslington, York

YO10 5DD

UK

Mobile: 07901166581

Indian service-users

Dear _____

Please may I introduce myself as a PhD student from the Centre for Women's Studies, University of York in the UK. I am looking for participants for my cross-cultural PhD research project 'The problem that has a name: can "paid domestic work" be reconciled with feminism?' from among female academic staff in Chandigarh who have an interest in gender and who use the services of domestic workers. I have attached here an information sheet that provides an overview of my study and participation details. Background information on the study is also available on my webpage at the University of York website (http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/researchst/lotikas.htm). I would like to assure confidentiality will be maintained throughout.

I would be very grateful if you could participate in my project. I will be in Chandigarh from 28 January to 15 February. If you could meet me for about 1.5 hours for an interview it would help me very much. Please could you let me know by email (ls810@york.ac.uk) or by phone (0044 790 1166581) if you would be willing to participate in my study.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely

Lotika Singha

Mrs Lotika Singha

PhD Student

Centre for Women's Studies

University of York

Heslington, York

YO10 5DD

UK

Mob: 0044 7901166581

UK service-providers

Dear _____

I am a PhD student at the University of York but I live in Newcastle-under-Lyme. I am doing research on paid domestic work (particularly cleaning) and women. I found your contact details on your website (XXXXXXX XXXXX XXXXXX) while searching for participants for my research to talk to about your work and how it fits in with your life. All information would be used anonymously and confidentiality maintained. The interview would need about one hour's time. I have attached here a study information sheet if you require more details at this stage about the interview. Details of my study and a picture of me are also given on my university webpage at

http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/researchst/lotikas.htm

   I will pay £20 for the hour's interview as I am conscious that you will be giving me your precious time specially for my research.

   Please would you be willing to help with my research? I can travel to meet you for the interview at a time and place that is convenient for you, on a weekday or the weekend.

I would be very grateful for your cooperation.

Thank you

Lotika

Mrs Lotika Singha

PhD Student

Centre for Women's Studies

University of York

Heslington, York

YO10 5DD

UK

Mob: 07901166581

Study information sheets

UK service-users

<div align="center">**STUDY INFORMATION SHEET**</div>

Provisional title: The problem that has a name: can 'paid domestic work' be reconciled with feminism?

I am conducting this study as part of my PhD in Women's Studies programme at the University of York, UK. Paid domestic work is an industry that is fraught with problems that are rooted in its long history of servitude. My study aims to explore whether and how feminism today can build on the early feminist work that lifted housework and personal care work out of the shadows to show that it was 'real' work to raise the status of paid domestic work. Your participation in the research will help to advance current debates about paid domestic work and its implications for continued gender and class or caste inequalities. The study has been approved by the relevant University of York ethics committee. For further background information, please see page 2 or my webpage: http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cws/researchst/lotikas.htm

Participation details

I will first ask you to fill in a consent form agreeing to take part in the study. If you have any questions you can ask me either before doing this or at any time during or after the interview. I will then ask you to complete a short questionnaire and to take part in an interview. In the interview I would like to ask your opinions and views about certain feminist concepts about paid domestic work, drawing on your own lived experiences as an employer of a domestic worker. I will ask for your permission to record all the conversations that take place between you and me while filling the questionnaire and the interview. The interview will last about one and a half to two hours.

The questionnaire and interview data (in the form of quotes) will be analysed and used in my thesis and any related publications after being anonymised so that you will not be identifiable in any way. I will also remove any other data that may specifically identify you. I will be using pseudonyms for quotes, which you can choose yourself or I can choose it for you. I may also use the data in future related research under the same conditions of anonymity. I will also maintain confidentiality with regard to your participation and the data provided. If you wish to see the transcript of the interview or findings of the study, you can indicate this on the consent form.

Your participation would be completely voluntary and if you wish to withdraw from the research at any point before, during or after the interview you will be able to do so without any cause for concern. If you have any other questions you can ask me at any time, either now or later. My contact details are given below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Lotika Singha

PhD student, Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, York YO10 5DD
Email: *ls810@york.ac.uk*

Indian service-users

<center>**STUDY INFORMATION SHEET**</center>

Provisional title: The problem that has a name: can 'paid domestic work' be reconciled with feminism?

I am conducting this study as part of my PhD in Women's Studies programme at the University of York, UK. Paid domestic work is an industry that is fraught with problems that are rooted in its long history of servitude. My study aims to explore whether and how feminism and being sensitised to women/gender today can build on the early feminist work that lifted housework and personal care work out of the shadows to show that it was 'real' work to raise the status of paid domestic work. Your participation in the research will help to advance current debates about paid domestic work and its implications for continued gender and class or caste inequalities. The study has been approved by the relevant University of York ethics committee.

Participation details

I will first ask you to fill in a consent form agreeing to take part in the study. If you have any questions you can ask me either before doing this or at any time during or after the interview. I will then ask you to complete a short questionnaire and to take part in an interview. In the interview I would like to ask your opinions and views about certain feminist concepts about paid domestic work, drawing on your own lived experiences as an employer of domestic workers. I will ask for your permission to record all the conversations that take place between you and me while filling the questionnaire and the interview. The interview will last about one and half hours.

The questionnaire and interview data (in the form of quotes) will be analysed and used in my thesis and any related publications after being anonymised so that you will not be identifiable in any way. I will also remove any other data that may specifically identify you. I will be using pseudonyms for quotes, which you can choose yourself or I can choose it for you. I may also use the data in future related research under the same conditions of anonymity. I will also maintain confidentiality with regard to your participation and the data provided. If you wish to see the transcript of the interview or findings of the study, you can indicate this on the consent form.

Your participation would be completely voluntary and if you wish to withdraw from the research at any point before, during or after the interview you will be able to do so without any cause for concern. If you have any other questions you can ask me at any time, either now or later. My contact details are given below.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Lotika Singha

PhD student
Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, York YO10 5DD
Email: *ls810@york.ac.uk*

UK service-providers

STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Provisional title: The problem that has a name: can 'paid domestic work' be reconciled with feminism?

I am doing this study as part of my PhD in Women's Studies programme at the University of York, UK. My study aims to explore whether and how feminism today can build on the early feminist work that lifted housework and personal care work out of the shadows to show that it was 'real' work to raise the status of paid domestic work. As a woman who does this work, your participation in my research will help to find out more about the working conditions and concerns of paid domestic workers and possible solutions to further improve the conditions of paid domestic work. The study has been approved by the relevant University of York research ethics committee.

If you decide to participate in the study

I will first ask you to fill in a consent form agreeing to take part in the study. If you have any questions you can ask me either before doing this or at any time during or after the interview. I will then ask you to complete a short questionnaire and to take part in an interview. In the interview I would like to ask your opinions and views about paid domestic work and what may be done to improve the conditions of paid domestic work, drawing on your own lived experiences of being a domestic worker. I will ask for your permission to record all the conversations that take place between you and me while filling the questionnaire and the interview. The interview will last about one hour.

What will happen if you change your mind?

You can change your mind at any time about taking part in the study. Even after filling the questionnaire or during the interview. You will not need to give me a reason.

What will happen to the information you provide?

Your name and your personal views will be only known to me. I will remove any information that may identify you (like your name) from the interview records. All the information you provide will be used anonymously and confidentially. So a false name, which you can choose yourself or let me choose, will be used if anything that you have said is included in my thesis. If you wish to see the transcript of the interview or findings of the study you can indicate this in the consent form.

If you have any other questions you can ask me at any time, either now or later. Thank you for your cooperation.

Lotika Singha

PhD student, Centre for Women's Studies, University of York, York YO10 5DD

email: *ls810@york.ac.uk*

Indian service-providers

The following study information was conveyed verbally after introducing myself.

शोध अध्ययन की जानकारी

परिचय

शोध अध्ययन का वर्तमान शीर्षकः भारत और ब्रिटेन में घरेलू कामगारों और नियोक्ताओं के बीच सामाजिक और व्यावसायिक संबंध की तुलना

यह स्टडी (अध्ययन) मैं यॉर्क विश्वविद्यालय की स्त्री-अध्ययन में पी.एच-डी डिग्री अपनाने के लिए कर रही हूँ। इस स्टडी में मैं आप जैसी महिलायों कि रोज़ की सामाजिक एवमं आर्थिक स्तिथी और काम के बारे में समझना चाहती हूँ। इससे आप जैसी महिलायों की स्थिति में आगे सुधार लाने के उपाय ढूंढने में मद्द होगी। यॉर्क विश्वविद्यालय की उचित अनुसंधान नैतिकता समिति ने इस अध्ययन को मंजूरी दी है।

भाग लेना की मंज़ूरी देने के बाद क्या होगा?

अध्ययन के बारे में जानकारी पढ़ने के बाद यदि आप कोई सवाल पूछना चाहती हैं तो पूध सकती हैं। फिर आप भागीदार के लिए सुचित सहमति पत्र पर हस्ताक्षर करेंगी। उसके बाद मैं आपकी घरेलू स्थिति और काम के बारे में एक प्रश्नावली भरूगीं। फिर, मैं आपके खुद के अनुभवों के बारे में भी सवाल पूधना चाहूँगी। आपकी अनुमति के साथ, इण्टरव्यू को अंकित (रिकाड) किया जाएगा। इण्टरव्यू के लिए ऐक धँटे के करीब लगेंगे। आपके विचार और समय के लिए मैं आभारी हूँ।

यदि आप अपना मन बदलना चाहैं

आप बिना किसी कारण दीये, किसी भी समय आगे भाग लेने से इनकार कर सकती हैं।

आपके विचारों का इस्तेमाल कैसे होगा?

आपके व्यक्तिगत विवरण का पता केवल मुझे होगा। आपके विचारों का इस्तेमाल गोपनीयता के साथ किया जाएगा। इसका मतलब है कि इण्टरव्यू का प्रतिलेख में, और पी. एच-डी शोध प्रबंध (थिसिस) और संबंधित प्रकाशनों में, उपनाम का इस्तमाल किया जाएगा। यदी आप इण्टरव्यू का प्रतिलेख सहमति के लिए पढ़ना चाहती हो और स्टडी की निष्कर्ष की सूचना चाहती हो, सुचित सहमति पत्र में इसका अनुरोध कर सकती हैं। यदी आपके ध्यान में और कोई सवाल आता है, आप किसी भी समय मुझसे पूछ सकती हैं। मेरा पता नीचे दिया है। आपके सहयोग के लिए धन्यवाद।

लोतिका सिंघा, पी.एच-डी छात्र

डाक-पता: Lotika Singha, Centre for Women Studies, University of York, York, YO10 5DD, UK

Information provided on university webpage during the fieldwork phase

The paid domestic work industry continues to flourish despite being associated with the worst kinds of exploitation in both traditional feudal and industrial as well as modern capitalist societies. Within Europe, it is increasingly seen as part of a multi-pronged approach towards work–life balance for the middle-class worker. Even within feminism similar proposals have been made in the past: in *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan recommended that hiring a housekeeper was one way the higher-educated middle-class woman could 'have it all'. She herself drew on paid domestic help while writing her historic text.

Since paid domestic workers are overwhelmingly (migrant) women, many feminists denounce it as it continues to be seen as a site of women's oppression or an impediment to women's liberation, and for reproducing the 'isms' that divide women and society in general. Yet some other feminists – living alone or with someone else – employ domestic workers or do the work themselves, or argue that commodification of domestic work can be a route to gender equality. A major part of the feminist unease surrounding paid domestic work is based on the assumption that this work is unique in the way it reproduces racial, class and gender inequalities: many feminist analyses emphasise the exploitation experienced by many (but not all) domestic workers and situate this work within 'dirty' work and label it as immanent work. However, my personal experience of doing housework and employing a domestic worker (where unlike the stereotypical picture that emerges from the literature, I, the employer, am a migrant Third World woman and my domestic worker is a local White woman), my MA dissertation data, other anecdotal personal accounts heard in person or on radio programmes and a close reading of published qualitative research have shown me this is not a universal feeling. There are women (and men) who derive pleasure from doing some household tasks (not just cooking) or personal service work. Some just get on with it as a part of life, of maintaining one's living space. At the same time, there is much low-wage work that is performed in public spaces that shares the same 'soul-destroying' characteristics as have been described for paid domestic work. Finally, there are many other choices we make in our private lives that result in or are made possible only by the exploitation of someone else, for example using advanced technology.

I therefore believe that for those who do paid domestic work either out of choice or not out of choice, the stigma attached to this work and the claim that it is dead-end work are preventing significant holistic improvement in the lives of domestic workers, despite the recommendations to material and structural improvements in working conditions being made by the International Labour Organization.

My PhD research project aims to rethink some of the current epistemological feminist assumptions about (paid) domestic work and its unique role in impeding women's liberation. I hope to do this by exploring how (i) feminists in the UK and India, who have an academic understanding of feminism and social inequalities and who employ a paid domestic worker and (ii) how women who perform paid domestic work and also consider themselves feminists negotiate paid domestic work contribute to the social status of the work and the worker.

Consent forms

UK service-users and service-providers and Indian service-users

<div align="center">

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORM

</div>

Provisional title of study: Can paid domestic work be reconciled with feminism? OR The feminist problem that has a name: paid domestic work

☐ I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I agree that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

☐ I agree that questionnaire data and the data gathered during the interview may be stored <u>after it has been anonymised</u>. I also agree to the use of anonymised quotes from the interview in Lotika Singha's PhD thesis and related presentations/publications.

☐ I agree to the interview being audio recorded.

☐ I do wish to be sent a copy of the transcript for this interview for my approval and amendments (withdraw statements or provide further information if necessary)

☐ I do wish to be sent a copy of the findings of the study.*

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____ _____ _____

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature

*If you have requested a copy of the transcript/study findings please indicate how you would like it to be sent to you:

By Post:

_____

By Email:

_____

Verbal consent was obtained after explaining the points listed in the translated form below (except about the request for a summary of the findings – see Chapter 3).

भागीदार के लिए सूचित सहमति पत्र

शोध अध्ययन का वर्तमान शीषॆकः भारत और ब्रिटेन में घरेलू कामगारों और नियोक्ताओं के बीच सामाजिक और व्यावसायिक संबंध की तुलना

☐ इस स्टडी के बारे में दी गई जानकारी मैं समझ गई हूँ। मुझे सवाल पूछने का अवसर मिला है और मैं समझ गई हूँ कि मैं किसी भी समय सवाल पूछ सकती हूँ। इस अध्ययन में मैं अपनी इच्छा से भाग ले रही हूँ और मैं समझती हूँ कि मैं, बिना किसी कारण दीये, किसी भी समय आगे भाग लेने से इनकार कर सकती हूँ।

☐ मुझे मंजूर है कि फारम और इंटरव्यू में दिये गए मेरे विचार गोपनीयता के साथ कुछ समय के लिए जमा किए जाएंगे। जमा करने से पहले उपनाम का प्रयोग कीया जाएगा। मुफे मंजूर है कि मेरे विचारों का प्रयोग लोतिका सिंघा की पी. एच-डी शोध प्रबंध (थिसिस) और संबंधित प्रकाशनों मे किया जा सकता है।

☐ मुफे मंजूर है कि इण्टरव्यू अंकित (रिकार्ड) की जा सक्ति है।

☐ इण्टरव्यू का प्रतिलेख मैं सहमति के लिए पढ़ना चाहूँगी और मैं प्रतिलेख मे दिया गए बयान बदला सकती हूँ या मिटवा सकती हूँ।

☐ मैं चाहती हूँ कि इस शोध अध्ययन का परिणाम मुझे भेजा जाऐ।*

_____   _____   _____

शोध में भाग लेने वालो का नाम   दिनांक   शोध में भाग लेने वाले का हस्ताक्षर

_____   _____   _____

शोधकर्ता का नाम   दिनांक   शोधकर्ता का हस्ताक्षर

*यदि आपने इण्टरव्यू का प्रतिलेख का अनुरोध किया है, कृपया अपना ई-मेल या डाक-पता इधर लिख दीजीऐ: _____

Appendix B: Data collection tools

Note: I used 'employers' and 'employees' in these documents because prior to my own fieldwork, I was accepting the assumptions around these roles as presented in the published literature.

Questionnaire for UK service-users

Questionnaire for employers

Personal details

Name:		Pseudonym (to be filled later)	
Age:	Personal status: Single Married Other:		Religion:
Ethnicity:	Living with partner (M/F)		
No. of children:	Age: _____ Daughter/son	Age: _____ Daughter/son	
	Age: _____ Daughter/son	Age: _____ Daughter/son	

House details:
 	
    Council tax band: _____
 	
    Bedrooms: _____   Bathrooms/toilets:_____   Reception rooms: _____
    Garden: _____   Verandah/balcony: _____   Television: _____
    Fridge: _____   Microwave: _____   Washing machine:_____
    Dryer: _____   Dishwasher: _____   Vacuum cleaner: _____
    Car: _____ Scooter: _____ Cycle: _____			

Highest qualification:		Employed/self-employed?	
Current job title:		Place of work:	
Your take-home income each month: <£1,500 / £1,501 - 2,000 / £2,001- 3,000 / £3,001-4,000 / >4,000			
Total household income per month: <£1,500 / £1,501 - 2,000 / £2,001- 3,000 / £3,001-4,000 / >4,000			

Who does what in the house most of the time?

Task	Who does this task most of the time?		
	You	**Family member or friend (please specify who it is: spouse/partner/daughter/son)**	**A paid worker**
Planning what to eat			
Food shopping			
Cooking meals			
Tea/coffee in between meals			
Cleaning the kitchen			
Washing dishes or filling dishwasher			
Putting away things or emptying dishwasher			
Vacuuming			

How many times a week is vacuuming done? _____

Continued – Please turn over

Task	Who does this task most of the time?		
	You	Family member or friend (please specify who it is: spouse/partner/daughter/son)	A paid worker
Dusting			

How many times a week is dusting done? _____

General tidying up			

How many times a week is it done? _____

Cleaning bathrooms/toilets			

How many times a week are the bathrooms/toilets cleaned? _____

Putting out garbage			
Window cleaning – inside			

How many times a week is it done? _____

Window cleaning – outside			

How many times a month is it done? _____ Pay for it? _____

Recycling			
Handwashing			
Using the washing machine			
Using the dryer/hanging out washing			
Putting away washing			
Ironing			
Caring for indoor plants			
Mowing the lawn			
Other gardening			

Continued – Please turn over

Task	Who does this task most of the time?		
	You	Family member or friend (please specify who it is: spouse/partner/daughter/son)	A paid worker
Household finances:			
Individual finances, managed separately			
Partly separate and partly pooled			
Joint finances			
Shopping for insurance(s)			
Playing with the children			
Physical care of children			
Helping with homework			
Taking children to school			
Car care: washing			
Car care: servicing/MOT			
Caring for a relative: (who?)			
Managing care for a relative: (who?)			
Painting/decorating			
Other household maintenance tasks (DIY)			
Day-to-day care of pet (if any)			
Management of domestic worker			
Generally making sure the household is running fine!			

Some basic questions about your work

Regular raise in income	No/Yes
Required to give notice before taking leave	No/Yes
Paid holidays?	No/Yes
Maternity leave (when you had your child(ren))	No/Yes
Has the amount of work you do in your current job changed over the years	No/Decreased/Increased
If it has increased have your wages increased proportionally?	Yes/No
Your workplace	Shared space/private office

Toilet: shared/private |

Continued – Please turn over

314

Information about domestic workers (except cleaner)

Have you employed:

Au pair: _____; Nanny: _____; Childminder: _____; Babysitter: _____; or used a nursery: _____

Gardener: _____

Any other worker: _____

Information about current cleaner

Age (if known or approximate): _____   Male/Female   Live-in/live-out   Ethnicity _____

Years/months worked for you: _____

Written contract	No/Yes Why?
Hours per day worked for you	
Approx. pay (per job or fixed amount)	
How do you pay?	Cash/Cheque/Bank
Who decided how to pay?	You/the worker
Did you talk about professional indemnity insurance or National Insurance payments or pension?	No/Yes
Do you give a raise?	No/Yes How? (Talk about it)
Paid holidays Did you talk about when he/she was taking up the job or it happened later when he/she needed holidays?	No/Yes Sick leave No/Yes
Required to give notice before taking leave	No/Yes
Maternity leave	Paid/unpaid
Do you pay for the times when you are away?	No/Yes
Has the amount of work he/she does changed over time?	Same/Decreased/Increased
If it has increased what about wages?	Same/Increased
Does he or she sometimes work overtime?	No/Yes How much?
Do you pay separately for this?	Yes/No
Do you provide the materials for his/her use?	Yes/No
Is he/she allowed to use any household devices, eg vacuum cleaner?	Yes/No

If this person is not your first cleaner, how many cleaners have you had? _____

Why did you need to change? (Talk about it)

Questionnaire for Indian service-users

Questionnaire

Personal details

Name:	Pseudonym (to be filled later)
Age:	Personal status: Single Married Other:	Religion:
Ethnicity:	Living with partner (M/F)	

No. of children:	Age: _____ Daughter/son	Age: _____ Daughter/son
	Age: _____ Daughter/son	Age: _____ Daughter/son

House details:
Approx. area: _____

Bedrooms: _____	Bathrooms/toilets:_____	Reception rooms: _____
Garden: _____	Verandah/balcony: ____	Television: _____
Fridge: _____	Microwave: _____	Washing machine:_____
Dryer: _____	Dishwasher: _____	Vacuum cleaner: _____
Car: _____	Scooter: _____	Cycle: _____

Highest qualification:	Employed/self-employed?
Current job title:	Place of work: University College Other

Your take-home income each month: Rs 20-50,000   Rs 50,000 - 1 lakh   > Rs 1 lakh

Total household income per month: Rs 20-50,000   Rs 50,000 - 1 lakh   > Rs 1 lakh

Who does what in the house most of the time?

Task	Who does this task most of the time?		
	You	Family member (who? spouse/partner/daughter/son)	A paid worker
Planning what to eat			
Food shopping			
Cooking			
Tea/coffee in between meals			
Cleaning the kitchen			
Washing dishes			
Hand washing of dishes			
Filling the dishwasher			
Emptying dishwasher			
Sweeping and mopping the house			

How many times a week is sweeping done? _____

Continued – Please turn over

Task	Who does this task most of the time?		
	You	**Family member (who? spouse/partner/daughter/son)**	**A paid worker**
Vacuuming			

How many times a week is vacuuming done? _____

Dusting			

How many times a week is dusting done? _____

Tidying up			

How many times a week is it done? _____

Cleaning bathrooms/toilets			

How many times a week are the bathrooms/toilets cleaned? _____

Putting out garbage			
Recycling			
Window cleaning – inside			

How many times a week is it done? _____

Window cleaning – outside			

How many times a month is it done? _____ Pay for it? _____

Handwashing of clothes			
Other washing: bed linen/curtains etc			
Using the washing machine			
Hanging out washing			
Using the dryer			
Putting away washing			
Ironing/starching			
Caring for indoor plants			
Mowing the lawn			

Continued – Please turn over

Task	Who does this task most of the time?		
	You	**Family member (who? spouse/partner/daughter/son)**	**A paid worker**
Other gardening			
Household finances:			
Individual finances, managed separately			
Partly separate and partly pooled			
Joint finances			
Shopping for insurance(s)			
Playing with the children			
Physical care of children			
Helping with homework			
Taking children to school			
Car care: washing			
Car care: servicing			
Caring for a relative: (who?)			
Managing care for a relative: (who?)			
Painting/decorating			
Other household maintenance tasks (DIY)			
Day-to-day care of pet (if any)			
Management of domestic worker			
Generally making sure the household is running fine!			

Some basic questions about your work

Regular rise in income	No/Yes
Required to give notice before taking leave	No/Yes
Paid holidays? How many?	No/Yes
Maternity leave (when you had your child(ren))	No/Yes
Has the amount of work you do in your current job changed over the years	No/Decreased/Increased
If it has increased what about your wages?	Same/Decreased/Increased
Your workplace	Shared space/private office Toilet: shared/private

Information about current domestic worker (1)[226]

Job title:

Age (if known or approximate): ____   Male/Female   Live-in/live-out   Ethnicity _____

Years/months worked for you: ____

Written contract	No/Yes Why?
Hours per day or week worked for you	
Approx. pay (per job or fixed amount)	
How do you pay?	Cash/Cheque/Bank
Who decided how to pay?	You/the worker
Do you need to declare it in your tax return?	No/Yes
Do you give a rise?	No/Yes How? (Talk about it)
Paid holidays Did you talk about when he/she was taking up the job or it happened later when he/she needed holidays?	No/Yes Sick leave No/Yes
Required to give notice before taking leave	No/Yes
Maternity leave	Paid/unpaid
Do you pay for the times when you are away?	No/Yes
Has the amount of work he/she does changed over time?	Same/Decreased/Increased
If it has increased what about wages?	Same/Increased
Does he or she sometimes work overtime?	No/Yes How much?
Do you pay separately for this?	Yes/No
Do you provide the materials for his/her use?	Yes/No
Is he/she allowed to use any household devices, e.g. vacuum cleaner?	Yes/No

If this person is not your first employee, how many employees have you had? _____

Why did you need to change? (Talk about it)

---

[226] Note: this page was repeated so that information for up to five service-providers could be recorded (see Chapters 2 and 4).

Interview schedule for service-users

1. I'd like to start by asking you about your own experience of being a working woman

- Why a working woman
- Work hours – contracted/worked; part-time/full-time/job share possible?
- Control over work hours/teaching schedule
- Typical working day
- Taking/thinking about work at home; switching off from work
- Doing extra-professional activities
- Work and sense of worth/identity
- Discrimination or harassment at work/politics of work
- Constraints/monitoring of work/anything you don't like
- Work fit in with your personal/family life: childcare (any worries about quality of childcare?), leisure, domestic work
- Deciding to hire a domestic worker

2. Can you tell me about your experience of housework?

- Childhood and first home
- What you like doing/what you don't like doing
- What could be going through your mind when you are doing housework?
- Adjectives to describe housework
- How do you value housework vs professional work
- Any effect of physical state (periods/menopause)

3. Can we now talk about your experience of hiring a domestic worker/cleaner?

- Cleanliness/personality/appearance
- Your decision or family decision?
- Agency/word of mouth
- Guidance before starting: wage/pensions/NI/professional indemnity insurance

- Negotiating wages and pay rises/forgetting to pay

- Deciding what she/he will do

- Cleaning materials and devices (vacuum cleaner): who decides what to buy?

- Checking/monitoring work

- Difference in opinion about what should be done

- Dealing with poor performance

- How does ___'s work compare with when you do it?

4. What happens when the cleaner doesn't come?

- Affordability

- The future: retirement, etc.?

5. How would you describe your relationship with your domestic worker?

- What are your feelings towards ___? Just a worker/friends/friendly

- Change in relationship over time

- How well do you know ___?

- Good/bad experiences: trust, safety

- Communication [first names? text messages?]

- Privacy

- Showing appreciation: Gift giving/taking/family events

- Any prep before ___ starts work

- Any aspect of cleaning you feel you can't ask ___ to do

- Refreshments

- Both are women: what else similar? What is different?

- Male cleaners

- Practices of separation: eating/utensils/sitting/clothes – charity shops

- Compare with relationship with non-teaching or non-academic staff in workplace

- Compare with relationship with cleaner in workplace

6. What does 'feminism' mean to you?

- Would you describe yourself as a feminist?

- What does 'having it all' include in your view? Domestic help

- Do you 'have it all'? Why and how?

- How do you find applying your feminism in your life: what is easy/what is hard?

- Make any difference to your relationship with _____?

- Any guilt, embarrassment, uncomfortable?

- What about childcare

- Any areas of personal life that are politically sensitive to talk about with feminist colleagues?

- Effect on children

7. One conclusion in the paid domestic work literature is that it allows one woman to become liberated at the cost of another woman's liberation.

- Compare your and ____'s exploitation

- Anything else in the home that you think of in terms of exploitation?

- Decision making: earning, income spending, family issues

- Being a mother/family member/friend/daughter

- Travelling

8. How does your employing ___ affect gender equality in the house?

- If everyone shared all the housework, would you still need to employ a domestic worker?

9. Considering all that we've discussed, who makes a good cleaner in your view?

- Can anyone do housework for a living?

- Maximum you would pay for it

- Agency vs freelance/having guidance/formalisation

Questionnaire and interview schedule for UK service-providers

Questionnaire

Personal details

Name:	Pseudonym:	
Age:	Personal status: Single Married Other:	Religion:
Ethnicity:	Living with partner (M/F)	
Children: _____	Age: _____ Son/daughter	
	Age: _____ Son/daughter	
	Age: _____ Son/daughter	
	Age: _____ Son/daughter	
Highest qualification: _____		
House details: Council tax band: _____		
Bedrooms: _____	Bathrooms/toilets:_____	
Other rooms: _____	Garden: _____	
Television: _____	Fridge: _____	
Microwave: _____	Washing machine:_____	
Dryer: _____	Dishwasher: _____	
Vacuum cleaner: _____	Car: _____	
Scooter: _____	Cycle: _____	
How much time does it take you to do your own housework? _____ per day/week		

Who does what in your <u>own home</u> most of the time?

Note: For the questions on childcare, please think back to the time when your child(ren) were young.

Task	Who does this task most of the time?	
	You	**Someone else (who?)**
Planning what to eat		
Food shopping		
Cooking meals		
Tea/coffee in between meals		
Cleaning the kitchen		
Washing dishes or filling dishwasher		
Putting away things or emptying dishwasher		
Vacuuming		

How many times a week do you vacuum? _____

Task	Who does this task most of the time?	
	You	**Someone else**
Dusting		

How many times a week is dusting done? _____

General tidying up		

How many times a week is it done? _____

Cleaning bathrooms/toilets		

How many times a week are the bathrooms/toilets cleaned? _____

Putting out garbage		
Window cleaning – inside		

How many times a week is it done? _____

Window cleaning – outside		

How many times a month is it done? _____

Recycling		
Handwashing		
Using the washing machine		
Using the dryer/hanging out washing		
Putting away washing		
Ironing		
Caring for indoor plants		
Mowing the lawn		
Other gardening		

Task	Who does this task most of the time?	
	You	**Someone else**
Household finances:		
Individual finances, managed separately		
Partly separate and partly pooled		
Joint finances		
Shopping for insurance(s)		
Playing with the children		
Physical care of children		
Helping with homework		
Taking children to school		
Car care: washing		
Car care: servicing/MOT		
Caring for a relative: (who?)		
Managing care for a relative: (who?)		
Painting/decorating		
Other household maintenance tasks (DIY)		
Day-to-day care of pet (if any)		
Generally making sure the household is running fine!		

Current employment details

1. Number of employers/clients: _____

2. Are you:

- Self-employed
- Employed by agency
- Both

3. Your household's total monthly take-home income:

Less than £1,500   £1,501 to £2,000   £2,001 to £2,500   £2,500 to £3,000
More than £3,000

Some information about your workplaces

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Client: Female/male/both								
Working or non-working								
Do you know what they do for work?								
No. of bedrooms								
No. of bathrooms/toilets								
Written contract	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
How long have you worked for them?								
How many hours a week do you work for them?								
What is the rate of pay?								

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
How are you paid?	cash/ cheque/ bank	cash/ cheque/ bank	cash/ cheque/ bank	cash/ cheque/ bank	cash/ cheque/ bank	cash/ cheque/ bank	cash/ cheque/ bank	cash/ cheque/ bank
Are you given a raise?	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
Tasks done								
Any change in tasks since first started job	increase/ decrease/ same	increase/ decrease/ same	increase/ decrease/ same	increase/ decrease/ same	increase/ decrease/ same	increase/ decrease/ same	increase/ decrease/ same	increase/ decrease/ same
Who provides the cleaning materials and the vacuum cleaner?	you/them	you/them	you/them	you/them	you/them	you/them	you/them	you/them
Do you ever work over-time for them?	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no
If yes, are you paid for it?	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no	yes/no

Interview schedule for UK service-providers

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself first?

- Start working?

- Past job history (for each job) (if any):

    - Job title

    - How long worked

    - Liked or disliked in the job

    - Why left the job

2. How do you feel about housework?

- Childhood

- What you like doing/what you don't like doing

3. How did you decide to get into this work?

- Compare with other jobs including cleaning in public spaces

- How easy to find

- Looking for work – networking or alone

- Anyone else in the family or friends do it

- Check any guidance, insurance issues, self-employed or undeclared/receipts/invoices

- Why not considered childcare?

4. How do you feel about your work?

- 'Proper' job?/compare with own housework

- Any embarrassment/stigma (some people say it is like keeping servants in old times)

- Work clothes

- Physical health – wearing gloves, working on hands and knees, moving furniture

- Bad days – having periods

5. Can you tell me about how you work?

- Set way of working?

- Different in different houses?

- How did you decide how will you work? Any training?

- Do employers have a say in how you work? Necessary vs unnecessary work

- Different materials in different houses

- Time issues?

- What are you thinking while you work?

- Do you prefer to work when your employers are in the home or when they are out?

6. What do you like about your work?

- Flexibility

- Hours of work

- Autonomy/monitoring

- Working alone vs working with other people

- Holidays (how many do you take and why?)

- Wages

7. What do you not like about your work?

- Boring? Try to make it more interesting?

- Anything would rather not do – any prep by employers/clients?

8. How would you describe your relationship with your employers/clients?

- Employers/clients? Friends or just friendly?

- Good/bad experiences/tidying up

- Feeling 'at home' or in a workplace

- Drink/something to eat

- Leave things as they are or it doesn't matter?

- How do you communicate? [names, text messages?]

- Anything demeaning? [Examples of being demeaned (stained/blood/semen)? Condoms? Sanitary napkins? Fecal or other dirt left sticking in toilets?)/made to feel good]

- Exchange advice

- Children

- Discrimination or feel different?

- Formal/informal/gift giving/birthdays/Christmas

- Anything particularly like/dislike about your employers

- Prefer to deal with the man or woman of the house?

9. How important is your job?

- Your identity? [other things are more important, job is just job]

- Your life satisfaction [other things are more important, job is just job]

- Get free time? [hobbies]

- Has it made any difference to your life or to the way you think?

10. What do you do with the money you earn?

11. Would you like to hire someone to do your housework?

12. Would you describe yourself as a feminist? Yes/No Why?

- What does the word 'feminism' mean in your view?

- People often talk about women 'having it all' now. Does this mean anything to you?

- Applying feminism in your life: what is easy/what is hard?

- How does doing cleaning for money fit in with your feminism?

- You and your employer are both women. What else is similar about the two of you? What is different?

- What would you rather be: a housewife or a working woman?

- If your daughter did this work

13. How long do you intend to stay in the job?

- Any plans for the future?

- Further education

14. Do you belong to any professional organisation?

15. Do you claim any benefits?

16. Considering all that we've discussed:

- Who makes a good employer/client in your view?

- Can anyone do housework for a living? Any skill, thinking work or training?

- Do you think it is women's work in particular?

- How do you think things could be better?

- Fair wages

17. For quasi-agency owners:

- What kind of contract? Why?

- How much and how do you pay?

- How much do you pay yourself?

- Any training/CRB checks?

Interview schedule for Indian service-providers

No questionnaire was used (see Chapter 2). The following schedule was loosely followed in Hindi.

---

1. Can you tell me a little about yourself first?

- Your name, age

- When did you get married?

    - Children

    - What does your husband do?

    - Household income, ration card?

---

2. Can you tell me some more about your life now?

- Where were you born?

- Childhood

- Why did your husband come here?

- Why did you come here? Who decided? He? You? Both?

---

3. How did you start doing domestic work?

- Since when? How easy to find?

- Looking for work – networking or alone?

- Anyone else in the family or friends do it?

- Is there anything else you could have done?

- How do you feel about your work?

---

4. Tell me about your day – at home and at work

- Now, in the rainy season, winter season

- Your own housework?

- Any help from others? Husband? Is it women's work?

- What tasks do you do at work? Different in different houses?

- Compare paid work and own work

- Is there something employers should never ask anyone else to do?

- How is your physical health

- Bad days – having periods

- What are you thinking while you work?

5. Can you tell me about your employers?

- How many?

- Your relationship with them? Monitoring, being scolded, separate utensils

- Do employers tell you how to work?

- Time issues? Safety issues?

- Any other bad experiences?

- Any good experiences?

- Wages and raises, loans, gifts, other help

- Holidays and taking time off

- Who makes a good employer?

6. What do you do with your earnings?

- Children's expenditures – who decides?

- Have you had an operation? Who decided?

7. What difference has this work made to your life?

- What if your husband earned enough?

- What would you like your children to do?

- Daughters and marriage

- What about the future?

8. Have you heard of any union for domestic workers?

Appendix C: Sample demographics

Table A1: Demographic details of the UK service-users (n=21)

Household composition	Pseudonym	Age in years	No. of children
Lone woman household	Iris	66	–
	Harriet*	57	–
Single parent with dependent children	Libby	39	2
	Peggy	53	2
LAT single parent with adult daughter sharing home	Pauline	63	1
Dual-earner couple (married/co-habiting) working in the same city with dependent children	Tanya	38	2
	Beverley	42	2
	Renee*§	42	1
	Samantha*	44	3
	Janet	47	3‡
	Imogen	51	2
Dual-earner couple (married/co-habiting) with jobs in different cities involving significant travelling for one partner, with dependent children	Caitlin	53	1
Dual-earner couple (married/co-habiting) working in the same city with no dependent children (younger couples with no children or older couples with children aged 18+ years)	Clare	37	–
	Felicity	37	–
	Una*	51	3
	Lily	62	2
	Naomi*	64	2
Dual-earner couple (married/co-habiting) with jobs in different cities involving significant travelling for one partner, with no dependent children	Gayle	53	2
	Patricia	65	2
	Maggie†	59	1
	Orla	61	–

LAT, living-apart together.

*Currently not using cleaning services.

†Also used cleaning services when she was a single parent with a dependent child.

‡Step-children.

§Partner temporarily a househusband.

Table A2: Demographic details of the Indian service-users (n=19)

Household composition	Pseudonym	Age in years	No. of children
Lone woman household*	Bindu*	38	0
	Nandita	47	0
	Navita	54	0
Single woman living with parent	Vibha	46	0
	Ritika	56	0
Single (divorced) parent with dependent children	Rekha	44	1
Single (separated) parent with adult son sharing home	Seema	63	2
Wife living with her parents and dependent children	Meenakshi	47	1
Wife living alone (children living with partner in a different city)	Lata	53	3
Dual-earner couple (married) working in the same city with dependent children†	Sarika	34	1
	Pratibha*	43	2
	Urmila	44	1
	Ananya	47	1
	Pooja	51	1
	Kajal	51	2
	Taruni	52	2
Dual-earner couple (married) working in the same city living in a joint family (and with or without dependent children)	Shobha	47	2
	Geetanjali	52	2
	Ritu	53	1

*Currently not using cleaning services.

†Some of these couples also had the husband's parents living with them, prior to their death.

Table A3: Demographic details of the UK service-providers (n=27)

(a) Age, ethnicity, living arrangements, children, site of work, number of current domestic customers, approximate length of time in the work and mode of travel

Pseudonym	Age in years	Ethnicity	Living arrangements	No. of dependent (or adult) children	Site of work/ Comments	No. of current domestic customers	Approximate length of time in this work	Mode of travel to work
Undeclared workers								
Gloria*	33	White British	Civil partnership (M)	2	D	2	6 months	Did not ask
Olivia	38	White British	Cohabiting (M)	1	D/AW (1 client)	4	2 years	Did not ask
Charlotte	38	White British	Married	2	D	3	6 months	Car
Carrie	52	White British	Cohabiting (F)	–	D	1	2 years (+3 years)	Car
Nicola	52	White British	Cohabiting (F)	1 (2)	D	1 (8 at a time)	10 years (+6 years)	Car
Corinne	61	White British	Single (divorced)	(2)	D	2	5 years	Car
Davina	75	White Irish	Single (divorced)	(3)	D	1	>20 years	Walking
Rebecca	74	White British	Married	(3)	D	1	>40 years	Car
Declared workers								
Self-employed and working alone								
Ruby	20	White British	Single (lives with father)	–	D	3	2 months	Car
Grace	23	White British	Single (lives with parents)	–	DC/ Previously AW	12	1 year	Car
Kate	25	White British	Single parent	2	D	2	2 months	Public transport
Sheila	27	White British	Cohabiting (M)	–	DC	12	1 year	Walking
Jessica	33	White British	Cohabiting (M)	6	D	6	1 month	Car
Amelia	39	White British	Cohabiting (M)	(1)	D	2	1.5 years	Public transport
Martha	47	White British	Single (divorced)	2	D	4	5 years	Car

Table A3a continued overleaf

Pseudonym	Age in years	Ethnicity	Living arrangements	No. of dependent (or adult) children	Site of work/ Comments	No. of current domestic customers	Approximate length of time in this work	Mode of travel to work
Evie	48	White British	Cohabiting (M)	2	D	6	7 years	Car/walking
Abigail	55	White British	Married	(2)	D/ Previously AW	3	8 years	Car
Sophie	55	White British	Single (divorced)	(1)	DC/ Previously AW	9	2 years	Car
Self-employed with one business partner								
*Celia**	32	White British	Married	4	D/Partner is friend	3	1 month	Car
*Helena**	40	White British	Married	4	D/Partner is friend	3	1 month	Do not know
Zoe	41	White British	Married	2	DC/Partner is husband	~10	8 years	Husband's car/public transport
Nora	54	White British	Married	1 (2)	D/Partner is friend	~40	1.3 years	Company van
Quasi-agency owners								
Vera	28	White British	Cohabiting (F)	1	DC/ZHC	>30	6 months	Car
Yvonne	28	White British	Single parent	1	DC/ZHC	Between 30 and 40	1.5 years	Car
Tamsin	47	White British	Single (divorced)	2	DC/ Employees	~25	2 years	Car
Valerie	47	White British	Single (separated)	(1)	DC/ZHC	~40	5 years	Car
Ex-agency worker, no longer doing cleaning								
Georgia	45	White British	Single parent	1 (1)	D	–	5 years	Do not know

AW, agency worker; D, domestic; DC, domestic and commercial; M, male partner; F, female partner; ZHC, zero-hour contracts.

Gloria answered questions by email. *Celia* and *Helena* were interviewed together.

Table A3: Demographic details of the UK service-providers (n=27) (continued)

(b) Age band when started cleaning work, education level, dependent children when starting work, and job history

Age group when started the work	Pseudonym	Education level	Children's approximate age status at the time of starting work	Job history
20–29 years	*Ruby*	A Level (Health and Social Care)	No children	Care worker
	Grace	FE (Diploma, Hair and Beauty)	No children	Call-centre worker; cleaning agency worker; brewery cleaner
	Sheila	FE (Diploma, Beauty Therapies)	No children	Beauty therapist; waitressing
	Kate	GCSE	Yes, <16 years	Shop assistant (paid and voluntary)
	Yvonne	FE (Art and Design)	Yes, <16 years	Call centre worker; sales and targets assistant; food outlet operative; shop assistant
	Vera	FE (Diploma, Cleaning Management student)	Yes, <16 years	Food outlet operative; call centre worker; door supervisor; care officer; bar work; painter/decorator
	Rebecca*	Left school at 15 years	Yes, <16 years	Factory work (bottling, spring making; wood cutting); also commercial properties cleaner
	Davina*	Left school at 15 years	Yes, <16 years	Hospital cleaner, factory work, live-out housekeeper cum childminder
	Georgia†	FE; currently BEd student	Twenties	Secretarial work (before cleaning work); retail and primary education (after cleaning work)

Table A3b continued overleaf

Age group when started the work	Pseudonym	Education level	Children's approximate age status at the time of starting work	Job history
30–39 years	*Zoe*	GCSE	Yes, <16 years	Shop assistant; usherette; commercial property cleaner
	Jessica	FE (NVQ2, Hairdressing)	Yes, <16 years	Domestic assistant; customer services advisor; barbering; mobile hairdressing; other odd jobs
	Celia	HE (BA)	Yes, <16 years	Mobile phone industry; waitressing; home shopping (supermarket); customer contact centre; selling advertising space; assessment team advisor in a solicitor's practice; legal services department
	Gloria*	GCSE	Yes, <16 years	Nanny; school club supervisor; quality inspector; accounts clerk; lettings manager; purchase ledger clerk; data entry clerk; optical assistant
	Charlotte*	AS Level	Yes, <16 and >16 years	Selling insurances; daycare assistant; selling mobile phones; farm admin and maintenance work; bar work
	Valerie	FE (Diploma, Hair and Beauty)	Yes, <16 years	Receptionist; shipping clerk; secretarial work; riding school groom and receptionist
	Olivia*	GCSE	Yes, <16 years	Supermarket job; bar work; shop assistant; factory work
	Amelia	FE (Diploma in Care)	Yes, >16 years	Shop assistant (butcher; fast-food outlet); care worker; cashier; cleaning subcontractor; school kitchen assistant; T-shirt printing

Table A3b continued overleaf

Age group when started the work	Pseudonym	Education level	Children's approximate age status at the time of starting work	Job history
40–49 years	*Carrie**§	HE (MA, doctoral student)	No children	Retail assistant; bar work; childminding; sixth form teacher
	Nicola*§	HE (BA, BEd, MA)	Yes, <16 and >16 years	School teacher; summer schools; childminder; nanny-housekeeper; currently personal tutor; environmental charity worker; knitting and sewing projects on commission
	Evie	A level	Yes, <16 years	Theatre/television costumer designer; T-shirt designer in family mail-order business
	Helena	GCSE	Yes, <16 and >16 years	Waitressing, shop assistant, supermarket jobs
	Martha	A level (Business Studies)	Yes, <16 years	Secretarial work; bank teller
	Tamsin	FE (NVQ3 Childcare)	Yes, <16 years	Customer services; receptionist; head of service department; office administration; nursery nurse
50–59 years	*Nora*	FE (Diploma, Health and Social Care)	Yes, <16 and >16 years	Care worker
	Abigail	FE (NVQ, Childcare, incomplete)	Yes, >16 years	Various jobs (including shift work) at local businesses; school catering manager; voluntary teaching assistant
	Sophie	HE (Diploma, Nursing)	Yes, >16 years	Nursing; cleaning work (local pub, brewery); waitressing; assistant pub chef; door-to-door selling; shop assistant; brewery tour guide; bar work; assistant manager in retail; sales; cleaning agency worker
	Corinne*	HE (BEd, hons)	Yes, >16 years	Teacher; social services home-help organiser; various 'odd jobs' such as working in a theatre box office

Table A3b continued overleaf

FE, further education; GCSE, General Certificate of Secondary Education; HE, higher education.

Further education (16+) in the UK comprises vocational work-related courses that lead to competence-based qualifications. Vocational work does not require a degree qualification (e.g. hairdressing or beauty therapy). Some A level courses also lead to vocational qualifications (e.g. health and social care).

*This respondent did not declare the work.

†*Georgia* had worked for a cleaning agency in her twenties. Since then she had moved on to other work.

§*Carrie*, who had a same-sex partner, first did cleaning work in her twenties while pursuing an undergraduate degree. She was single at that time. She went back to higher education in her late forties, after teaching for many years. She was also doing some cleaning work again. *Nicola* first did cleaning work in her thirties, after leaving her partner because of domestic violence and becoming a single mother with three children. Her second experience in cleaning work occurred in her fifties.

Table A4: Demographic details of Indian service-providers (n=24)

Note: Domestic work is generally part of the informal economy in India, and cash-in-hand is the most common form of payment. Hence, the demographic details of the Indian sample are shown differently from the UK sample in Table C.3, that is, on the basis of where the provider lived, rather than on the basis of the working practice.

(a) Age, regional background, living arrangements, children, education level, site of work, length of time in work, number of current customers, mode of travel and husband's paid work status and level of responsibility towards family

Pseudonym	Age in years*	Region of origin	Living arrangements	No. of children	No. of dependent children	Education level	Site of work	Approximate length of time in this work	No. of current domestic customers	Mode of travel to work	Husband's paid work status§§	Husband's responsibility towards family***
Live-out providers												
Anjali	28	NW	Nuclear family+‡	2	2	None	D C	14+	5–6	Walking	1	3
Urvashi	37	NW	Nuclear family	3	2	None	D	12	3	Cycling	2	1
Priya	35	NW	LAT + children	5	4	None	D	5	3	Cycling	2/3	1
Brinda	43	NW	Nuclear family	5	3	None	D	17+	2	Walking	1	3
Chetna	28	Same	Nuclear family+§	3	3	Class 8‡‡	D	DNA	2–3	Walking	2	1
Asha	35	NW	Widow + children	5	5	None	D	4+	1	Walking	2 (when alive)	1 (when alive)
Gauri	32	NW	Nuclear family	4	4	None	D	<1	3	Walking	4	4
Indu	35	NW	Nuclear family	4	4	None	D	3+	3	Walking	1	3
Bela	57	Same†	Nuclear family	4	1	None	D	MD	1	Walking	2	1
Kavita	30	NW	LAT + children	4	4	None	D	1	3	Walking	1	2

Table A4a continued overleaf

Pseudonym	Age in years*	Region of origin	Living arrangements	No. of children	No. of dependent children	Education level	Site of work	Approximate length of time in this work	No. of current domestic customers	Mode of travel to work	Husband's paid work status§§	Husband's responsibility towards family***
Jyotika	30	Same	Nuclear family	2	2	Class 7	D	5+	4–5	Cycling	2	1
Kalpana	37	Same	Nuclear family¶	2	2	None	D C	30+	2	Cycling	2	1†††
Divya	30	NW	Nuclear family+**	1	1	None	D	2.5	2	Walking	2	1
Madhu	30	NW	Nuclear family	3	3	None	D	DNA	1	Walking	1	1
Neena	40	NW	Nuclear family	4	3	None	D	20	4–5	Cycling	1¶¶	4
Sanvi	25	NW	Nuclear family	2	2	None	D	6	1	Cycling	2	1
Shilpa	40	Same	Nuclear family	4	3	None	D	20+	DNA	Do not know	1	3
Part live-out providers												
Mohini	40	NW	Nuclear family	3	1††	None	D	25+	1		2	1
Anika	24	NW	Nuclear family	2	2	None	D	10	1		2	1
Loveleen	40	NW	Nuclear family	4	4	None	D	11	1		2	2
Neelam	29	NW	Nuclear family	3	3	Class 5	D	6	1		2	1
Sonali	47	NW	Widow + child	3	1	None	D	18+	3	Walking ‡‡‡	2	2
Pallavi	35+	Nepal	Widow + child	2	1	None	D	18+	3	Walking‡‡‡	2	3
Rashmi	30	NW	Nuclear family	3	3	None	D	2+	1		1	1

Table A4a continued overleaf

C, commercial; D, domestic; DNA, did not ask question; LAT, living apart-together; MD, missing data (corrupted audio file); NW, north-western regions of India

*Approximate age. Most women did not know their date of birth but had a rough idea of their age at marriage and the number of years they had been married.

†Parents were migrants from north-western regions of India.

‡Brother-in-law and another man from her village also live with them.

§ Her husband's brothers and their families live in the same compound.

¶Second husband.

**Brother-in-law also lives with them.

††Older son earns but not enough to live independently.

‡‡ Indian 'class' = UK 'year' − 1.

§§: 1, (irregular) daily manual labourer (e.g. stitching up gunny bags for transport, rickshaw puller, construction site worker ; 2, regular low-waged (manual/non-manual) work (sweeper; peon; labourer in fruit and vegetable market, *dhobhi*; tea shop owner, gardener; factory worker; painter); 3, farm labourer; 4, unemployed or unable to work to full capacity due to ill health.

¶¶Husband not working as present due to illness;

***1, husband regular worker or regularly looks for work; wife says decent man (although this does not preclude a degree of domestic violence, such as shouting at or hitting wife; 2, husband is regular worker but alcoholic and inflicts domestic violence; 3, husband is irregular worker, alcoholic and inflicts domestic violence; 4, husband unemployed or working less due to physical ill-health but wife says 'decent' man (although this does not preclude a degree of domestic violence, such as shouting at or hitting wife).

††† First husband was a farm labourer.

‡‡‡To other service-users' houses.

Table A4: Demographic details of Indian service-providers (n=24) (continued)

(b) Living spaces of the Indian cleaning service-providers: size, rental agreement, access to basic utilities and mobile phones

Pseudonym	Location of living space	No. of rooms	Ownership status	Access to water	Access to electricity	Bathing arrangement	Access to toilet	Mobile phone
Live-out providers								
Anjali	Apartment building	One, with kitchen in a recess	Rented	Private tap	Yes, legal	Communal bathroom	Communal toilet	Yes
Urvashi	Apartment building	One + kitchen	Rented	Private tap	Yes, legal	Private bathroom	Private toilet	Yes
Priya	Landlord's yard containing several built single-room apartments	One	Rented	Communal tap	Yes, legal status not known	Communal bathroom	Communal toilet	Yes
Brinda	*Jhuggi** in slum	One + covered verandah	Rented	Communal tap	No access	In room	Communal toilet	No
Chetna	Separate room in a joint family accommodation built by father-in-law in a slum	One	Owned by husband's family	Communal tap	Yes, legal status not known	Private bathroom shared with joint family	Toilet build in shared family space (also used by other people from the slum)	No
Asha	*Jhuggi* in slum	One + covered verandah	Owned by self	Communal tap	Yes, possibly illegal	In room	Communal toilet	No
Gauri	*Jhuggi* in slum	One + covered verandah	Do not know	Communal tap	Yes, possibly illegal	In room	Communal toilet	No

Table A4b continued overleaf

Pseudonym	Location of living space	No. of rooms	Ownership status	Access to water	Access to electricity	Bathing arrangement	Access to toilet	Mobile phone
Indu	*Jhuggi* in slum	One	Do not know	Communal tap	Yes, possibly illegal	In room	Communal toilet	No
Bela	Alleyway	One (converted to ironing shack in the day)	Not applicable	Tap in customer's yard	No access	Communal bathrooms in marketplaces or customer's facility	Toilets in marketplaces/open sheltered spaces	No
Kavita	*Jhuggi* in slum	One	Do not know	Communal tap	Yes, possibly illegal	In room	Communal toilet	No
Jyotika	*Jhuggi* built on disputed land	One	Owned by self	Communal tap	Yes, possibly illegal	Private bathroom	Private (but not plumbed in)	Yes
Kalpana	Apartment building	One	Rented		Yes, legal	Private bathroom	Private toilet	Yes
Divya	Common green space in a middle-class area	One (converted to ironing shack in the day)	Not applicable	Tap in customer's driveway	Illegal access from customer's supply (paid for by customer)	Communal bathrooms in marketplaces	Communal toilets in marketplaces	No
Madhu	Yard with apartments	One	Rented	Communal tap	Yes, legal status not known	Communal bathroom	Communal toilet	No
Neena	Apartment building	One	Rented	Communal tap	Yes, legal status not known	Communal bathroom	Communal toilet (and fields)	Yes but no credit

Table A4b continued overleaf

Pseudonym	Location of living space	No. of rooms	Ownership status	Access to water	Access to electricity	Bathing arrangement	Access to toilet	Mobile phone
Sanvi	*Jhuggi* in slum	One	Rented	Communal tap	No access	In room	Open field (and customer's toilet)	Yes but can dial only two numbers
Shilpa	Questions not asked							
Part live-out providers								
Mohini	Outhouse in landlord's backyard	Two	Work done in lieu of rent	Private tap (water bill paid by landlord)	Yes, legal, paid for by landlord	Private bathroom/toilet owned by landlord		No
Anika	Outhouse in landlord's backyard	One	Work done in lieu of rent	Private tap (water bill paid by landlord)	Yes, legal, paid for by landlord	Private bathroom/toilet owned by landlord		No
Loveleen	Outhouse in landlord's backyard	One + kitchen	Work done in lieu of rent	Private tap (water bill paid by landlord)	Yes, legal, paid for by landlord	Private bathroom/toilet owned by landlord		No
Neelam	Outhouse in landlord's backyard	One	Work done in lieu of rent	Private tap (water bill paid by landlord)	Yes, legal, paid for by landlord	Private bathroom/toilet owned by landlord		No
Sonali	Outhouse in landlord's backyard	One + recess for kitchen	Work done in lieu of rent	Private tap (water bill paid by landlord)	Yes, legal, paid for by landlord	Private bathroom/toilet owned by landlord		Yes
Pallavi	Rooms attached to landlord's house	One + kitchen	Work done in lieu of rent	Private tap (water bill paid by landlord)	Yes, legal, paid for by landlord	Private bathroom/toilet owned by landlord		Yes
Rashmi	Outhouse in landlord's backyard	One	Work done in lieu of rent	Private tap (water bill paid by landlord)	Yes, legal, paid for by landlord	Private bathroom/toilet owned by landlord		No

Jhuggi = shack (often built illegally).

Appendix D: Quantitative data are 'fuzzy' data

The tasks included in most questionnaire-based studies to date are generally categorised as cleaning, cooking, washing-up, laundry and ironing, childcare and grocery shopping, tasks that in the West have been understood broadly as 'women's work' since the industrial revolution. This broad, ethnocentric categorisation overlooks several variations in households with different living arrangements, class variations and cross-cultural variations in domestic practices (see Chapters 2 and 3).

First, the perception of who does what in the house may differ from person to person, although women's reports are said to be more accurate (Crompton and Lyonette, 2008; Press and Townsley, 1998). Yet, among my women-only sample, quantifying who did what was easier for some than others. In general, the UK academics living in a 'typical' nuclear family unit were most easily able to provide a quantitative picture of the division of household labour, which was not surprising as most housework questionnaires are based on this type of family unit. When living arrangements diverted from this, uncertainties crept in. For Felicity, cohabitation caused uncertainty about who owns the housework, as her partner Alec lived with her in her house but still continued to maintain his old house:

> it's quite funny, it depends on what you count as household. ... It's complicated by the fact that at the moment we have two separate houses so anything even domestic about his house, he takes 100% responsibility. So what's a little bit unclear is what would actually happen once we both jointly take responsibility for our house that's ours. Whether or not the practices that happen in our current sort of shared home does translate into that, or whether once he feels ownership of the second house it would be more like how he deals with in his own home, if that makes any sense. [...] Because in his own house, he does do the cleaning, he always did the cleaning, he never had a domestic worker and he never really let thing get to point where it became catastrophic ...

Who owns the work may also change if one of the partners does not live in the accommodation for a significant part of the week, for example if they work in another city. Five of my respondents were currently in this situation. Figure A1 shows Orla's description of who did what in the house for all tasks except cleaning-related tasks, which she outsourced.

Figure A1: The proportion of time, at the time of data collection and as reported by Orla, that each task was done by Orla or her husband or her cleaning service-provider
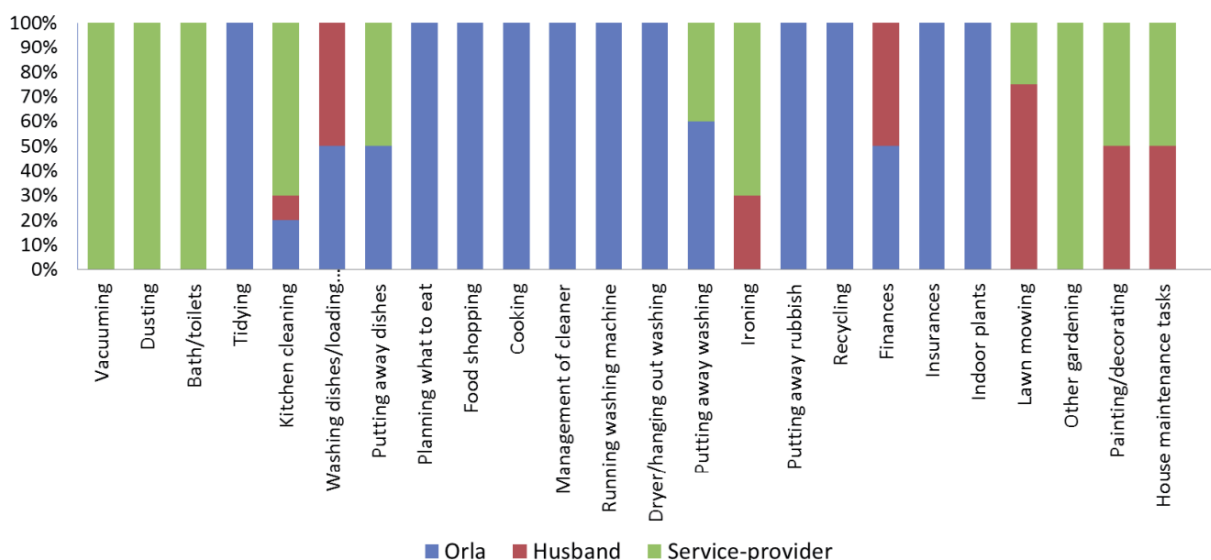
At first glance it seems as if her husband, Henry, is doing very little. But when Orla explained that he lived elsewhere for most of the working week, it becomes clear that the figure was not an accurate representation of reality.

> Now our life's complicated as my husband [works] in [another city], so we have a flat [there], where he stays most of the time during the week. I'm in our main home most of the time. So when I talk about what I do in our house that's because I'm there much more than he is. Not because if he would be living with me equally it would be quite like that.

In India, for women living in joint families, work, including the management of domestic help was often shared with parent(s)/parent(s)-in-law. *Anjali* shared her housework with a young man from her village whom she had offered to put up until he was able to afford a place of his own.

Second, there are cross-cultural variations in gender roles, and regional variations in tasks that still need to be done in households that do not have all the usual modern urban amenities. In the Indian service-providers' households, where beliefs about traditional gender roles in the house remained strong, grocery shopping was most often done by men. This is because in India, grocery shopping is traditionally outside work. The families who lived in one-room shacks in the slum had no private water supply. Water was obtained from a communal tap once or twice every day. Many cooked on a homemade mud hearth and they either bought firewood or collected it from a forest about half-hour's walk away. The decent husbands (see Chapter 6) also fetched water and firewood. The

women had to accompany their children to the communal toilets, particularly young girls, as it was not safe for them to go alone in an environment where cultural attitudes bred sexual repression and drug and alcohol addiction was widespread among men. A key 'woman's' task in these and rural households is dealing with cow-dung (see Chapter 6; and Kothari (1997) and Sourabh (2007) for the tasks that are still are relevant for a gendered analysis of division of household labour in rural and small urban areas in India). These living conditions have been reported by other researchers in slums in various parts of India (Bharati and Mehrotra, 2008; Duggal, 2010; A.N. Singh, 2001; V. Singh, 2007). Moreover, not all household tasks are relevant to all households even within a single culture.

Third, who does the task and how it is done, for example cleaning, may also depend on cultural variations around particular aspects of the task. Among the service-users and the UK service-providers, men were more likely to do the mechanised work of vacuuming and cleaning of bathrooms and toilets than dusting, which is non-mechanised as well as less strenuous (Figure A2; see also Singha, 2012). In India, middle-class women and men are less likely to do sweeping and mopping for symbolic reasons (see Chapter 3). Working-class Indian men, including those who work as sweepers, do not do it in the home because in that social class, it is 'women's work' (see Chapter 5; Douglas, 1966/2002). In addition, those service-providers who used communal bathing and toilet facilities did not have to clean these themselves. This situation, however, is not indicative of any social privilege.

Fourth, the number of sub-tasks making up a broad category is also variable. Does cooking mean just cooking or does it also include serving the cooked food? In traditional north Indian households, serving food is 'women's work', which often happens simultaneously with the cooking, because 'rotis' are meant to be served freshly cooked. The woman therefore eats after everyone else has eaten. In the service-users' households, this task was done by a service-provider (who could be a man or a woman). In *her* household, the man who served his food himself or helped boil the milk was considered a helpful husband. A major cooking task is boiling milk. In the West today, fresh milk does not usually need to be boiled as it is already pasteurised and homogenised.

Many UK academics said ironing was a 'non'-task in their households while a minority outsourced the task. In contrast, the service-providers appeared more invested in ironing, either themselves or by sharing the load with their

Figure A2: The division of cleaning work in respondents' households, as reported by the UK service-users and service-providers and the Indian service-users
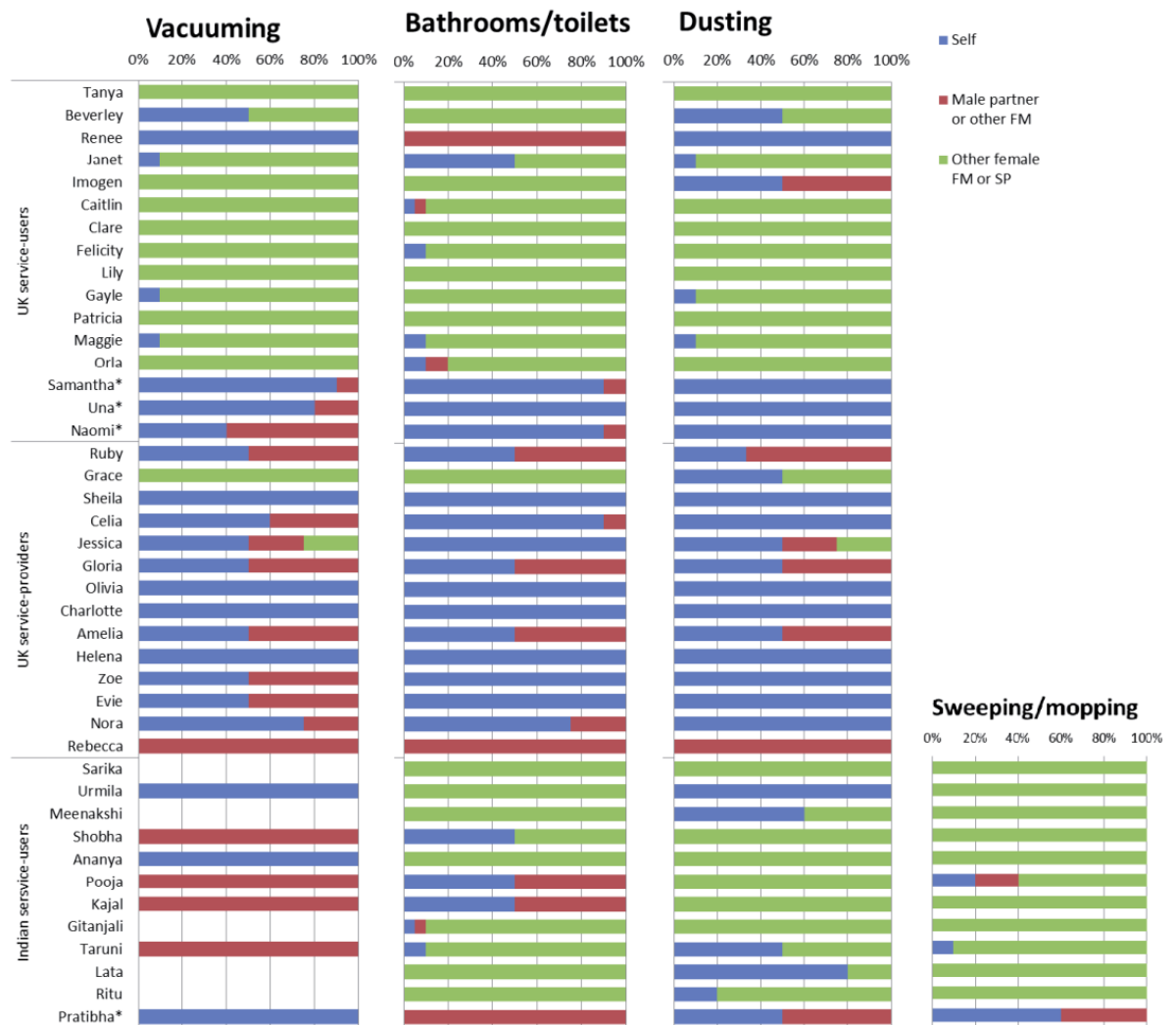
FM, family member; SP, service-provider.

*Not outsourcing cleaning at the time of data collection.

In the Indian households, not everyone owned a vacuum cleaner and vacuuming was done sporadically. The main method of cleaning floors still remains the traditional broom and basic cloth mop.

This graph only includes the respondents who had a male partner.

The names of the service-providers are not italicised in this graph because of software limitations.

partner. This socially constructed difference may be a Western class difference, where the working-class person does extra work to 'buy' respectability (Skeggs, 1997/2002). In India, this plays out differently. Here, many service-providers did

not iron because an electric iron was too costly to buy and use. They preferred to wear lighter, non-iron synthetic fabrics, which were easier to wash too. The academics, however, invested much in ironing because cotton, that requires ironing (and starching), is a popular fabric among the middle-class. However, the task was mostly outsourced to the *dhobhi*, who is usually a man who irons for a living and often belongs to the caste that has done laundry work for a living for centuries. Clearly, the amount of work a task entailed and the frequency and thoroughness with which it was done varied from house to house. This also applied to cleaning, which like other housework is also a socially constructed activity (see Chapter 4).

Some of the service-users lived in five-bedroom houses, and in India, verandahs, balconies and driveways added to the floor space that required frequent cleaning. Also in India, cleaning is done every day, ostensibly because dust levels are much higher than in the UK. Symbolic beliefs were not alluded to, but Hindu beliefs from proto-historical times include daily house-cleaning (Lüthi, 2010). In the UK, market-driven 'secular' beliefs around hygiene (Martens and Scott, 2005, 2006) means the kitchen is often cleaned more frequently than once a week, but not the other rooms, although the women did not talk in these terms. In both countries, cleaning frequencies grounded in symbolism appeared to have become part of the 'natural' fabric of life (Douglas, 1966/2002).

The extent to which some housework has become a function of mechanised aids in the West is captured in the commonly used expression 'hoovering' instead of vacuum cleaner. However, dishwashers and dryers are less common in lower socio-economic households (Figure A3). In India, housework is still largely non-mechanised (Figure A3). The washing machine was the most often used machine among those who could afford one but even then, it was rare to depend only on that. This is in part due to erratic electric supply and timed fresh water supply, and the greater likelihood of colour bleeding from cotton and linen produced using popular traditional techniques such as batik-tie-and-dye. All the Indian service-users who owned a vacuum cleaner said it was used occasionally or never. Only a fifth of the Indian service-providers had a fridge and given that they did not even live in 'proper' houses, the question of using machines for housework did not arise. I could not ascertain the impact of these differences as that would have required more data and a different method of data collection (e.g. participant observation).

Figure A3: Percentage of service-users and service-providers owning various household machines
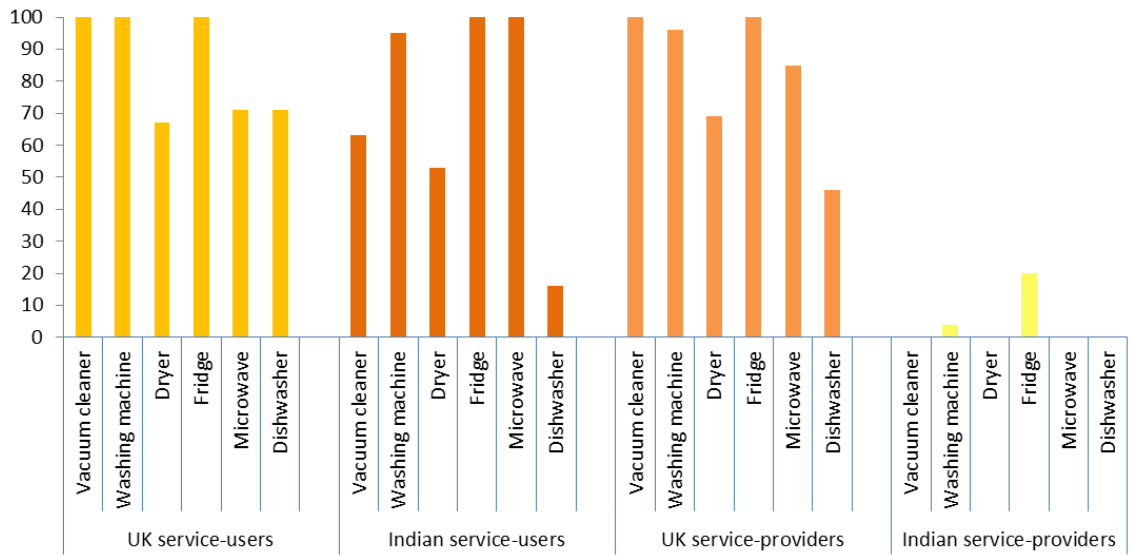
Table A5: Outsourcing of different tasks by the person providing the service in the households of the Indian service-users

Service-user	Kitchen cleaning	Sweeping and mopping	Dusting	Toilet	Vacuuming	Washing up	Handwashing of clothes	Washing machine	Ironing	Tidying	Help with cooking
Kajal	D	D	D	D	Do not use	D	D	D	F	Self/Fam	D
Nandita	A	A	A	A	Do not use	Self/A	A	A	F	Self	A
Navita	B	B	B	B	Do not use	B	B	Self/B	Self/B/F	Self/B	B
Seema	B	B	B	B	Self/B's children sometimes do it for 'fun'	Self/B	Self/B	Self/B	Self/B	Self/B	Self/B
Vibha	D2	D1	D1 (but as an 'extra')	D1	Self and D2	D1/D2	Not done	Self/D1	F	Self	A1/D2/A2
Ananya	D1	D2	D2	D2	Self	B	B	Self	F	D1	D1/B
Geetanjali	A	C	C	C	Self	A	Self	Self	Self/F	Self/A	A
Meenakshi	D2	D1	D1	D1	Do not use	D2	D1	Do not use	F	Self	D1/D2
Lata*	B	A (husband of B)	A or B	Self	Do not use	B	Not done	B and daughters	F	Self	Fam/B

Table 5 continued overleaf

Service-user	Kitchen cleaning	Sweeping and mopping	Dusting	Toilet	Vacuuming	Washing up	Handwashing of clothes	Washing machine	Ironing	Tidying	Help with cooking
Pooja	D3	D2	D1	Self/Fam	Husband	D3	D1	Self	Self/F	Self/D1	D1
Rekha	D	D	A and Self	Self	Do not use	D	D	Does not use	F	Self	No help
Ritika	B	A (husband of B)	A or B	B	B	B	B	B	F	Self/Fam/A/B	A/B
Ritu	B	B	B	C	Do not use	Self/B	Not done	Self	F	Self	B
Sarika	E	D	D	D	Do not use	D	D	D	F	D	D
Shobha	D1	D2	D1	D2	Self and son	D2	–	Self and D2	F	Self and D1	D1
Taruni	Self	D	D	D	Husband	D	D	Self	F	Self/Fam	D
Urmila	E	C	C	C	Do not use	E	E	Self	E	E	E

A, part-live-out male service-provider; B, part-live-out female service-provider; C, live-out male service-provider; D, live-out female service-provider; E, live-in male service-provider; F, *dhobhi* (live-out male ironing service-provider); Fam, family member

*Domestic arrangements in main family home (Lata lived apart from the rest of her nuclear family for significant periods of time in a flat in the city where she worked).

Appendix E: The quasi-agency

Four UK service-providers were running small agencies. However, they were engaging selectively with malestream good business practices to strike a balance between growing their business and allowing their subcontractors to work as autonomously as possible, a factor they highly valued. Thus I am calling these businesses quasi-agencies. All of them had started out as a one- or two-woman business, but were soon getting more work than they could handle. The quote below succinctly captures the essence of the quasi-agency model: the owner was not running a business sitting in an office. She wore several hats: owner, manager, hirer, admin worker and cleaner.

> I actually go with them … it's me who does the induction. And I usually go with them for a few weeks on a new clean because I like to do them as well, so that if I have to stand in, I know how to do them … This means I'm still meeting the customer as well, and sort of keeping a rapport as well. (*Tamsin*)

Continuing to clean themselves underpinned the business ethos and USP (unique selling point), but also created challenges. The quasi-agency owners allocated a regular team of two (or one) cleaners to each client household. To avoid the risk of poaching, however, they, spent extra time doing 'customer relations' themselves. Subcontractors could be unreliable, and the owner often preferred to substitute herself, rather than sending a 'stranger'. Customers were charged the same rate regardless of whether the work was done by subcontractors or the owners (£10–11 per hour). The commission was quite modest as the average subcontractor fee was £7 an hour.[227] Thus they used self-employed subcontractors, as the commission was not enough for them to pay national insurance (if eligible) and holiday pay, and some subcontractors took time off frequently. *Tamsin's* experience confirmed this. After 18 months of being in the business and having about 30 customers, *Tamsin* was still not making enough profit to sign off family credit benefit. Employees' wages was her biggest overhead, and she also gave holiday pay. Sometimes she sent her employees even when she had the time to clean herself, so they had enough work to justify their

---

[227] The overwhelming view among both users of and lone-trader providers themselves was that conventional agencies creamed off too much of the money paid by the service-user.

employment. All the quasi-agency owners' professional indemnity insurance covered the subcontractors, and they provided the uniforms and cleaning materials. *Tamsin* also paid the DBS fee for all her employees (£26 per person for a standard check and £44 for an enhanced check[228] at the time of writing). DBS checks are increasingly seen as a measurable way of establishing baseline trust, both between the customer and a quasi-agency owner/lone service-provider or the quasi-agency owner and subcontractor/employee: 'I want to know that person's *trustworthy*', said *Jessica* when talking about her plans to build her business. Many other declared service-providers who had started the work more recently also mentioned having these checks.

No quasi-agency owner said they dictated work routines to their subcontractors, as they were conscious of how they valued their own autonomy. They did not want their subcontractors/employees to feel like 'just another number' or see them, the business owners, as 'out of touch'. *Valerie* described how, just before she met me, she had rung to warn one subcontractor of a traffic jam so that the latter would not lose time on her way to work. However, most carried out inductions to ensure quality control and customer satisfaction. *Yvonne*, who had started cleaning thinking anyone could do it, found herself on a steep learning curve. In her naivety, she had subcontracted to friends who, seeing her success, wanted to join her. Then she found herself receiving negative feedback from customers and lost a few in the process. Like bigger agencies, if customers were disrespectful to their subcontractors/employees, the quasi-agency owners dealt with the problem. The subcontractor usually had the freedom to negotiate their own work times with the customer and the customer directly negotiated with the subcontractor for small changes to the agreed work. The main area where the subcontractor did not have autonomy was in the agreement about hours of work, which was made between the customer and the quasi-agency owner. However, if a subcontractor found that it was persistently taking longer than expected, they could tell the owner and some tried to renegotiate the agreement.

---

[228] Gov.uk. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks (previously CRB checks). https://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check/overview; page last updated 9 March 2015 [Accessed 16 March 2015].

Appendix F: European-level and UK Labour Force Survey analyses of ethnicity and citizenship status of statistically accounted-for domestics/cleaners

1. European findings

All European countries do not collect/disseminate ethnicity data, however, some information about place of birth and citizenship is available. According to the Europe-wide Census 2011, the majority of people employed in elementary occupations (which includes cleaning) in several advanced European economies, except Luxembourg and Switzerland, were born in and were citizens of the country or citizens of another European state (Figure A4).

Figure A4: People working in elementary occupations in several advanced European economies, disaggregated by place of birth (left panel) and citizenship (right panel) (2011)

Data source: Eurostat, Census 2011 Hub (Tables HC29 and HC13) [Online]. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-and-housing-census/census-data/2011-census [Accessed 13 March 2015].

The European Social Survey, an academically robust survey, includes a question on whether a person belongs to an ethnic minority group in the country they live in and three-digit occupational data. In several countries where academic research reports an increase in outsourced domestic work (Abrantes, 2014b), the majority of respondents working as domestic cleaners stated they did not belong to an ethnic minority group (Table A6; it was not possible to know whether these survey respondents were declaring their income).

Table A6: The occupation group 'Domestic cleaners and helpers' in rounds 1–7 of the European Social Survey (2002–2014) disaggregated by ethnic group status

	Belong to minority ethnic group in country													
	2002		2004		2006		2008		2010		2012		2014	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Germany	3	39	3	43	0	45	5	46	0	3	0	16	3	31
Denmark	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	1			0	1
Spain	1	106	11	113	0	127	9	108	2	68	6	107		
France	1	44	2	87	5	99	10	96	0	93	5	72	5	139
Netherlands	1	15			3	42	1	18			3	43	4	27

Data are weighted absolute numbers.

Data source: European Social Survey Rounds 1–7.

ESS Round 7: European Social Survey Round 7 Data (2014). Data file edition 2.1. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC.

ESS Round 6: European Social Survey Round 6 Data (2012). Data file edition 2.3. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC.

ESS Round 5: European Social Survey Round 5 Data (2010). Data file edition 3.3. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC.

ESS Round 4: European Social Survey Round 4 Data (2008). Data file edition 4.4. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC.

ESS Round 3: European Social Survey Round 3 Data (2006). Data file edition 3.6. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC.

ESS Round 2: European Social Survey Round 2 Data (2004). Data file edition 3.5. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC.

ESS Round 1: European Social Survey Round 1 Data (2002). Data file edition 6.5. NSD - Norwegian Centre for Research Data, Norway – Data Archive and distributor of ESS data for ESS ERIC.

2. Labour Force Survey findings

Between January 2011 and March 2015, 157,440 people in employment (not including those on certain government schemes) entered the LFS; 3,190 were classed as 'domestics and cleaners', of whom 1,300 were likely to have been doing domestic cleaning (those categorised as providing independent services to cleaning of buildings – this descriptor includes homes and public buildings), or were categorised under 'activities of households as employers of domestic personnel'. I selected these industry codes after conferring with the Office for National Statistics (see Milburn, 2015a). Of these, 1,034 were women, of whom

the majority were of White ethnicity and had British nationality (690/896; 79.5%). A total of 342 were self-employed (214 were White British), and for 277 (204 White British and 73 non-White British and migrant women) of them the highest qualification was available (variable HIQUAL) variable (see Figure 4).

I also analysed the proportion of refuse, water and sewerage plant operatives who were men among first-wave respondents entering the LFS between January 2011 and March 2015.

Table A7: Percentage of refuse, salvage and water and sewerage plant operatives who are male (LFS January 2011 to March 2015)

LFS quarter	Refuse and salvage occupations n.e.c. (SOC10M code 9235)	Water and sewerage plant operatives (SOC10M code 8126)
Jan–Mar 2011	100	–
Apr–Jun 2011	84.6	100
Jul–Sept 2011	100	100
Oct–Dec 2011	94.4	100
Jan–Mar 2012	100	100
Apr–Jun 2012	100	100
Jul–Sept 2012	100	100
Oct–Dec 2012	100	100
Jan–Mar 2013	90	100
Apr–Jun 2013	90	100
Jul–Sept 2013	100	100
Oct–Dec 2013	100	100
Jan–Mar 2014	88.9	–
Apr–Jun 2014	100	100
Jul–Sept 2014	100	75
Oct–Dec 2014	90	100
Jan–Mar 2015	88.9	100
Mean	95	87

Appendix G: What makes outsourced domestic cleaning *work* instead of *labour*

When outsourced domestic cleaning is acknowledged as *work*	When outsourced domestic cleaning is acknowledged as *labour*

Regarding structure of the work (Chapter 5)

• Housecleaning should not disturb the aesthetics of the home within a house. This requires developing responsivity between the service-provider and client because people have different levels of tolerance for dirt, cleanliness, orderliness or homemaking. An agreement has to be reached between the two parties regarding what is dirt, what needs cleaning, and the standards the service-provider will be working towards. This will mean working to same, higher or lower standards in relation to what service-providers do in their own living space..	• The work is considered simply an extension of unpaid work with no differentiation between the work required in different houses. What the service-provider does in the unpaid context is taken as the baseline and they work towards that – if clients ask for more, they may be considered unreasonable.
• There will be recognition that the work requires:	• The work done in each house may be fragmented, with different service-providers for different household tasks.
(a) a tangible amount of time that is affected by several aspects of the house: size, how dirty, other people living there today, etc.	• There is little regard for the time of the worker as compared with the time of the client. Work might be added and expected to be done in the same time as prior work.
(b) mental skills such as 'crafting an economy of movement', broader business skills such as timetabling, negotiation skills, communication skills.	• Mental skills are recast as 'natural' affective labour, with the 'mental' work either assumed by a third party or the client themselves.
(c) additional mental work to maintain standards of work over time, in different climatic conditions, and to override the worker's own frame of mind (people have good days and bad days depending on what else is going on their lives).	• Mental work required to maintain a consistent standard of work is subsumed into a generalised mental grit, required simply to sustain the worker as they do work 'nobody wants to do'.

- The worker would have considerable autonomy and do a variety of tasks, including negotiating with clients, deciding which products to use, all of which are commensurate with their own values (this would require access to modern products that reduce hard graft).

Regarding who does the work (Chapters 6 and 7)

- People would make an active decision to do cleaning as work, selecting it from a range of options.
- Such a person has to have an interest in cleaning, the ability to 'see' what needs doing and 'how' it should be done, which would vary from house to house.
- The work as described above also requires the worker to be literate and generally in good health. Some formal education or prior experience of work in other industries would ensure knowledge of both vendors' and clients' rights and responsibilities, and an understanding of how a business works.
- The worker would be invested in their work and it would provide a sense of satisfaction.
- The work may be done for part or one's whole working life, depending on the worker's work orientation at different stages of life. The worker's progeny may or may not do the same work.

- Anyone belonging to a *particular* groups (classed, racial or gendered) is considered capable of doing cleaning, because of 'innate' abilities. People are 'pushed' into doing the work.
- Literacy is not considered a necessary condition of work, rather the work is considered appropriate for the illiterate person.
- The work is done out of *majboori*, primarily for the family rather than own self: when nothing else is possible, and a living is needed.
- They have little investment in the work (or the wrong kind of investment, for instance when a migrant worker pays a third person fees for training and getting them a job in another country). The idea of gaining satisfaction from the work would be hard to describe here.
- There is little possibility of the worker or their progeny of doing other work, except equally alienating work.

Regarding the work relationship and the wider socio-legal framework for the work (Chapters 6 and 7)

- All the above points would be more likely to happen when the service-provider is a live-out independent self-employed worker (or part of a collective of self-employed workers).
- There will be participatory parity between the client and vendor, a friendly *work* relationship that can be located within wider work relationships. For this :

  (a) the service-provider has to be treated as a fully developed worker rather than being conceived of as a 'helper', and given feedback within a responsive relationship.

  (b) they have to receive adequate remuneration (from a range of clients) to be able to live with dignity (take holidays etc.) and plan for the future (set up a secure pension).
- There may be an implicit or explicit contract for services delivered.
- There would be some internationally recognised good practice guidelines and regulatory frameworks for both service-providers and clients. These need not follow the frameworks that guide the employer–employee relation unless this was the agreed relation.

- Both live-in and live-out cleaning can be reduced to labour.
- The relationship is substantially unequal because of race, class or gender or because the work done is considered low status. That is, both the work and worker are stigmatised
- The worker harbours *ressentiment.*
- Feedback becomes a contested terrain, a site of tension: experienced as *khichh khichh.*
- Work is done under an implicit or explicit contract *of* service that resembles conditions of servitude. Worker has little autonomy or say in method of working or products used or job descriptions.
- Worker feels like an atomised being.
- Guidelines and regulations still consider domestic work as work like no other in some regards, which prevents participatory parity between the service-providers and service-users.

Appendix H: Selection of webpages consulted on Mumsnet and Netmums

Mumsnet. (2012a). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 10 October 2012). Am I being unreasonable to get a cleaner? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/1584321-to-get-a-cleaner [Accessed 20 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2012b). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 24 November 2012) AIBU To think about getting a cleaner? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/1619688-To-think-about-getting-a-cleaner [Accessed 20 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2013a). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 29 April 2013). AIBU To (privately) disapprove of my friend having a cleaner. [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/1744098-To-privately-disapprove-of-my-friend-having-a-cleaner [Accessed 28 April 2014].

Mumsnet. (2013b). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 14 August 2013). AIBU to ask what jobs you do that fit in well with school hours? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/1827105-to-ask-what-jobs-you-do-that-fit-in-well-with-school-hours [Accessed 28 April 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014a). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 26 February 2014). AIBU Am I the only one who doesn't have a cleaner?? http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2009337-Am-I-the-only-one-who-doesnt-have-a-cleaner. [Accessed 28 April 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014b). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 3 May 2014). AIBU To not sack my cleaner? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2069957-To-not-sack-my-cleaner [Accessed 5 August 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014c). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 16 May 2014). AIBU To feel a bit weird and embarrassed now we've got a cleaner? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2081523-to-feel-a-bit-weird-and-embarrassed-now-weve-got-a-cleaner [Accessed 5 August 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014d). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 24 May 2014). Cleaners advice please. http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/good_housekeeping/2088485-Cleaners-advice-please [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014e). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 10 June 2014). [Online]. Available at: Anyone worked as a cleaner? http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/going_back_to_work/2102836-Anyone-worked-as-a-cleaner [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014f). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 12 June 2014). AIBU To tell DH that we ARE getting a cleaner - no excuses anymore. [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2104739-To-tell-DH-that-we-ARE-getting-a-cleaner-no-excuses-anymore [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014g). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 18 June 2014). AIBU Cleaners, anyone who has one come and advise me please. [Online]. Available at:

http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/good_housekeeping/2110706-Cleaners-anyone-who-has-one-come-and-advise-me-please [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet (2014h). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 17 August 2014). AIBU TO be reluctant to hire MIL as a cleaner? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2161523-To-be-reluctant-to-hire-MIL-as-a-cleaner [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014i). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 19 September 2014). Is £15 p.h. a lot for a cleaner? http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/good_housekeeping/2188704-Is-15-p-h-a-lot-for-a-cleaner [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014j). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 24 September 2014). What does your cleaner do? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/good_housekeeping/2192777-What-does-your-cleaner-do [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014k). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 25 September 2014). AIBU To not clean up for the (potential) cleaner? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2194146-To-not-clean-up-for-the-potential-cleaner [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014l). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 26 September 2014). AIBU That part of me feels like a failure for wanting a cleaner? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2194927-That-part-of-me-feels-like-a-failure-for-wanting-a-cleaner [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014m). Mumsnet discussion threat (22 October 2014). Cleaner problem. [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/good_housekeeping/2215792-Cleaner-problem [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014n). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 1 November 2014). AIBU To wonder about Mumsnetters and their cleaners? [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2224055-To-wonder-about-Mumsnetters-and-their-cleaners [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Mumsnet. (2014o). Mumsnet discussion thread (started 15 December 2014). AIBU To think cleaners should do the hours they're paid to do [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/Talk/am_i_being_unreasonable/2260060-To-think-cleaners-should-do-the-hours-theyre-paid-to-do [Accessed 30 December 2014].

Netmums. (2009–2014). Netmums discussion thread (started 8 December 2009, last post 14 November 2014) Cleaning business owners general discussion. http://www.netmums.com/coffeehouse/working-childcare-692/working-yourself-self-employed-76/wfy-self-employed-chat-clubs-501/358425-cleaning-business-owners-general-discussion.html [Accessed 28 November 2014].

Netmums. (2011). Netmums discussion thread (started 25 October 2011). Do YOU have a cleaner?? [Online]. Available at: http://www.netmums.com/coffeehouse/general-coffeehouse-chat-514/coffee-lounge-18/658095-do-you-have-cleaner-all.html [Accessed 28 April 2014].

Netmums. (2012). Netmums discussion thread (started 28 November 2012). Is having a cleaner when you're an SAHM jolly lazy? [Online]. Available at: http://www.netmums.com/coffeehouse/general-coffeehouse-chat-514/wine-bar-494/855047-having-cleaner-when-you-re-sahm-jolly-lazy.html [Accessed 28 April 2014].

Abbreviations

AIBU	Am I being unreasonable?
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DBS	Disclosure and Barring Service
DC	domestic and commercial
DNA	did not ask question
EHRC	Equality and Human Rights Commission
ERIC	European Research Infrastructure Consortium
FE	further education
FTE	full-time equivalent
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
HE	higher education
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue and Customers service
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LAT	living-apart together
LFS	Labour Force Survey
NCEUS	National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector
n.e.c.	not elsewhere classified
n.d.	no date
ONS	Office for National Statistics
SAHM	stay-at-home-mother
SOC	Standard Occupational Classification
WLM	women's liberation movement
ZHC	zero-hour contract

References

Aalto, K. and Varjonen, J. (2007). Balancing time and money for family wellbeing in families with children and in younger couples' households. Unpublished paper presented at 'International Association for Time Use Research' (IATUR) XXIX Conference. 17–19 October 2007. Washington, DC, USA. [Online]. Available at: http://www.atususers.umd.edu/wip2/ papers_i2007/Aalto.pdf [Accessed 20 April 2015].

Abrantes, M. (2012). You're not there to make the world any cleaner: domestic services and knowledge societies. *European Societies*, 14(3), 320–337.

Abrantes, M. (2014a). 'I know it sounds nasty and stereotyped': searching for the competent domestic worker. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(5), 427–442.

Abrantes, M. (2014b). What about the numbers? A quantitative contribution to the study of domestic services in Europe. *International Labour Review*, 153(2), 223–243.

Accredited Qualifications. (2012). Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). [Online]. Available at: http://www.accreditedqualifications.org.uk/ qualifications-and-credit-framework-qcf.html [Accessed 15 May 2015].

Adams, B. (1995). *Timewatch. The Social Analysis of Time*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

affectivelabor.org. (n.d.). Affective labor of employment agents. Transformation of public services in Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Papers. [Online]. Available at: http://www.affectivelabor.org/index.php/en/papers [Accessed 28 April 2016].

Ahlander, N.R. and Bahr, K.S. (1995). Beyond drudgery, power, and equity: toward an expanded discourse on the moral dimensions of housework in families. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 57(1), 54–68.

Ahmed, S. (2016). Resignation. 30 May 2016. *feminist killjoys*. [Online]. Available at: https://feministkilljoys.com/2016/05/30/resignation/ [Accessed 20 August 2016].

Akalın, A. (2007). Hired as a caregiver, demanded as a housewife. Becoming a migrant domestic worker in Turkey. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14(3), 209–225.

Akalın, A. (2014). Affective labor: a better term in contemplating migrant domestic labor than emotional labor? Unpublished paper presented at 'Gender, Work & Organization 2014' (GWO 2014). 8th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference. 24–26 June 2014. Keele University, Staffordshire, UK.

Albin, E. (2012). From 'domestic servant' to 'domestic worker'. In J. Fudge, S. McCrystal and K. Sankaran, (Eds.). *Challenging the Legal Boundaries of Work Regulation*. Oxford: Hart, pp. 231–250.

Albin, E. and Mantouvalou, V. (2012). The ILO convention on domestic workers: from the shadows to the light. *Industrial Law Journal*, 41, 67–78.

Alisa. (2008). My cleaning lady saved my marriage! 28 October 2008. *Project Happily Ever After*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.projecthappilyeverafter.com/2008/10/my-cleaning-lady-saved-my-marriage [Accessed 28 April 2014].

Ambedkar, B.R. (1916/1979/2004). Castes in India: their mechanism, genesis and development. In M. Mohanty, (Ed.). *Class, Caste and Gender*. New Delhi: Sage, pp. 131–153.

Ambedkar, B.R. (1936/2016). *Annihilation of Caste: the Annotated Critical Edition*. Edited by S. Anand. London: Verso.

Anderson, B. (1993). *Britain's Secret Slaves: an Investigation Into the Plight of Overseas Domestic Workers*. London: Anti-Slavery International and Kalayaan.

Anderson, B. (1999). Overseas domestic workers in the European Union: invisible women. In J.H. Momsen, (Ed.). *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service*. London: Routledge, pp. 117–133.

Anderson, B. (2000). *Doing the Dirty Work? The Global Politics of Domestic Labour*. London: Zed Books.

Anderson, B. (2001). Just another job? Paying for domestic work. *Gender and Development*, 9(1), 25–33.

Anderson, B. (2003). Just another job? The commodification of domestic labor. In B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild, (Eds.). *Global Women. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. London: Granta Books, pp. 104–114.

Anderson, B. (2007). A very private business: exploring the demand for migrant domestic workers. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14(3), 247–264.

Anderson B. and Ruhs M. (2012). Reliance on migrant labour: inevitability or choice? *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 20(1), 23–30.

Anonymous. (2015). What I'm really thinking: the gardener. *The Observer*. 9 May 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/may/09/what-im-really-thinking-the-gardener [Accessed 24 May 2015].

Anzaldúa G. (1987). How to tame a wild tongue. In G. Anzaldúa. *Borderland/La Frontera: the New Mestiza*. San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, pp. 53–64.

Archive on 4. (2016). *A Guide to the Modern Snob*. 4 June 2016. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07djnzb [Accessed 30 June 2016].

Aron, S. (2013). *Akhilesh Yadav: Winds of Change*. Chennai: Tranquebar Press.

Ashforth, B.E. and Kreiner, G.E. (1999). 'How can you do it?': dirty work and the challenge of constructing a positive identity. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(3), 413–434.

Atkinson, W. (2010). The myth of the reflexive worker: class and work histories in neo-liberal times. *Work, Employment and Society*, 24(3), 413–429.

Baby Center. (2013). 'Going home to a CLEAN house tonight!!'. 27 February 2013. [Online]. Available at: http://community.babycenter.com/post/a40296826/going_home_to_a_clean_house_tonight [Accessed 15 September 2015].

Backett, K.C. (1982). *Mothers and Fathers: a Study of the Development and Negotiation of Parental Behaviour*. Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bailly, F., Devetter, F.-X. and Horn, F. (2013). Can working and employment conditions in the personal services sector be improved? *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 37, 299–321.

Bali, N. (2016). *Naam, kaam, gaam*: educating women for self-employment, cooperation and struggle. *International Labor and Working-class History*, 90, 164–175.

Banerjee, S.M. (2015). Baby Halder's *A Life Less Ordinary*: a transition from India's colonial past? In V.K. Haskins and C. Lowrie, (Eds.). *Colonization and Domestic Service: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 239–255.

Bapat, S. (2014). *Part of the Family? Nannies, Housekeepers, Caregivers and the Battle for Domestic Workers' Rights*. New York: Ig Publishing.

Barnes, H. (2013). Work advisers 'pushing jobless into self-employment'. BBC News. 3 February 2013. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-21260331 [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Barstad, A. (2014). Equality is bliss? Relationship quality and the gender division of household labor. *Journal of Family Issues*, 35(7), 972–992.

Bartolomei, M.R. (2010). Migrant male domestic workers in comparative perspective: four case studies from Italy, India, Ivory Coast, and Congo. *Men and Masculinities*, 13, 87–110.

Bates, K.G. (2013). History makes hiring household help a complex choice. Code Switch. [Online]. Available at: http://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/05/24 /185508615/going-to-meet-the-ma-am [Accessed 4 December 2015].

Baxter, J., Hewitt, B. and Western, M. (2009). Who uses paid domestic labor in Australia? Choice and constraint in hiring household help. *Feminist Economics*, 15(1), 1–26.

BBC News. (2013). Charles Saatchi 'made threat to destroy' Nigella Lawson. BBC News. 4 December 2013. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/ news/uk-england-25216157 [Accessed 6 June 2014].

BBC News. (2015). Ed Balls: I always get a receipt for getting my hedge cut. BBC News. 16 February 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31480231 [Accessed 23 March 2015].

BBC One. (2013). *Panorama.* Amazon: the truth behind the click. BBC One television. 25 November 2013. Programme information available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b03k5kzp [Accessed 21 April 2014].

BBC Radio 4. (2010). *Women's Hour.* History and science archive. The first Women's Liberation Movement conference. 25 February 2010. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/womanshour/03/2010_08_ thu.shtml [Accessed 13 December 2012].

BBC Radio 4. (2012a). *Woman's Hour.* Housework week. 9 July 2012. [Online]. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00vwhcr [Accessed 13 July 2012].

BBC Radio 4. (2012b). *Woman's Hour.* Equality – the next generation. 11 July 2012. [Online]. Available at: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00vyj07 [Accessed 13 July 2012].

BBC Radio 4. (2015). *Analysis.* Caring in the new old age. 16 March 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b055g1jv [Accessed 24 July 2015].

BBC Radio 4. (2016a). *Thinking Allowed.* The end of 'careers', humour at work. 6 January 2016. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/ b06tvbpj [Accessed 22 January 2016].

BBC Radio 4 (2016b). *Behind Closed Doors.* 25 October 2016. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07zzg8m [Accessed 26 October 2016].

BBC Two. (2012). *Servants: The True Story of Life Below Stairs.* BBC Two television. 28 September – 12 October 2012. Programme episode(s) information and clips available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01n5wjx [Accessed 30 May 2013].

BBB Two. (2014). *Watermen: a Dirty Business.* BBC Two television. 15 April – 20 May 2014. Programme episode(s) information and clips available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b041j9l7 [Accessed 30 August 2015].

BBB Two. (2015a). *Wastemen.* BBC Two television. 28 April – 12 May 2015. Programme episode(s) information and clips available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02npms8 [Accessed 30 August 2015].

BBC Two. (2015b). *Modern Times. The Secret Life of Cleaners.* BBC Two television. 18 June 2015. Programme episode(s) information and clips available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b05xcwf9 [Accessed 13 August 2015].

Belliappa, J.L. (2013a). *Gender, Class and Reflexive Modernity in India.* Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Belliappa, J.L. (2013b). 'She was very outgoing': sexual harassment and appropriate female behaviour. The Indian information technology industry. *Travail, genre et sociétés*, 29(1), 129–148.

Benegal, V., Nayak, M., Murthy, P., Chandra, P. and Gururaj, G. (2005). Women and alcohol in India. In I.S. Obot and R. Room, (Eds.). *Alcohol, Gender and Drinking Problems: Perspectives from Low and Middle Income Countries*. Geneva: World Health Organization, pp. 89–124. [Online]. Available at: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/alcohol_gender_drink ing_problems.pdf [Accessed 7 April 2016].

Benston, M. (1969/1980). The political economy of women's liberation. In E. Malos, (Ed.). *The Politics of Housework*. London: Allison and Busby, pp. 119–129.

Bergmann, B. (1998). The only ticket to equality: total androgyny, male style. *Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues*, 9 (Spring), 75–86.

Bernardino-Costa, J. (2014). Intersectionality and female domestic workers' unions in Brazil. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 46, 72–80.

Bharati, M. and Tandon Mehrotra, S. (2008). *Rights and Dignity: Women Domestic Workers in Jaipur*. New Delhi: Jagori.

Bhasin, K. and Khan, N.S. (1986/2005). Some questions on feminism and its relevance to South Asia. In M. Chaudhuri, (Ed.). *Feminism in India*. London: Zed Books, pp. 3–7.

Bhavnani, K.-K. (1993). Tracing the contours: feminist research and feminist objectivity. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 16(2), 95–104.

Bianchi, S.M., Milkie, M.A., Sayer, L.C., and Robinson, J.P. (2000). Is anyone doing the housework? Trends in the gender division of household labor. *Social Forces*, 79, 191–228.

Bianchi, S.M., Sayer, L.C., Milkie, M.A. and Robinson, J.P. (2012). Housework: who did, does or will do it, and how much does it matter? *Social Forces*, 91(1), 55–63.

Birbili, M. (2000). Translating from one language to another. *Social Research Update*, Issue 31, Winter 2000. Available at: http://sru.soc.surrey.ac.uk/SRU31.html [Accessed 5 August 2014].

Birch, E.R., Le, A.T. and Miller, P.W. (2009). *Household Division of Labour*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bittman, M. and Pixley, J. (1997). *The Double Life of the Family*. St Leonards, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

Bittman, M., Matheson, G. and Meagher, G. (1999). The changing boundary between home and market: Australian trends in outsourcing domestic labour. *Work, Employment and Society*, 13, 249–273.

Blackett, A. (2011). Introduction: regulating decent work for domestic workers. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 1–97.

Blaisure, K.R. and Allen, K.R. (1995). Feminism and the ideology and practice of marital equality. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 57, 5–19.

Blake, D. (2016). *We Need a National Narrative: Building a Consensus Around Retirement Income. Summary.* Independent Review of Retirement Income. [Online]. Available at: http://www.pensions-institute.org/IRRIReport.pdf [Accessed March 2016].

Bose, C. (1979). Technology and the changes in the division of labour in the American home. *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, 2, 295–300.

Bose, C.E. (2009). The interconnections of paid and unpaid domestic work. *The Scholar and Feminist Online*, Fall (issue 8.1). [Online]. Available at: http://sfonline.barnard.edu/work/bose_01.htm [Accessed 12 August 2015].

Bowman, J.R. and Cole, A.M. (2009). Do working mothers oppress other women? The Swedish 'maid debate' and the welfare state politics of gender equality. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 35(1), 157–184.

Bowman, J.R. and Cole, A.M. (2014). Cleaning the 'People's Home': the politics of the domestic service market in Sweden. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(2), 187–201.

Bradshaw, A. (2015). Home economics: the labor struggle of domestic workers. *Leo Weekly*. 8 July 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.leoweekly.com/2015/07/home-economics-the-labor-struggle-of-domestic-workers/ [Accessed 12 May 2016].

Branca, P. (1975). A new perspective on women's work: a comparative typology. *Journal of Social History*, 9(2), 129–153.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.

Bremen, J. (2013). *Work in the Informal Economy in India. A Perspective From the Bottom Up.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Bright and Beautiful. (n.d.). A flexible domestic cleaning franchise opportunity. [Online]. Available at: http://www.brightandbeautifulhome.com/domestic-cleaning-franchise-opportunities/ [Accessed 8 January 2016].

Brunner, L. and Dever, M. (2014). Work, bodies and boundaries: talking sexual harassment in the new economy. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(5), 459–471.

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods,* 3rd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bujra, J. (2000). *Serving Class: Masculinity and Feminisation of Domestic Service in Tanzania.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Cain, S. (2012). The rise of the new groupthink. 13 January 2012. *The New York Times*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2012/01/15/opinion/sunday/the-rise-of-the-new-groupthink.html [Accessed 16 November 2016].

Calleman, C. (2011). Domestic services in a 'land of equality': the case of Sweden. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 121–140.

Campkin, B. and Cox, R. (2007/2012). Introduction: materialities and metaphors of dirt and cleanliness. In B. Campkin and R. Cox, (Eds.). *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination.* London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 1–8.

Cardoso, I.G. (2012). At the salon: addressing dynamics of space, intimacy and ritual. *Ethnographic Encounters*, 2, 89–97.

Carey, M. (2007). White-collar proletariat? Braverman, the deskilling/upskilling of social work and the paradoxical life of the agency care manager. *Journal of Social Work*, 7(1), 93–114.

Carter, B., Danford, A., Howcroft, D., Richardson, H., Smith, A. and Taylor, P. (2011). 'All they lack is a chain': lean and the new performance management in the British civil service. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 26(2), 83–97.

Census Customer Services. (2014). Email to Lotika Singha. With extracts from census tables from 1951, 1961, 1971 and 1981, 14 October 2014.

Chagar, R. (2011). The Dalit women of India. In D.W. Pike, (Ed.). *Crimes Against Women.* New York, NY: Nova Science Publishers, pp. 235–239.

Chakrabortty, A. (2016). Being self-employed means freedom. Freedom to be abused and underpaid. *The Guardian.* 5 April 2016. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/apr/05/self-employed-freedom-underpaid-contractors? [Accessed 6 April 2016].

Chan, T.W. and Halpin, B. (2002). Union dissolution in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Sociology*, 32(4), 76–93.

Chandra Mohan, N. (2015). The spectre of jobless growth in India. Inter Press Service News Agency. 2 October 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.ipsnews.net/2015/10/the-spectre-of-jobless-growth-in-india/ [Accessed 23 February 2016].

Chaney, E.M. and Garcia Castro, M., (Eds.). (1989). *Muchachas No More. Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Channel 4. (2016a). *Obsessive Compulsive Cleaners*. Last updated 2016. [Online]. Available at: http://www.channel4.com/programmes/obsessive-compulsive-cleaners/episode-guide [Accessed 29 August 2016].

Channel 4. (2016b). *How Clean is Your House?*. Last updated 2016. Programme information available at: http://www.channel4.com/programmes/how-clean-is-your-house [Accessed 15 September 2016].

Chatterjee, M. (1990). Indian women, health, and productivity. Policy, Research, and External Affairs working paper no. WPS 442. Washington, DC: World Bank. [Online]. Available at: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/1990/10/700170/indian-women-health-productivity [Accessed 7 April 2016].

Chaudhuri, M. (Ed.). (2004/2011). *Feminism in India*. Delhi: Kali for Women & Women Unlimited.

Chigateri, S. (2007). Articulations of injustice and the recognition–redistribution debate: locating caste, class and gender in paid domestic work in India. *Law, Social Justice and Global Development Journal (LGD)*, 1, n.p. [Online]. Available at: http://go.warwick.ac.uk/lgd/2007_1/chigateri [Accessed 15 December 2014].

Chin, C.B.N. (1998). *In Service and Servitude: Foreign Female Domestic Workers and the Malaysian 'Modernity' Project*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Christy, M. (2005). Urine: your own perfect medicine. *All Natural*. [Online]. Available at: http://all-natural.com/natural-remedies/urine/ [Accessed 12 September 2015].

Chun, L. (1997). Feminism and women's movements in contemporary China. In W. J. Scott, C. Kaplan and D. Keates, (Eds.). *Transitions, Environments, Translations: Feminisms in International Politics*. London: Taylor and Francis, pp. 11–20.

Cockburn, C. (1991). *Brothers. Male Dominance and Technological Change*. London: Pluto Press.

Cockburn, C. (1997). Domestic technologies: Cinderella and the engineers. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20(3), 361–371.

Coelho, K. (2016). Occupational domestication in a post-resettlement context: an analysis of women's work in Kannagi Nagar, Chennai. In S. Raju and S. Jatrana, (Eds.). *Women Workers in Urban India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, pp. 97–120.

Collins, G. (2007). Cleaning and the work-life balance. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 18(3), 416–429.

Colombo, A. (2007). 'They call me a housekeeper, but I do everything.' Who are domestic workers today in Italy and what do they do? *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, 12(2), 207–237.

Constable, N. (2007). *Maid to Order in Hong Kong: Stories of Migrant Workers*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Cooke, L.P. (2004). The gendered division of labor and family outcomes in Germany. *Journal of Marriage and Family*. 66, 1246–1259.

Cooke, L.P. (2006). 'Doing gender' in context: household bargaining and the risk of divorce in Germany and the United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, 112, 442–72.

Cooper, C. and Taylor, P. (2000). From Taylorism to Ms Taylor: the transformation of the accounting craft. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, 25(6), 555–578.

Cooper, S.M. (2005). Service to servitude? The decline and demise of life-cycle service in England. *History of the Family*, 10, 367–386.

Cooperative Programme (EMP/COOP), International Labour Office (ILO). (2011). Domestic workers organize. *EMP/COOP - COOP NEWS*, No. 1, 7–8. Available at: http://www.wecandoit.coop/pdfs/wcms_157995.pdf [Accessed 12 May 2016].

Cooperative Programme (EMP/COOP), International Labour Office (ILO). (2013). Domestic workers cooperatives. *EMP/COOP - COOP NEWS*, No. 1, 8. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_emp/---emp_ent/---coop/documents/publication/wcms_213244.pdf [Accessed 1 May 2017].

Corden, A. and Sainsbury, R. (2006). Aspects of presentation. In *Using Verbatim Quotations in Reporting Qualitative Social Research: the Views of Research Users*. York: Social Policy Research Unit, University of York, 2006, pp. 17–23.

Cornelisse-Vermaat J.R., van Ophem, J.C., Antonides, G. and van den Brink, H.M. (2013). Outsourcing child care, home cleaning and meal preparation. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 37, 530–537.

Costas, J. and Kärreman, D. (2016). The bored self in knowledge work. *Human Relations*, 69(1), 61–83.

Cotterill, P. (1992). Interviewing women. Issues of friendship, vulnerability and power. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 15(5–6), 593–606.

Cox, P. and Hobley, A. (2014). *Shopgirls: the True Story of Life Behind the Counter*. London: Hutchinson.

Cox, R. (1997). Invisible labour: perceptions of paid domestic work in London. *Journal of Occupational Science Australia*, 4(2), 62–68.

Cox, R. (1999). The role of ethnicity in shaping the domestic employment sector in Britain. In J.H. Momsen, (Ed.). *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service*. London: Routledge, pp. 134–147.

Cox, R. (2000). Exploring the growth of paid domestic labour: a case study of London. *Geography*, 85(3), 241–251.

Cox, R. (2006). *The Servant Problem. Domestic Employment in a Global Economy*. London: I.B. Tauris.

Cox, R. (2007/2012a). Introduction to Section 1. Home: domestic dirt and cleaning. In B. Campkin and R. Cox, (Eds.). *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination*. London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 11–14.

Cox, R. (2007/2012b). Introduction to Section 3. Country: constructing rural dirt. In B. Campkin and R. Cox, (Eds.). *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination*. London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 153–155.

Cox, R. (2011). Dishing the dirt: dirt in the home. In R. Cox, R. George, R.H. Horne, R. Nagle, E. Pisani, B. Ralph and V. Smith, (Eds.). *The Filthy Reality of Everyday Life. DIRT*. London: Profile Books, pp. 37–73.

Cox, R. (2016). Cleaning up: gender, race and dirty work at home. In C. Lewe, T. Othold, and N. Oxen, (Eds.). *Müll. Interdisziplinäre Perspektiven auf das Übrig-Gebliebene*. Bielefeld: transcript, pp. 97–116.

Cox, R. (Ed.). (2015a). *Au Pairs' Lives in Global Context: Sisters or Servants?* Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cox, R. (2015b). From our own backyard? Understanding UK au pair policy as colonial legacy and neocolonial dream. In V.K. Haskins, and C. Lowrie, (Eds.). *Colonization and Domestic Service: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*. New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 256–272.

Cox, R. and Watt, P. (2002). Globalization, polarization and the informal sector: the case of paid domestic workers in London. *Area*, 34(1), 39–47.

Crompton, R. (2006). *Employment and the Family: the Reconfiguration of Work and Family Life in Contemporary Societies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crompton, R. and Le Feuvre, N. (1996). Paid employment and the changing system of gender relations: a cross-national comparison. *Sociology,* 30(3), 427–445.

Crompton, R. and Lyonette, C. (2007). Occupational class, country and the domestic division of labour. In R. Crompton, S. Lewis and C. Lyonette, (Eds.). *Women, Men, Work and Family in Europe*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 116–132.

Crompton, R. and Lyonette, C. (2008). Who does the housework? The division of labour within the home. In A. Park, J. Curtice, K. Thomson, M. Phillips, M. Johnson and E. Clery, (Eds.). *British Social Attitudes, the 24th Report*. National Centre for Social Research. London: Sage, pp. 53–80.

Crompton, R. and Lyonette C. (2011). Women's career success and work–life adaptations in the accountancy and medical professions in Britain. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 18(2), 231–254.

Crompton, R. and Scott, J. (2005). Class analysis: beyond the cultural turn. In F. Devine, and M. Savage, J. Scott, and R. Crompton, (Eds.). *Rethinking Class. Culture, Identities, Lifestyles*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 186–203.

Cross, J. (2009). From dreams to discontent: educated young men and the politics of work at a Special Economic Zone in Andhra Pradesh. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 43(3), 351–379.

Cruz, K., Hardy, K. and Sanders, T. (2017). False self-employment, autonomy and regulating for decent work: improving working conditions in the UK stripping industry. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 55(2), 274–294.

Curley, C. and Royle, T. (2013). The degradation of work and the end of the skilled emotion worker at Aer Lingus: is it all trolley dollies now? *Work, Employment and Society*, 27, 105–121.

Currie, J. and Eveline, J. (2011). E-technology and work/life balance for academics with young children. *Higher Education*, 62(4), 533–550.

Curthoys, A. (1988). *For and Against Feminism. A Personal Journey into Feminist Theory and History*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

Curtis, V.A. (2007). Dirt, disgust and disease: a natural history of hygiene. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 61(8), 660–664.

Cusack, J. and Roy, A. (2016). *Things That Can and Cannot Be Said. Essays and Conversations*. London: Penguin.

D'Arcy, C. and Gardiner, L. (2014). *Just the Job – or a Working Compromise? The Changing Nature of Self-Employment in the UK*. London: Resolution Foundation.

Dalla Costa, M. and James, S. (1973). *The Power of Women and the Subversion of the Community*, 3rd edn. Bristol: Falling Wall Press.

Damaske, S. (2011). *For the Family? How Class and Gender Shape Women's Work*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Das Gupta, M. (2008). Housework, feminism, and labor activism: lessons from domestic workers in New York. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 33(3), 532–537.

Davidoff, L. (1995). The rationalization of housework. In *Worlds Between. Historical Perspectives on Gender and Class*. Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 73–102.

Davis, J. (2012). The debate: are cash-in-hand payments morally wrong? *The Independent*. 25 July 2012. [Online]. Available at: http://blogs.independent.co.uk/2012/07/25/the-debate-are-cash-in-hand-payments-morally-wrong/ [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Davis, S. (2013). Why study housework? Cleaning as a window into power in couples. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 5(2), 63–71.

Davis, S.N. and Greenstein, T.N. (2013). Why study housework? Cleaning as a window into power in couples. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 5(2), 63–71.

De Casanova, E.M. (2013). Embodied inequality: the experience of domestic work in urban Ecuador. *Gender & Society*, 27(4), 561–585.

de Ruijter, E. and van der Lippe, T. (2007). Effects of job features on domestic outsourcing as a strategy for combining paid and domestic work. *Work and Occupations*, 34(2), 205–230.

de Ruijter, E., van der Lippe, T. and Raub, W. (2003). Trust problems in household outsourcing. *Rationality and Society*, 15(4), 473–507.

de Ruijter, E., Treas, J. and Cohen, P.N. (2005). Outsourcing the gender factory: living arrangements and service expenditures on female and male tasks. *Social Forces*, 94, 305–322.

de Santana Pinho, P. and Silva, E.B. (2010). Domestic relations in Brazil: legacies and horizons. *Latin American Research Review*, 45(2), 90–113.

Delap, L. (2007). 'Campaigns of curiosity': class crossing and role reversal in British domestic service, 1890–1950. *Left History*, 12(2), 33–63.

Delap, L. (2011a). *Knowing Their Place. Domestic Service in the Twentieth Century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Delap, L. (2011b). Housework, housewives, and domestic workers. *Home Cultures*, 8(2), 189–209.

Delphy, C. and Leonard, D. (1992). *Familiar Exploitation. A New Analysis of Marriage in Contemporary Western Societies*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Department of Education. (2011). *Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2010*. Crown Copyright. [Online]. Available at: http://www.education.gov. uk/researchandstatistics/statistics/allstatistics/a00196854/dfe-childcare-and-early-years-providers-survey-2010 [Accessed 13 December, 2012].

Department of Education. (2012). *Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2011*. Crown Copyright. [Online]. Available at: http://www.education.gov. uk/researchandstatistics/statistics/allstatistics/a00213767/childcare-early-years-providers-survey-2011 [Accessed 13 December, 2012].

Department of Education. (2014). *Childcare and Early Years Providers Survey 2013*. TNS BMRB Report JN 117328. Crown Copyright. [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/childcare-and-early-years-providers-survey-2013 [Accessed 15 December, 2015].

Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. (2006). *Recruitment in the Cleaning Services Industry*. Canberra: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations. [Online]. Available at: http://webarchive.nla.gov.au /gov/20110604035943/http://www.deewr.gov.au/Employment/LMI/Regi onalReports/Industry/Pages/2006.aspx [Accessed 13 June 2016].

Desai, S.B., Dubey, A., Joshi, B.J., Sen, M., Sharif, A. and Vanneman, R. (2010). *Human Development in India. Challenges for a Society in Transition*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

DeSilver, D. (2014). For most workers, real wages have barely budged for decades. *Fact Tank*. Pew Research Centre. 9 October 2014. [Online]. Available at: http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/10/09/for-most-workers-real-wages-have-barely-budged-for-decades/. [Accessed 1 December 2016].

Devetter, F.-X. (2015). Can public policies bring about the democratization of the outsourcing of household tasks? *Review of Radical Political Economics*, published online before print, 20 August, 2015. Available at: http://rrp.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/08/20/0486613415594159. abstract [Accessed 30 September 2015].

Devetter, F.-X. and Rousseau, S. (2009). The impact of industrialization on paid domestic work: the case of France. *European Journal of Industrial Relations*, 15, 297–316.

Devine, F. and Savage, M. (2005). The cultural turn, sociology and class analysis. In F. Devine, and M. Savage, J. Scott, and R. Crompton, (Eds.). *Rethinking Class. Culture, Identities, Lifestyles*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–23.

Dickey, S. (2000a). Mutual exclusions. Domestic workers and employers on labor, class, and character in South India. In K.M. Adams and S. Dickey, (Eds.). *Home and Hegemony. Domestic Service and Identity Politics in South and Southeast Asia*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, pp. 31–62.

Dickey, S. (2000b). Permeable homes: domestic service, household space, and the vulnerability of class boundaries in urban India. *American Ethnologist*, 27(2), 462–489.

Dill, B.T. (1988). 'Making your job good yourself': domestic service and the construction of personal dignity. In A. Bookman and S. Morgen, (Eds.). *Women and the Politics of Empowerment*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, pp. 33–52.

Dill, B.T. (1994). *Across the Boundaries of Race and Class: an Exploration of Work and Family Among Black Female Domestic Servants*. New York: Garland Publishing.

Dodson, L. and Zincavage, R.M. (2007). 'It's like a family'. Caring labor, exploitation, and race in nursing homes. *Gender & Society*, 21(6), 905–928.

Dohrenwend, B.S. and Richardson, S.A. (1963). Directiveness and nondirectiveness in research interviewing: a reformulation of the problem. *Psychological Bulletin*, 60(5), 475–485.

Douglas, M. (1966/2002). *Purity and Danger: an Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. With a new preface. London: Routledge.

Douglas, M. (1986/1987). *How Institutions Think*. London: Routledge/Kegan Paul.

Douglas, M. (2002). *Risk and Blame: Essays in Cultural Theory*. London: Routledge.

Douglas, M., and Wildavsky, A. (1983). *Risk and Culture: an Essay on the Selection of Technological and Environmental Dangers*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Dowling, T. (2014). Our cleaner is going home. *The Guardian*. 26 October 2014. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2013/oct/26/tim-dowling-cleaner-leaving#comments [Accessed 27 November 2014].

Draycott Nursing. (n.d.). Carers job description. [Online]. Available at: http://www.draycottnursing.co.uk/pdfs/Job-Description-Carer.pdf [Accessed 27 November 2014].

Driscoll, E.T. (2011). *Class and Gender in the Philippines: Ethnographic Interviews with Female Employer-Female Domestic Dyads*. Sociology – Dissertations and Theses. Paper 68. [Online]. Available at: http://surface.syr.edu/soc_etd/68 [Accessed 28 April 2013].

du Preez, J., Beswick, C., Whittaker, L. and Dickinson, D. (2010). The employment relationship in the domestic workspace in South Africa: beyond the apartheid legacy. *Social Dynamics*, 36(2), 395–409.

Duffy, M. (2007). Doing the dirty work. Gender, race, and reproductive labor in historical perspective. *Gender & Society*, 21(3), 313–336.

Duggal, B. (2010). *Chandigarh Slums. Issues of Poverty and Human Rights*. Chandigarh: Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development.

Edgell, S. (2012). *The Sociology of Work: Continuity and Change in Paid and Unpaid Work*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.

EHRC. (2010). *Inquiry into Recruitment and Employment in the Meat and Poultry Processing Sector. Report of the Findings and Recommendations.* Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission. [Online]. Available at: https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/meat_inquiry_report.pdf [Accessed 15 January 2016].

Ehrenreich, B. (1976). What is socialist feminism? *WIN Magazine* (6/3/76). [Online]. Available at: https://www.marxists.org/subject/women/authors/ehrenreich-barbara/socialist-feminism.htm [Accessed 28 July 2017].

Ehrenreich, B. (2000). Maid to order. *The Guardian.* 20 August 2000. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/profile/barbaraehrenreich [Accessed 18 May 2012].

Ehrenreich, B. (2002/2010). *Nickel and Dimed.* London: Granta.

Ehrenreich, B. and English, D. (1978/1988). *For Her Own Good: 150 Years of the Experts' Advice to Women.* London: Pluto Press.

Ehrenreich, B. (2003). Maid to order. In: B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild (Eds.). *Global Women. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy.* London: Granta Books, pp.

Ehrenreich, B. and Hochschild, A.R. (Eds.). (2003). *Global Women. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy.* London: Granta Books.

Eichler, M. and Albanese, P. (2007). What is household work? A critique of assumptions underlying empirical studies of housework and an alternative approach. *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 32(2), 227–258.

Elias, N. (1994/2003). *The Civilising Process: Sociogenetic and Pyschogenetic Investigations.* Translated by E. Jephcott and edited by E. Dunning, J. Goudsblom and S. Mennell. Revised edition. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Elson, D. and Pearson, R. (1981). 'Nimble fingers make cheap workers': an analysis of women's employment in Third World export manufacturing. *Feminist Review*, 7, 87–107.

Emerson, R.M. (1962). Power-dependence relations. *American Sociological Review*, 27, 31–41.

Estévez-Abe, M. (2015). The outsourcing of house cleaning and low skill immigrant workers. *Social Politics*, 22(2), 147–169.

Estévez-Abe, M. and Hobson, B. (2015). Outsourcing domestic (care) work: the politics, policies, and political economy. *Social Politics*, 22(2), 133–146.

Eurofound (2006). *Employment Developments in Childcare Services for School-Age Children: Sweden.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_publication/field_ef_document/ef0623enc5.pdf [Accessed 29 April 2012].

European Federation for Services to Individuals. (2013). *White Book on Personal and Household Services in Ten EU Member States.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.efsi-europe.eu/fileadmin/MEDIA/Event/5th_European_Conference/White_book_final_december_2013.pdf [Accessed 18 November 2014].

Evans, J. (2002). Cautious caregivers: gender stereotypes and the sexualization of men nurses' touch. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 40(4), 441–448.

Fauve-Chamoux, A. (Ed.). (2004). *Formation of European Identity. Understanding the Globalization of Domestic Work, 16th–21st Century.* Bern: Peter Lang AG.

Federici, S. (2012). On elder care work and the limits of Marxism. In *Revolution at Point Zero. Housework, Reproduction and Feminist Struggle.* Oakland, CA: PM Press, pp. 115–125.

Fernando, W.D.A. and Cohen, L. (2014). Respectable femininity and career agency: exploring paradoxical imperatives. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21, 149–164.

Fielding, N. and Thomas, H. (2009). Qualitative interviewing. In N. Gilbert, (Ed.). *Researching Social Life*, 3rd edn. London: Sage, pp. 245–265.

Financial Review. (2014). ATO cracks down on cash economy. 22 August 2014. [Online]. Available at: http://www.afr.com/p/national/ato_cracks_ down_on_cash_economy_oxC03yjFKi37LU8u8AZtGJ [Accessed 23 August 2014].

Flanagan, C. (2004). How serfdom saved the women's movement. *Atlantic Monthly*, 293(2), 109–128. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theatlantic. com/past/docs/issues/2004/03/flanagan.htm [Accessed 24 March 2013].

Flather, A.J. (2013). Space, place, and gender: the sexual and spatial division of labor in the early modern household. *History and Theory*, 52(3), 344–360.

Folbre, N. (1995). The paradox of caring labour. *Feminist Economics*, 1(1), 73–92.

Foreman, J. (2014). The servant problem. *red pepper blog*. 9 June 2014. [Online]. Available at: http://www.redpepper.org.uk/the-servant- problem/#comment-248195 [Accessed 1 November 2016].

Fraser, N. (1996). Social justice in the age of identity politics: redistribution, recognition, and participation. The Tanner Lectures on Human Values. Delivered at Stanford University, 30 April – 2 May 1996. [Online]. Available at: http://tannerlectures.utah.edu/_documents/a-to-z/f/Fraser98.pdf [Accessed 15 January 2016].

Fraser, N. (2013). *The Fortunes of Feminism: from State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*. London: Verso.

Freeman, H. (2013). Nigella Lawson: from domestic goddess to the face of domestic violence. *The Guardian*. 18 June 2013. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/jun/18/nigella- lawson-domestic-goddess-violence [Accessed 20 May 2015].

Friedan, B. (1963/1983). *The Feminine Mystique*. New York, NY: Laurel.

Frost, N. and Rodriguez, D. (2015). 'And it was all my choice but it didn't feel like a choice': a re-examination of interpretation of data using a 'rhetoric of choice' lens. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 53, 192–199.

Frostrup, M. (2015). Dear Mariella: a drunk colleague called me a slut. What should I do? *The Observer*. 22 November 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2015/nov/22/drunk- colleague-called-me-a-slut-what-should-i-do-mariella-frostrup [Accessed 4 December 2015].

Frøystad, K. (2003). Master-servant relations and the domestic reproduction of caste in Northern India. *Ethnos*, 68(1), 73–94.

Gabb, J. (2002). *Perverting Motherhood?: Sexuality and Lesbian Parent Families*. Unpublished: University of York. PhD.

Gabb, J. and Fink, J. (2015). *Couple Relationships in the 21st Century*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave MacMillan.

Gamburd, M. (2003). Breadwinners no more. In B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild, (Eds.). *Global Women. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*. London: Granta Books, pp. 190–206.

Game, A. and Pringle, R. (1983). *Gender at Work*. Sydney: George Allen and Unwin.

Gatrell, C. (2004). *Hard Labour: the Sociology of Parenthood, Family Life and Career*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing.

Gatrell, C. (2008). *Embodying Women's Work*. Maidenhead, Berkshire: Open University Press.

Gavanas, A. (2010). *Who Cleans the Welfare State? Migration, Informalization, Social Exclusion and Domestic Services in Stockholm.* Research Report 2010/3. Stockholm: Institute for Future Studies.

Geary, J.F. (1992). Employment flexibility and human resource management: the case of three American electronics plants. *Work, Employment and Society*, 6(2), 251–270.

Gee, M. (2005). Confessions of a domestic cleaner. *The Guardian.* 13 September 2005. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/sep/13/gender.uk [Accessed 18 October 2013].

Gershuny, J. (2005). Busyness as the badge of honour for the new superordinate working class. *Social Research: an International Quarterly*, 72(2), 287–314.

Gill, K. (2009/2012). *Of Poverty and Plastic: Scavenging and Scrap Trading Entrepreneurs in India's Urban Informal Economy.* [Oxford Scholarship Online]. Available at: http://www.oxfordscholarship.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198060864.001.0001/acprof-9780198060864 [Accessed 15 February 2016].

Gill, R. (2010). Breaking the silence: the hidden injuries of the neoliberal university. In R. Ryan-Flood and R. Gill, (Eds.). *Secrecy and Silence in the Research Process. Feminist Reflections.* London: Routledge, pp. 228–224.

Gittins, D. (1993). *The Family in Question. Changing Households & Familiar Ideologies.* Basingstoke, Hants: MacMillan.

Glazer-Malbin, N. (1976). Housework. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 1, 905–922.

Glenn, E.N. (1981). Occupational ghettoization: Japanese American women and domestic service, 1905–1970. *Ethnicity*, 8, 352–386.

Glenn, E.N. (1986). *Issei, Nisei, War Bride: Three Generations of Japanese American Women in Domestic Service.* Philadelphia, PA: Temple.

Glenn, E.N. (1992). From servitude to service work: historical continuities in the racial division of paid reproductive labor. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 18(1), 1–43.

Glenn, E.N. (2000). Creating a caring society. *Contemporary Sociology*, 29(1), 84–94.

Goerdeler, K.J., Wegge, J., Schrod, N., Bilinska, P., and Rudolf, M. (2015). 'Yuck that's disgusting!' – 'No not to me': antecedents of disgust in geriatric care and its relation to emotional exhaustion and intention to leave. *Motivation and Emotion*, 39, 247–259.

Gogna, M. (1989). Domestic workers in Buenos Aires. In E.M. Chaney and M. Garcia Castro, (Eds.). *Muchachas No More. Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 83–104.

Good, L. and Cooper, R. (2016). 'But it's your job to be friendly': employees coping with and contesting sexual harassment from customers in the service sector. *Gender, Work & Organization.* Published online first 15 January 2016. doi: 10.1111/gwao.12117.

Gopal, M. (1999). Disempowered despite wage work: women workers in beedi industry. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 34(16/17), WS12–WS20.

Gore, T. and Hollywood, E. (2009). The role of social networks and geographical location in labour market participation in the UK coalfields. *Environment and Planning C Government and Policy*, 27(6), 1008–1021.

Goyan Kittler, P. and Sucher, K. (2008). *Food and Culture,* 5th edn. Belmont, CA: Thompson Wadsworth.

Gregory, A. and Milner, S. (2009). Editorial. Work–life balance: a matter of choice? *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(1), 1–13.

Gregson, N. and Lowe, M. (1994a). *Servicing the Middle Classes: Class, Gender and Waged Domestic Work in Contemporary Britain.* London: Routledge.

Gregson, N. and Lowe, M. (1994b). Waged domestic labour and the renegotiation of the domestic division of labour within dual career households. *Sociology*, 28, 55–78.

Gregson, N. and Lowe, M. (1995). 'Too much work?' Class, gender and the reconstitution of middle-class domestic labour. In T. Butler and M. Savage, (Eds.). *Social Change and the Middle Classes*. London: UCL Press Limited, pp. 148–165.

Grose, J. (2013). Cleaning: the final feminist frontier. *New Republic.* 19 March 2013. [Online]. Available at: https://newrepublic.com/article/112693/112693 [Accessed 15 August 2014].

Grover, S. (2014.) Book review: Raka Ray and Seemin Qayum. 2009. *Cultures of Servitude: Modernity, Domesticity, and Class in India.* New Delhi. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 48, 284–286.

Groves, J.M. and Lui, L. (2012). The 'gift' of help: domestic helpers and the maintenance of hierarchy in the household division of labour. *Sociology*, 46, 57–73.

Guerrier, Y. and Adib, A.S. (2000). 'No, we don't provide that service': the harassment of hotel employees by customers. *Work, Employment and Society*, 14(4), 689–705.

Gunn, S. and Bell, R. (2002). *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl.* London: Orion.

Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, E. (2014). Domestic work–affective labor: on feminization and the coloniality of labor. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 46, 45–53.

Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, E. and Brites, J. (2014). Feminization of labor: domestic work between regulation and intimacy. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 46, 1–4.

Haidinger, B. (2008). Contingencies among households: gendered division of labour and transnational household organization – the case of Ukrainians in Austria. In H. Lutz, (Ed.). *Migration and Domestic Work: a European Perspective on a Global Theme*. Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 127–142.

Hall, C. (1973/1980). The history of the housewife (extract 1973). In E. Malos, (Ed.). *The Politics of Housework.* London: Allison and Busby, pp. 44–71.

Hand, E. (1992). *Sociological Aspects of Women's Beliefs about the Family; Staffordshire Housewives' Awareness of Alternatives within Family Life.* Unpublished: University of Keele. PhD.

Hansard. (1989). H.C. Deb. Vol. 150, cols. 747–750. (11 April). (Counting women's unremunerated work bill.) [Online]. Available at: http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1989/apr/11/counting-womens-unremunerated-work [Accessed 11 December 2012].

Hansen, K.T. (1990). Domestic trials: power and autonomy in domestic service in Zambia. *American Ethnologist*, 17(2), 360–375.

Hardyment, C. (1988). *From Mangle to Microwave. The Mechanization of Household Work.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Harris, J. (2012). Self-employed business opportunity? No thanks. *The Guardian.* 22 January 2012. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jan/22/self-employment-proper-jobs-cameron [Accessed 24 March 2014].

Hartmann, H.I. (1981). The family as the locus of gender, class, and political struggle: the example of housework. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 6(3), 366–394.

Harvey, G., Rhodes, C., Vachhani, S.J. and Willams, K. (2017). Neo-villeiny and the service sector: the case of hyper flexible and precarious work in fitness centres. *Work, Employment and Society*, 31(1), 19–35.

Hatton, E. (2015). Work beyond the bounds: a boundary analysis of the fragmentation of work. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(6), 1007–1018.

Hawksley, H. (2014). Why India's brick kiln workers 'live like slaves'. BBC News, 2 January 2014. [Online]. Available at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-india-25556965 [Accessed 15 April 2015].

Hebson, G. (2009). Renewing class analysis in studies of the workplace: a comparison of working-class and middle-class women's aspirations and identities. *Sociology*, 43(1), 27–44.

Hebson, G., Rubery, J. and Grimshaw, D. (2015). Rethinking job satisfaction in care work: looking beyond the care debates. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(2), 314–330.

Henry, M. (2007). If the shoe fits: authenticity, authority and agency feminist diasporic research. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 30, 70–80.

Hertz, R. and Ferguson, F.I.T. (1997). Kinship strategies and self-sufficiency among single mothers by choice: post modern family ties. *Qualitative Sociology*, 20(2), 187–209.

Hettige, S. and Paranagama, D. (2005). Gender and alcohol in Sri Lanka. In I.S. Obot and R. Room, (Eds.). *Alcohol, Gender and Drinking Problems: Perspectives from Low and Middle Income Countries.* Geneva: World Health Organization, pp. 167–188. [Online]. Available at: http://www.who.int/substance_abuse/publications/alcohol_gender_drinking_problems.pdf [Accessed 7 April 2016].

Higman, B.W. (1989). Domestic service in Jamaica since 1750. In E.M. Chaney and M. Garcia Castro, (Eds.). *Muchachas No More. Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 37–66.

Hill, B. (1996). *Servants. English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Hinsliff, G. (2014). The forelock-tugging's gone, but most of us still depend on servants. *The Guardian.* 24 October 2014. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/oct/24/still-depend-servants-amazon-toffs-bygone-age [Accessed 15 May 2015].

Hinze, S.W. (2004). 'Am I being oversensitive?' Women's experience of sexual harassment during medical training. *Health: an Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 8(1), 101–127.

HMRC. (n.d.). Employment Status Indicator. [Online.] Available at: https://esi2calculator.hmrc.gov.uk/esi/app/investigate.action?entity=%2F&factid=complete [Accessed 1 June 2014]. (Note: the website and tool was redesigned in April 2015 and is now available at: http://tools.hmrc.gov.uk/esi/screen/ESI/en-GB/summary?user=guest.)

Hochschild, A.R. (1983). *The Managed Heart.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hochschild, A.R. (2001). *The Time Bind. When Work Becomes Home and Home Becomes Work.* With a new introduction. New York: Henry Holt.

Hochschild, A.R. (2012). *The Outsourced Self: Intimate Life in Market Times.* New York: Metropolitan Books.

Hochschild, A.R. (with Machung, A.) (1989/2003) *The Second Shift.* USA: Penguin (reissue edition).

Hodkinson, P. (2009). Grounded theory and inductive research. In N. Gilbert, (Ed.). *Researching Social Life*, 3rd edn. London: Sage, pp. 80–100.

Hoerder, D., van Nedereveen Meerkerk, E., and Neunsinger, S., (Eds.). (2015). *Towards a Global History of Domestic and Caregiving Workers*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill.

Holtz, P., Kronberger, N. and Wagner, W. (2012). Analyzing internet forums: a practical guide. *Journal of Media Psychology: Theories, Methods, & Applications*, 24(2), 55–66.

Hom, S. (2008/2010). Housekeepers and nannies in the homework economy: on the morality an politics of paid housework. In R. Whisnant and P. DesAutels, (Eds.). *Global Feminist Ethics.* Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 23–42.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2001)*. Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2007). Preface to the 2007 edition. In *Doméstica: Immigrant Workers Cleaning and Caring in the Shadows of Affluence*. With a new preface. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. ix–xvi.

Horn, P. (2012). *Life Below Stairs: the Real Lives of Servants, the Edwardian Era to 1939*. Stroud: Amberley Publishing.

Hu, Y. and Stewart, F. (2009). Pension coverage and informal sector workers: international experiences. OECD working papers on insurance and private pensions, No. 31. Paris: Financial Affairs Division, Directorate for Financial and Enterprise Affairs, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Huling, A. (2012). Domestic workers in Malaysia: hidden victims of abuse and forced labor. *International Law and Politics*, 44, 629–680.

Human Rights Watch. (2014). *Cleaning Human Waste: 'Manual Scavenging', Caste, and Discrimination in India.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/india0814_ForUpload.pdf [Accessed 25 August 2015].

Huppatz, K. and Goodwin, S. (2013). Masculinised jobs, feminised jobs and men's 'gender capital' experiences: understanding occupational segregation in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 49, 291–308.

Hyland, B. (2017). From factory workers to care workers … Women's Views on the News, 21 April 2017. Available at: http://www.womensviewsonnews. org/2017/04/from-factory-workers-to-care-workers/?utm_source= feedburner&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+WomensViews OnNews+%28Women%27s+Views+on+News%29 [Accessed 5 May 2017].

Illich, I. (1983). *Gender.* London: Marion Boyars.

ILO. (n.d.). Ratifications of C189 - Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). [Online]. Available at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:11300, 0::NO::P11300_INSTRUMENT_ID:2551460 [Accessed 15 July 2016].

ILO. (2010). *Decent Work for Domestic Workers*. Report IV(1). International Labour Conference, 99th Session, 2010. Geneva: International Labour Office.

ILO. (2011). *Convention No. 189. Decent Work for Domestic Workers*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

ILO. (2013). *Domestic Workers Across the World: Global and Regional Statistics and the Extent of Legal Protection*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

ILO. (2016). *Formalization of Domestic Work*. Geneva: International Labour Office.

indiatoday.in. (2014). Indian Administrative Service salary and perks. 13 June 2014. [Online]. Available at: http://indiatoday.intoday.in/education /story/ias-salary-and-perks/1/366752.html [Accessed 4 December 2015].

indirect government services. (2014). Employment status. Crown Copyright. Available at: http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/employment-status [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Irudayam, A., Mangubhai, J.P. and Lee, J.G. (2011). *Dalit Women Speak Out. Caste, Class and Gender Violence in India*. New Delhi: Zubaan.

Jackson, C. and Griffiths, P. (2014). Dirt and disgust as key drivers in nurses' infection control behaviours: an interpretative, qualitative study. *Journal of Hospital Infection*, 87(2), 71–76.

Jackson, S. (1992). Towards a historical sociology of housework. A material feminist analysis. *Women's Studies International Forum,* 15(2), 153–172.

Jackson, S. (2011). Materialist feminism, the self and global late modernity: some consequences for sexuality and intimacy. In A. Jónasdóttir, V. Bryson and K.B. Jones, (Eds.). *Sexuality, Gender and Power: Intersectional and Transnational Perspectives*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp. 15–29.

Jacobs, A.W. and Padavic, I. (2015). Hours, scheduling and flexibility for women in the US low-wage labour force. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 22, 67–86.

James, L. (2008). United by gender or divided by class? Women's work orientations and labour market behaviour. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 15(4), 394–412.

Jayaraman, S. (2013). *Behind the Kitchen Door*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

Jayawarna, D., Rouse, J. and Macpherson, A. (2014). Life course pathways to business start-up. *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development: an International Journal*, 26(3–4), 282–312.

Jeffrey, C., Jeffrey, R. and Jeffrey, P. (2004). Degrees without freedom: the impact of formal education on Dalit young men in North India. *Development and Change*, 35(5), 963–986.

Jeffrey, C., Jeffrey, P. and Jeffrey, R. (2005). When schooling fails: young men, education and low-caste politics in rural north India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, 39(1), 1–38.

Johnson, J. (2002). *Getting By on the Minimum. The Lives of Working-Class Women*. New York: Routledge.

Johnson, L. and Lloyd, J. (2004). *Sentenced to Everyday Life: Feminism and the Housewife*. Oxford: Berg.

Joinson, A. (1999). Social desirability, anonymity, and Internet-based questionnaires. *Behavior Research Methods, Instruments, & Computers*, 31(3), 433–438.

Jokela, M. (2017). The role of domestic employment policies in shaping precarious work. *Social Policy & Administration*, 51(2), 286–307.

Jones, A. (2003). *About Time for Change*. London: The Work Foundation in association with Employers for Work-life Balance. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theworkfoundation.com/assets/docs/publications/177_abou t%20time%20for%20change.pdf [Accessed 15 November 2015].

Jones, A. (2004). *Domestics: UK Domestic Workers and Their Reluctant Employers*. London: The Work Foundation.

Jones, H. (1997). Introduction. In H. Jones, (Ed.). *Towards a Classless Society?* London: Routledge, pp. 1–12.

Joshi, A. (2012). Fact sheet: the pension bill. *Wall Street Journal*, WSJ Blogs, 22 November 2012. [Online]. Available at: http://blogs.wsj.com/indiarealtime/2012/11/22/fact-sheet-the-pension-bill/ [Accessed 15 April 2015].

Kabeer, N. (2001). Reflections on the measurement of women's empowerment. In A. Sisask, (Ed.). *Discussing Women's Empowerment. Theory and Practice*. Sida Studies no. 3. Stockholm: Sida. [Online]. Available at: http://sidapublications.sitrus.com/optimaker/interface/stream/mabstre am.asp?filetype=1&orderlistmainid=15611&printfileid=15611&filex=22761 651770208 [Accessed 13 October 2014].

Kaluzynska, E. (1980). Wiping the floor with theory: a survey of writings on housework. *Feminist Review*, 6, 27–54.

Kennedy, M. (2001). One woman's reflections on the Ruskin conference, 'celebrating the Women's liberation movement thirty years on', Ruskin College, Oxford, 18 March 2000. *Women's History Review,* 10(2), 349–352.

Kessler, I., Heron, P. and Dopson, S. (2015). Managing patient emotions as skilled work and being 'one of us'. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(5), 775–791.

Khare, R. (2001). 'Do rats have rights?'. In *People Unlike Us: the India that is Invisible*. Contemporary Essays series. New Delhi: Harper Collins, pp:159–211.

Kilkey, M., Perrons, D. and Plomein, A. (2013). *Gender, Migration and Domestic Work. Masculinities, Male Labour and Fathering in the UK and USA.* Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Kimball, K. (2010). *The Dirty Life*. New York: Scribner.

Kindler, M. (2008). Risk and risk strategies in migration: Ukrainian domestic workers in Poland. In H. Lutz, (Ed.). *Migration and Domestic Work: a European Perspective on a Global Theme.* Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 145–159.

King, A.J. (2007). *Domestic Service in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Deference and Disdain.* Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing.

Kinman, G. and Jones, F. (2008). A life beyond work? Job demands, work-life balance, and wellbeing in UK academics. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment*, 17(1–2), 41–60.

Kirsch, G.E. (2005). Friendship, friendliness, and feminist fieldwork. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 30(4), 2163–2172.

Kishwar, M. (1991/2005). A horror of 'isms': why I do not call myself a feminist. In M. Chaudhuri, (Ed.). *Feminism in India.* London: Zed Books, pp. 26–51.

Kitzinger, C. and Wilkinson, S. (1996). Theories representing the Other. In C. Kitzinger and S. Wilkinson, (Eds.). *Representing the Other. A Feminism and Psychology Reader*. London: Sage, pp. 1–32.

Kordasiewicz, A. (2015). Class guilt? Employers and their relationships with domestic workers in Poland. In A. Triandafyllidou and S. Marchetti, (Eds.). *Employers, Agencies and Immigration: Paying for Care.* Surrey: Ashgate, pp. 53–72.

Kothari, U. (1997). Women's paid domestic work and rural transformation. A study in south Gujarat. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 32(17), WS-5–WS-12.

Krishnan, C.B. (2006). The liberated woman. *The Hindu.* 5 February 2006. [Online]. Available at: http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-features/tp-sundaymagazine/article3219371.ece [Accessed 8 October 2014].

Lachance-Grzela, M. and Bouchard, G. (2010). Why do women do the lion's share of housework? A decade of research. *Sex Roles*, 63, 767–780.

Lader, D., Short, S. and Gershuny, J. (2006). *The Time Use Survey, 2005. How We Spend Our Time.* London: Office for National Statistics. [Online]. Available at: http://www.timeuse.org/sites/ctur/files/public/ctur_report/1905/lader_short_and_gershuny_2005_kight_diary.pdf [Accessed 15 August 2015].

Lai, M.-Y. (2007). Field note: in your face – Indonesian domestic workers' activism at the World Trade Organization ministerial in Hong Kong. *Women's Studies Quarterly*, 35(3/4), 123–127.

Lalani, M. (2011). *Ending the Abuse. Policies that Work to Protect Migrant Domestic Workers*. London: Kalayaan. [Online]. Available at: www.kalayaan.org.uk [Accessed 15 May 2015].

Lalani, M. and Metcalf, H. (2012). *Forced Labour in the UK: the Business Angle*. JRF programme paper, forced labour. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. [Online]. Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/forced-labour-uk-business-angle [Accessed 11 June 2013].

Lan, P.-C. (2006). *Global Cinderellas*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Landry, J.T. (2011). The coming age of corporate paternalism. *HBR Blog Network*. 11 April 2011. [Online]. Available at: http://blogs.hbr.org/hbr/hbreditors /2011/04/in_hbr_and_elsewhere_a_1.html [Accessed 14 April 2013].

Lau, L. (2011). The male South Asian domestic servant: master-servant relationships, class chasms, and systematic emasculation. *The Sri Lanka Journal of the Humanities*, XXXVII (1&2), 35–54.

Laub, J.A. (2013). APS model. OLA group. [Online]. Available at: http://www. olagroup.com/Display.asp?Page=aps_model [Accessed 4 April 2013].

Lawler, S. (2005). Introduction: class, culture and identity. *Sociology*, 39, 797–806.

Ledwith, S. and Manfredi, S. (2000). Balancing gender in higher education: a study of the experience of senior women in a 'new' UK university. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 7, 7–33.

Lee, Y.-S. and Waite, L.J. (2005). Husbands' and wives' time spent on housework: a comparison of measures. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 67(2), 328–336.

Leonard, A. (2012). There is no ethical smartphone. *Salon*. 23 February 2012. [Online]. Available at: http://www.salon.com/2012/02/23/ there_is_no_ethical_smartphone/ [Accessed 19 April 2013].

Letherby, G. (2003). *Feminist Research in Theory and Practice*. Maidenhead, Berks: Open University Press.

Leung, W., Gill, R. and Randle, K. (2015). Getting in, getting on, getting out? Women as career scramblers in the UK film and television industries. *The Sociological Review*, 63(Suppl 1), 50–65.

Levine, R. (2005). A geography of busyness. *Social Research: an International Quarterly*, 72(2), 355–370.

Linder, M. and Houghton, J. (1990). Self-employment and the petty bourgeoisie: comment on Steinmetz and Wright. *American Journal of Sociology*, 93(3), 727–735.

Lodge, S. (2014). Landlords – HMRC is closing in on your undeclared lettings income. *The Guardian*. [Online]. 15 March 2014. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/money/2014/mar/15/landlords-hmrc-undeclared-lettings-income-tax [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Longhurst, R. (1997). (Dis)embodied geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21(4), 486–501.

Longhurst, R. (2000). Men's bodies and bathrooms. In *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries*. London: Routledge, pp. 66–90.

Lucas, K. (2011). Blue-collar discourses of workplace dignity: using outgroup comparisons to construct positive identities. *Papers in Communication Studies*, paper 13. [Online]. Available at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/ commstudiespapers/13 [Accessed 30 December 2015].

Lucas, K. and Buzzanell, P.M. (2004). Blue-collar work, career, and success: occupational narratives of *Sisu*. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 2(4), 273–292.

Lüthi, D. (2010). Private cleanliness, public mess: purity, pollution and space in Kottar, South India. In E. Durr and R. Jaffe, (Eds.). *Urban Pollution:*

Cultural Meanings, Social Practices. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, pp. 67–84.

Lutz, H. (2002). At your service madam! The globalization of domestic service. *Feminist Review*, 70, 90–101.

Lutz, H. (2007). Domestic work. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 14, 187–191.

Lutz, H. (2008). When home becomes a workplace: domestic work as an ordinary job in Germany? In H. Lutz, (Ed.). *Migration and Domestic Work: a European Perspective on a Global Theme.* Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 43–60.

Lutz, H. (2011). *The New Maids: Transnational Women and the Care Economy.* Translated by Deborah Shannon. London: Zed Books.

Lyonette, C. and Crompton, R. (2015). Sharing the load? Partners' relative earnings and the division of domestic labour. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(1), 23–40.

Macdonald, C.L. and Merrill, D.A. (2002). 'It shouldn't have to be a trade': recognition and redistribution in care work advocacy. *Hypatia*, 17, 67–83.

Mackenzie, A. (2009). *Ask Aggie: For All Your Cleaning Solutions.* London: Penguin Books.

Magnus, E. (1934a). The social, economic and legal conditions of domestic servants: I. *International Labor Review*, 30, 190–207.

Magnus, E. (1934b). The social, economic and legal conditions of domestic servants: II. *International Labor Review*, 30, 336–364.

Mainiero, L.A. and Sullivan, S.E. (2005). Kaleidoscope careers: an alternate explanation for the 'opt-out' revolution. *Academy of Management Executive*, 19(1), 106–123.

Markham, A., Buchanan, E., and AOIR Working Committee. (2012). Ethical decision-making and Internet research: recommendations from the AOIR ethics working committee. http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf [Accessed 5 August 2014].

Marriage Savers Calgary Cleaning Services. (2016). About Marriage Savers. [Online]. Available at: http://themarriagesavers.ca/ [Accessed 12 February 2016].

Marshall, J. (1995). *Women Managers Moving On: Exploring Career and Life Choices.* London: Routledge.

Martens, L. (2007/2012). The visible and invisible: (de)regulation in contemporary cleaning practices. In B. Campkin and R. Cox, (Eds.). *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination.* London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 34–48.

Martens, L. and Scott, S. (2005). 'The unbearable lightness of cleaning': Representations of domestic practice and products in *Good Housekeeping* magazine (UK) 1951–2001. *Consumption Markets and Culture*, 8, 371–409.

Martens, L. and Scott, S. (2006). Under the kitchen surface: domestic products and conflicting constructions of home. *Home Cultures: The Journal of Architecture, Design and Domestic Space*, 3(1), 39–62.

Martínez, J. and Lowrie, C. (2009). Colonial constructions of masculinity: transforming Aboriginal Australian men into 'houseboys'. *Gender & History*, 21(2), 305–323.

Mattila, K. (2016).[229] Gendered vulnerabilities: work–life trajectories of female domestic workers in Jaipur. In S. Raju and S. Jatrana, (Eds.).*Women Workers in Urban India.* New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, pp. 67–96.

Mattila, P. (2011). *Domestic Labour Relations in India. Vulnerability and Gendered Life Courses in Jaipur.* Unpublished: University of Helsinki. PhD. Helsinki: Interkont Books 19.

Maushart, S. (2003). *Wifework: What Marriage Really Means for Women.* London: Bloomsbury.

Mavin, S. and Grandy, G. Women elite leaders doing respectable business femininity: how privilege is conferred, contested and defended through the body. *Gender, Work & Organization*, published ahead of print 6 May 2016, doi, 10.1111/gwao.12130.

Mayer-Ahuja, N. (2004). Three worlds of cleaning: women's experiences of precarious labor in the public sector, cleaning companies and private households of West Germany, 1973–1998. *Journal of Women's History*, 16(2), 116–141.

Mayyasi, A. (2013). The IIT entrance exam. Pricenomics. [Online]. Available at: http://priceonomics.com/the-iit-entrance-exam/ [Accessed 15 February 2016].

McDowell, L. (2014). Gender, work, employment and society: feminist reflections on continuity and change. *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(5), 825–837.

McNally, F. (1979). *Women for Hire. A Study of the Female Office Worker.* London: MacMillan Press.

Meagher, G. (1997). *Just Another Lousy Job? Evaluation of the Construction of Paid Household Work.* Unpublished: University of Sydney. PhD. Available at: http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/1881/1/The%20 Ultimate%20Lousy%20Job%20Evaluating%20the%20Construction%20of %20Paid%20Household%20Work.pdf [Accessed 4 April 2013].

Meagher, G. (2002). Is it wrong to pay for housework? *Hypatia*, 17(2), 52–66.

Meagher, G. (2003). *Friend or Flunkey. Paid Domestic Work in the New Economy.* Sydney: UNSW Press.

Meagher, G., Szebehely, M. and Mears, J. (2016). How institutions matter for job characteristics, quality and experiences: a comparison of home care work for older people in Australia and Sweden. *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(5), 731–749.

Mendez, J.B. (1998). Of mops and maids: contradictions and continuities in bureaucratized domestic work. *Social Problems*, 45(1), 114–135.

Metcalfe, G. (2013). *Young Women's Everyday Lives: Home and Work in the North East of England.* Unpublished: Newcastle University School of Geography, Politics and Sociology. PhD.

Meyers, M. (2013). The war on academic women: reflections on postfeminism in the neoliberal academy. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 37(4), 274–283.

Milburn, S. (2015a). Emails to Lotika Singha. Inquiry regarding UK SIC: self-employed domestic cleaners. 30 April, 11 May and 12 May 2015.

---

[229] K. Mattila and P. Mattila are the same author. See author's biography at Finnish League of Human Rights (2016). Nimenmuutos: Ihmisoikeusliiton pääsihteeristä Kaari Mattila. Available at: https://ihmisoikeusliitto.fi/nimenmuutos-ihmisoikeusliiton-paasihteerista-kaari-mattila/ [Accessed 23 October 2016].

Milburn, S. (2015b). Email to Lotika Singha. Another inquiry regarding Labour Force Survey. 27 July 2015.

Milkman, R., Reese, E. and Roth, B. (1998). The macrosociology of paid domestic labor. *Work and Occupations*, 25(4), 483–510.

Miller, J. and Glassner, B. (1998). The 'inside' and the 'outside'. Finding realities in interviews. In D. Silverman, (Ed.). *Qualitative Research. Theory, Method and Practice*. London: Sage, pp. 125–139.

Mills, S. (2004). Class, gender and politeness. *Multilingua*, 23, 171–190.

Mirchandani, K., Mukherjee, S. and Tambe, S. (2016). Old jobs in new forms: women's experiences in the housekeeping sector in Pune. In S. Raju and S. Jatrana, (Eds.). *Women Workers in Urban India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, pp. 121–138.

Mitchell, A. (2015). The role balance experience of Black female counsellor education doctoral students maintaining full-time employment and significant relationships. Unpublished paper presented at 'Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium'. 5–7 August 2015. Somerville College, Oxford.

Mitra, N. (2012). Email to Lotika Singha. On domestic workers, feminist aspirations and equality. 31 July 2012.

Molinier, P. (2009/2012). Of feminists and their cleaning ladies: caught between the reciprocity of care & [*sic*] the desire for depersonalisation. *The Commoner*, 15, 287–306. Originally published in *Multitudes* (2009), 37–38, 113–121.

Momsen, J.H. (Ed.). (1999). *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service*. London: Routledge.

Moosvi, S. (2004). Domestic service in pre-colonial India: bondage, caste and market. In A. Fauve-Chamoux, (Ed.). *Formation of European Identity. Understanding the Globalization of Domestic Work, 16th–21st century*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, pp. 543–576.

Morel, N. (2015). Servants for the knowledge-based economy? The political economy of domestic services in Europe. *Social Politics*, 22(2), 170–192.

Moreton-Robinson, A. (2000). *Talkin' Up to the White Woman: Indigenous Women and Feminism*. St Lucia: University of Queensland Press.

Morgan, D.H.J. (2011). *Rethinking Family Practices*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Morgan, S. (2009). Review of theorising feminist history: a thirty-year perspective. *Woman's History Review*, 18(3), 381–407.

Moya, J.C. (2007). Domestic service in a global perspective: gender, migration, and ethnic niches. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(4), 559–579.

Mullings, B. (1999). Insider or outsider, both or neither: some dilemmas of interviewing in a cross-cultural setting. *Geoforum*, 30, 337–350.

Mumsnet Census. (2009). [Online]. Available at: http://www.mumsnet.com/info/media/census-2009 [Accessed 5 August 2014].

Mundlak, G. and Shamir, H. (2011). Bringing together or drifting apart – targeting care work as work like no other. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 289–308.

Myrdal, A. and Klein, V. (1956/1968). *Women's Two Roles. Home and Work*. London: Butler and Tanner.

Narayan, U. (1997). *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism (Thinking Gender)*. New York: Routledge.

Narayan, U. (1998). Essence of culture and a sense of history: a feminist critique of cultural essentialism. *Hypatia*, 13(2), 86–106.

Näre, L. (2011). The moral economy of domestic and care labour: migrant workers in Naples, Italy. *Sociology*, 45, 396–412.

Narula, R. (1999). Cinderellas need not apply. A study of paid domestic work in Paris. In J.H. Momsen, (Ed.). *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service*. London: Routledge, pp. 148–163.

NCEUS. (2008). *Report on Definitional and Statistical Issues Relating to the Informal Economy*. New Delhi: National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector.

NCEUS. (2009). *The Challenge of Employment in India: an Informal Economy Perspective. Volume I – Main Report*. New Delhi: National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector.

Neetha, N. (2004). Making of female breadwinners. migration and social networking of women domestics in Delhi. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 24, 1681–1688.

Neetha, N. (2008). Regulating domestic work. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 13 September, 26–28.

Neetha, N. (2009). Contours of domestic service: characteristics, work relations and regulation. *Indian Journal of Labour Economics*, 52(3), 489–506.

Neetha, N. (2016). Persistent inequalities and deepened burden of work? An analysis of women's employment in Delhi. In S. Raju and S. Jatrana, (Eds.).*Women Workers in Urban India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, pp. 36–66.

Neetha, N. and Palriwala, R. (2011). Absence of state law: domestic workers in India. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 97–120.

Nelson, M.K. (2004). How men matter: housework and self-provisioning among rural single-mother and married-couple families in Vermont, US. *Feminist Economics*, 10(2), 9–36.

Nicholson, V. (2015). *Perfect Wives in Ideal Homes: the Story of Women in the 1950s*. London: Penguin UK.

O'Dwyer, B. (2007). Qualitative data analysis: illuminating the process for transforming a 'messy' but 'attractive' 'nuisance'. In C. Humphrey and B. Lee, (Eds.). *The Real Life Guide to Accounting Research. A Behind-the-Scenes View of Using Qualitative Research Methods*. Oxford: Elsevier, pp. 391–408.

Oakley, A. (1974/1977). *Housewife*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Oakley, A. (1974/1985). *The Sociology of Housework*. London: Martin Robinson.

Oakley, A. (2000). *Experiments in Knowing. Gender and Method in Social Sciences*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Oakley, A. (2005). *The Ann Oakley Reader. Gender, Women and Social Science*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

ONS. (2010a). *Standard Occupational Classification 2010. Volume 1 Structure and Descriptions of Unit Groups*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

ONS. (2010b). *Standard Occupational Classification 2010. Volume 1 The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification: (Rebased on the SOC2010)*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

ONS. (2011). *Labour Force Survey. User Guide. Volume 1 – LFS Background and Methodology 2011*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.esds.ac.uk/doc/6782%5Cmrdoc%5Cpdf%5Clfs_user_guide_vol1_background2011.pdf [Accessed 15 January 2015].

ONS. (2013). *Families and Households in England and Wales: 2011*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/articles/familiesandhouseholdsinenglandandwales/2013-01-30 [Accessed 13 April 2016].

ONS. (2015a). *Harmonised Concepts and Questions for Social Data Sources. Primary Principles. Ethnic Group*. [Online]. Available at:

http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/harmonisation/primary-set-of-harmonised-concepts-and-questions/index.html [Accessed 13 April 2016].

ONS. (2015b). *Labour Force Survey. User Guide. Volume 3 – Details of LFS Variables 2015.* [Online]. Available at: http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/method-quality/specific/labour-market/labour-market-statistics/index.html [Accessed 13 April 2015].

ONS. (2016). *Household Satellite Accounts: 2005 to 2014.* [Online]. Available at: https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/nationalaccounts/satelliteaccounts/compendium/householdsatelliteaccounts/2005to2014 [Accessed 15 June 2016].

Orr, D. (2013). Lawson, Saatchi and Grillo: the messy bond between master and servant. *The Guardian.* 20 December 2013. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/dec/20/lawson-saatchi-grillo-messy-bond-master-servant [Accessed 20 May 2015].

Ostrander, S. (1987). Women using other women. *Contemporary Sociology,* 16 (1), 51–53.

Ozyegin, G. and Hondagneu-Sotelo, P. (2008). Conclusion: domestic work, migration and the new gender order in contemporary Europe. In H. Lutz, (Ed.). *Migration and Domestic Work: a European Perspective on a Global Theme.* Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 195–207.

Padley, M., Valadez, L. and Hirsch, D. (2015). *Households Below a Minimum Income Standard.* JRF programme paper. Minimum Income Standard. Loughborough, Leics: Joseph Rowntree Foundation and Loughborough University. [Online]. Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/households-below-minimum-income-standard-200809-201213 [Accessed 1 December, 2016].

Pai, H.-H. (2008). *Chinese Whispers. The True Story Behind Britain's Hidden Army of Labour.* London: Penguin Books.

Palriwala, R. and Uberoi, P. (2008). Exploring the links: gender issues in marriage and migration. In R. Palriwala and P. Uberoi, (Eds.). *Marriage, Migration and Gender.* New Delhi: Sage Publications, pp. 23–62.

Pape, K. (2016). ILO Convention C189—a good start for the protection of domestic workers: An insider's view. *Progress in Development Studies,* 16(2), 189–202.

Parreñas, R.S. (2008). *The Force of Domesticity. Filipina Migrants and Globalization.* New York, NY: NYU Press.

Pedersen, S. and Smithson, J.S. (2013). Mothers with attitude – how the Mumsnet parenting forum offers space for new forms of femininity to emerge online. *Women's Studies International Forum,* 38, 97–106.

Pellegrini, E.K., Scandura, T.A. and Jayaram, V. (2010). Cross-cultural generalizability of paternalistic leadership: an expansion of leader-member exchange theory. *Group and Organization Management,* 35(4), 391–420.

Pérez, I. and Stallaert, C. (2016). The professionalization of paid domestic work and its limits: experiences of Latin American migrants in Brussels. *European Journal of Women's Studies,* 23(2), 155–168.

Perry, S.E. (1998). *Dirty Work, Clean Jobs, Proud People. Collecting Garbage.* New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Peschek-Bohmer, F. and Schreiber, G. (n.d.). Healing yourself using urine. [Online]. Available at: http://www.innerself.com/Health/urine.htm [Accessed 12 September 2015].

Philips, D. (2010). The women's liberation movement at forty (review). *History Workshop Journal,* 70 (1), 293–297.

Philpott, J. (2012). *The Rise in Self-Employment.* Work Audit series. London: Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Pilling, D. (2014). Has the GDP outgrown its use? *FT Magazine.* 4 July 2016. [Online]. Available at: https://next.ft.com/content/dd2ec158-023d-11e4-ab5b-00144feab7de [Accessed 16 June 2016].

Pinkster, F.M. (2007). Localised social networks, socialisation and social mobility in a low-income neighbourhood in the Netherlands. *Urban Studies,* 44(13), 2587–2603.

Platzer, E. (2006). From private solutions to public responsibility and back again: the new domestic services in Sweden. *Gender & History,* 18(2), 211–221.

Pogrebin, A. (2004). Nanny scam. *New York Magazine.* 26 July – 2 August 2004. [Online]. Available at: http://nymag.com/nymetro/urban/family/features/9527/ [Accessed 18 March 2013].

Pollert, A. (1981). *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives.* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pollert, A. (1996). Gender and class revisited; or, the poverty of 'patriarchy'. *Sociology,* 30(4), 639–659.

Pooley, S. (2009). Domestic servants and their urban employers: a case study of Lancaster, 1880–1914. *Economic History Review,* 62(2), 405–429.

Potter, J. (2015). *Crisis at Work. Identity and the End of Career.* Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.

Potter, M. and Hamilton, J. (2014). Picking on vulnerable migrants: precarity and the mushroom industry in Northern Ireland. *Work, Employment and Society,* 28(3), 390–406.

Prasad-Aleyamma, M. (2017). The cultural politics of wages: ethnography of construction work in Kochi, India. *Contributions to Indian Sociology,* 51(2), 163–193.

Praxis India/Institute of Participatory Practice. (2014). *Down the Drain – Participatory Video Made by Sewage Workers in Delhi.* [Video]. [Online]. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3azx-jUT1sY [Accessed 24 May 2014].

Press, J.E. and Townsley, E. (1998). Wives' and husbands' housework reporting: gender, class, and social desirability. *Gender & Society,* 12(2), 188–218.

Qi, X. (2011). Face. A Chinese concept in a global sociology. *Journal of Sociology,* 47(3), 279–295.

Radcliffe, L.S. and Cassell, C. (2013). Resolving couples' work–family conflicts: the complexity of decision making and the introduction of a new framework. *Human Relations,* 67(7), 793–819.

Radhakrishnan, S. (2009). Professional women, good families: respectable femininity and the cultural politics of a 'new' India. *Qualitative Sociology,* 32, 195–212.

Rafkin, L. (1998). *Other People's Dirt. A Housecleaner's Curious Adventures.* Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.

Rafnsdóttir, G.L. and Heijstra, T.M. (2013). Balancing work–family life in academia: the power of time. *Gender, Work & Organization,* 20, 283–296.

Raghuram, P. (1999). Interlinking trajectories. Migration and domestic work in India. In J.H. Momsen, (Ed.). *Gender, Migration and Domestic Service.* London: Routledge, pp. 215–228.

Raghuram, P. (2001). Caste and gender in the organisation of paid domestic work in India. *Work, Employment and Society,* 15, 607–617.

Rajak, D. (2011). *In Good Company: the Anatomy of Corporate Social Responsibility.* Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Raju, S. and Bose, D. (2016). Women workers in urban India and the cities. In S. Raju and S. Jatrana, (Eds.).*Women Workers in Urban India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, pp. 36–66.

Raju, S. and Jatrana, S. (Eds.). (2016a). *Women Workers in Urban India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.

Raju, S. and Jatrana, S. (2016b). Setting the backdrop. In S. Raju and S. Jatrana, (Eds.).*Women Workers in Urban India*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–35.

Rani, P. and Kaul, P. (1986). For two meals a day. A report on Tamil maids. *Manushi*, 35, 2–15.

Rankin, J. and Butler, S. (2015). City Link's army of self-employed workers count cost of business failure. *The Guardian*. 1 January 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/business/2015/jan/01/city-link-army-self-employed-count-cost-failure l [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Ray, R. (2000). Masculinity, femininity, and servitude: domestic workers in Calcutta in the late twentieth century. *Feminist Studies*, 26, 691–718.

Ray, R. and Qayum, S. (2009/2010). *Cultures of Servitude. Modernity, Domesticity, and Class in India*. New Delhi, Oxford University Press.

Reader's Digest (2011). *How to Clean Just About Everything*. London: Vivat Direct.

Reay, D. (2004). 'Mostly roughs and toughs': social class, race and representation in inner city schooling. *Sociology*, 38(5), 999–1017.

Reay, D. (2005). Beyond consciousness? The psychic landscape of social class. *Sociology*, 39(5), 911–928.

Reinharz, S. (1992). *Feminist Methods in Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Risman, B. and Johnson-Sumerford, D. (1998). Doing it fairly: a study of postgender marriages. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 60, 23–40.

Rivas, L.M. (2003). Invisible labors: caring for the independent person. In B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild, (Eds.). *Global Women. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy*, London: Granta Books, pp. 70–84.

Rivera, L.A. (2015). *Pedigree: How Elite Students Get Elite Jobs*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Roberts, D.E. (1997). Spiritual and menial housework. University of Pennsylvania Law School, paper 1282. *Faculty Scholarship*. [Online]. Available at: http://scholarship.law.upenn.edu/faculty_scholarship/1282 [Accessed 6 February 2016].

Robinson, J.P. and Milkie, M.A. (1998). Back to basics: trends in and role determinants of women's attitudes towards housework. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 60(1), 205–218.

Rolfe, H. (2006). Where are the men? Gender segregation in the childcare and early years sector. *National Institute Economic Review*, 195, 103–117.

Rollins, J. (1985). *Between Women. Domestics and Their Employers*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press.

Romero, M. (2002). *M.A.I.D. in the USA. 10th Anniversary Edition*. London: Routledge.

Rose, D. and Pevalin, D.J. (with O'Reilly, K.). (2005). *The National Statistics Socio-economic Classification: Origins, Development and Use*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Rose, M. (2004/2014). *The Mind At Work. Valuing the Intelligence of the American Worker. 10th Anniversary Edition*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

Roy, A. (2014a). *Capitalism: a Ghost Story*. London: Verso.

Roy, A. (2014b). The doctor and the saint: an introduction. In B.R. Ambedkar. *Annihilation of Caste: the Annotated Critical Edition.* Edited by S. Anand. London: Verso.

Roy, A. and Barsiaman, D. (2004). *The Check Book and the Cruise Missile.* Conversations with Arundhati Roy. Interviews with David Barsiaman. Cambridge, MA: South End Press.

Rubery, J., Hebson, G., Grimshaw, D., Carroll, M., Marchington, L., Smith, L., *et al.* (2011). *The Recruitment and Retention of a Care Workforce for Older People.* London: Department of Health.

Russell, S. (2006). Netmums: online support for parents. *Community Practitioner: the Journal of the Community Practitioners' & Health Visitors' Association,* 2, 44–45.

Sagar. (2017). Down the drain. How the Swachh Bharat Mission is heading for failure. *The Caravan,* 9(5), 30–55.

Saldaña-Tejeda, A. (2015). Un/Identifying reflexive subjects: the case of women in paid domestic work in Mexico. *Current Sociology,* 63(7), 943–960.

Salzinger, L. (1991). A maid by any other name: the transformation of 'dirty work' by Central American immigrants. In M. Burawoy, [Ed.]. *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis.* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, pp. 139–160.

Sambrook, P. (2005/2009). *Keeping Their Place: Domestic Service in the Country House.* Stroud: The History Press.

Samman, E., Presler-Marshall, E., Jones, N. with Bhatkal, T., Melamed, C., Stavropoulou, M. and Wallace, J. (2016). *Women's Work. Mothers, Children and the Global Childcare Crisis.* London: Overseas Development Institute. [Online]. Available at: http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/10333.pdf [Accessed 12 April 2016].

Sandroll, A.M., Grov, E.K., Kristofferson, K. and Hague, S. (2015). When care situations evoke difficult emotions in nursing staff members: an ethnographic study in two Norwegian nursing homes. *BMC Nursing,* 14, 40. [Online]. Available at: http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6955/14/40 [Accessed 1 September 2015].

Sang, K.J.C., Dainty, A.R.J. and Ison, S.G. (2014). Gender in the UK architectural profession: (re)producing and challenging hegemonic masculinity. *Work, Employment and Society,* 28, 247–264.

Saptari, R. (1999). Rethinking domestic service. *International Review of Social History,* 44, 77–85.

Sarti, R. (2005). Conclusion. Domestic service and European identity. In S. Pasleau and I. Schopp, (Eds., with R. Sarti). *The Modelization of Domestic Service. Proceedings of the Servant Project, Vol. V.* Liège: Les Éditions de l'Université de Liège, pp. 195–284.

Sarti, R. (2008). The globalisation of domestic service – an historical perspective. In H. Lutz, (Ed.). *Migration and Domestic Work: a European Perspective on a Global Theme.* Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 77–98.

Sassen, S. (2003). Global cities and survival circuits. In B. Ehrenreich and A.R. Hochschild, (Eds.). *Global Women. Nannies, Maids and Sex Workers in the New Economy,* London: Granta Books, pp. 254–274.

Sassen, S. (2009). The other workers in the advanced corporate economy. *S&F Online,* Issue 8.1 (Valuing Domestic Work). [Online]. Available at: http://sfonline.barnard.edu/work/sassen_01.htm [Accessed 4 February 2013].

Schober, P.S. (2013). Gender equality and outsourcing of domestic work, childbearing, and relationship stability among British couples. *Journal of Family Issues,* 34(1), 25–52.

Schwartz, L. (2014). 'What we think is needed is a union of domestics such as the miners have': the Domestic Workers' Union of Great Britain and Ireland 1908–14. *Twentieth Century British History*, 25(2), 173–198.

Schwartz, L. (2015). A job like any other? Feminist responses and challenges to domestic worker organizing in Edwardian Britain. *International Labour and Working-Class History*, 88, 30–48.

Scrinzi, F. (2010). Gender, migration and the ambiguous enterprise of professionalizing domestic service: the case of vocational training for the unemployed in France. *Feminist Review*, 98, 153–172.

Seale, C., Charteris-Black, J., MacFarlane, A. and McPherson, A. (2010). Interviews and internet forums: a comparison of two sources of qualitative data. *Qualitative Health Research*, 20(5), 595–606.

Seierstad, C. and Kirton, G. (2015). Having it all? Women in high commitment careers and work–life balance in Norway. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 22(4), 390–404.

Sen, S. and Sengupta, N. (2012). Marriage, work and education among domestic workers in Kolkata. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVII(43), 67–77.

Shah, R.A. (2015). Work-life balance and gender: a study of professionals in India. *Review of Management*, 5(1/2), 5–18.

Sherman, K.F. (2000). *A Housekeeper is Cheaper Than a Divorce: Why You Can Afford to Hire Help and How to Get It.* Mountain View, CA: Life Tools Press.

Shildrick, T., MacDonald, R., Webster, C.S. and Garthwaite, K. (2012). *Poverty and Insecurity: Life in Low-Pay, No-Pay Britain.* Bristol: Policy Press.

Shire, K. (2015). Family supports and insecure work: the politics of household service employment in conservative welfare regimes. *Social Politics*, 22(2), 193–219.

Shows, C. and Gerstel, N. (2009). Fathering, class, and gender: a comparison of physicians and emergency medical technicians. *Gender & Society*, 23(2), 161–187.

Shrivastava, H. (2015). Harassment at the workplace, powerlessness and identity: experiences of women civil servants in India. *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 22(3), 437–457.

Sigle-Rushton, W. (2010). Men's unpaid work and divorce: reassessing specialization and trade in British families. *Feminist Economics*, 16, 1–26.

Simpson, R., Hughes, J., Slutskaya, N. and Balta, M. (2014). Sacrifice and distinction in dirty work: men's construction of meaning in the butcher trade. *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(5), 754–770.

Simpson, R., Slutskaya, N., Lewis, P. and Höpfl, H. (2012). Introducing dirty work, concepts and identities. In R. Simpson, N. Slutskaya, P. Lewis and H. Höpfl, (Eds.). *Dirty Work. Concepts and Identities.* Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 1–18.

Singh, A.N. (2001). *Women Domestic Workers: Socio-Economic Life.* Delhi: Shipra Publications.

Singh, V. (2007). *Women Domestics: Workers Within Households.* Jaipur: Rawat Publications.

Singha, L. (2012). *Negotiating the Domestic Sphere: Dual-Career Indian Migrant Couples.* Unpublished: University of York. Master's Dissertation.

Singha, L. (2014). Paid domestic work: is it a blight on modern society? Unpublished paper presented at 'Gender, Work & Organization 2014' (GWO 2014). 8th Biennial International Interdisciplinary Conference. 24–26 June 2014. Keele University, Staffordshire, UK.

Singha, L. (2015). Housework as 'family practices' in transnational couples: an exploratory study of middle-class Indians in the UK. *Families, Relationships and Societies*, 4(1), 131–147.

Skeggs, B. (1997/2002). *Formations of Class and Gender*. London: Sage.

Skeggs, B. (2004). *Self, Class, Culture*. London: Routledge.

Skrivankova, K. (2014). *Forced Labour in the United Kingdom*. York: Joseph Rowntree Foundation. [Online]. Available at: https://www.jrf.org.uk /report/forced-labour-united-kingdom [Accessed 4 December 2015].

Slaughter, A-M. (2012). Why women still can't have it all. *Atlantic Review*. 13 June 2012. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine /archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/ [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Slutskaya, N., Simpson, R., Hughes, J., Simpson, A. and Uygur, S. (2016). Masculinity and class in the context of dirty work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 23(2), 165–182.

Smith, A. and Elliot, F. (2012). The demands and challenges of being a retail store manager: 'handcuffed to the front doors'. *Work, Employment and Society*, 26(4), 676–684.

Smith, D. (2016). The upper classes in the twenty first century. *Discover Society*, Issue 34, 5 July 2016. [Online]. Available at: http://discoversociety.org /2016/07/05/the-upper-classes-in-the-twenty-first-century/ [Accessed 23 July 2016].

Smith, D.E. (2002). Afterword. In M. Romero. *M.A.I.D. in the USA*. New York. Routledge, pp. 203–206.

Smith, E. (2009). Social construction of skill viewed through the lens of training for the cleaning industry. Unpublished paper presented at 'Aligning Participants, Policy and Pedagogy: Traction and Tensions in VET Research'. 12th Annual Conference, AVETRA. 16–17 April 2009. Sydney, Australia. [Online]. Available at: http://www.avetra.org.au/annual_ conference/presentations-2009.shtml [Accessed 20 August 2014].

Smith, L.M. (1989). Where is María now? Former domestic workers in Peru. In E.M. Chaney and M. Garcia Castro, (Eds.). *Muchachas No More. Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean*. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, pp. 127–142.

Smith, P.R. (2011). The pitfalls of home: protecting the health and safety of paid domestic workers. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23, 309–339.

Soni-Sinha, U. (2006). Where are the women? Gender, labor, and discourse in the Noida Export Processing Zone and Delhi. *Feminist Economics*, 12(3), 335–365.

Soni-Sinha, U. (2008). Dynamics of the 'field': multiple standpoints, narrative and shifting positionality in multisited research. *Qualitative Research*, 8, 515–537.

Soni-Sinha, U. and Yates, C.A.B. (2013). 'Dirty work?' Cleaning, race and the union in industrial cleaning. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20, 599–758.

Soukup, R. (2012). Why I make my bed: 10 reasons i keep my house clean. [Online]. Available at: http://www.livingwellspendingless.com/2012 /02/15/why-i-make-my-bed-10-reasons-i-keep-my-house-clean/ [Accessed 15 September 2015].

Sourabh, N.C. (2007). *The Culture of Women's Work. A Case Study of Bihar, India*. Unpublished: University of Helsinki. PhD. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.doria.fi/bitstream/handle/10024/33767/thecultu.pdf?sequ ence=2> [Accessed 8 October 2012].

Spitze, G. (1999). Getting help with housework. Household resources and social networks. *Journal of Family Issues*, 20(6), 724–745.

Spitze, G. and Loscocco, K.A. (1999). The labor of Sisyphus? Women's and men's reactions to housework. *Social Science Quarterly*, 81(4), 1087–1100.

Spivak, G.C. (2000). The politics of translation. In L. Venuti, (Ed.). *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 397–416.

Srinivas, L. (1995). Master-servant relationship in a cross-cultural perspective. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 30, 269–278.

Srinivasan, S. (1997). Breaking rural bonds through migration: the failure of development for women in India. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 28, 89–102.

Stacey, C.L. (2005). Finding dignity in dirty work: the constraints and rewards of low-wage home care labour. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 27, 831–854.

Stancanelli, E.G.F. and Stratton, L.S. (2010). *Her Time, His Time, or the Maid's Time: an Analysis of the Demand for Domestic Work*. IZA DP No. 5253. Discussion paper series, Institute for the Study of Labor. [Online]. Available at: http://ftp.iza.org/dp5253.pdf [Accessed 15 November 2015].

Steinmetz, G. and Wright, E.O. (1989). The fall and rise of the petty bourgeoisie: changing patterns of self-employment in the postwar United States. *American Journal of Sociology*, 94(5), 973–1018.

Sturges, J. (2013). A matter of time: young professionals' experiences of long work hours. *Work, Employment and Society*, 27, 343–359.

Sullivan, O. (1996). Time co-ordination, the domestic division of labour and affective relations: time use and the enjoyment of activities within couples. *Sociology*, 30(1), 79–100.

Sullivan, O. (2006). *Changing Gender Relations, Changing Families. Tracing the Pace of Change Over Time*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield.

Sullivan, O. and Gershuny, J. (2012). Domestic outsourcing and multitasking: how much do they really contribute? Sociology working papers, paper number 2012-05, Department of Sociology, University of Oxford. [Online]. Available at: http://www.sociology.ox.ac.uk/working-papers/domestic-outsourcing-and-multitasking-how-much-do-they-really-contribute.html [Accessed 15 April 2015].

Sultana, F. (2007). Reflexivity, positionality and participatory ethics: negotiating fieldwork dilemmas in international research. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 6(3), 374–385.

Sun, W. (2008). 'Just looking': domestic workers' consumption practices and a latent geography of Beijing. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 15(5), 475-488.

Suresh Reddy, B. and Snehalatha, M. (2011). Sanitation and personal hygiene: what does it mean to poor and vulnerable women? *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, 18(3), 381–404.

Swan, E. (2012). Cleaning up? Transnational corporate femininity and dirty work in magazine culture. In R. Simpson, N. Slutskaya, P. Lewis and H. Höpfl, (Eds.). *Dirty Work. Concepts and Identities*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 182–202.

Sykes, W., Groom, G., Desai, P. and Kelly, J. (2014). *Coming Clean: the Experience of Cleaning Operatives*. Equality and Human Rights Commission research report 95. Manchester: Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Tandon, A. (2006). Domestic workers continue to be vulnerable to abuse, HIV: survey. *The Tribune*. 17 August 2006. [Online]. Available at:

http://www.tribuneindia.com/2006/20060817/cth1.htm [Accessed 20 July 2014].

Tandon, P. (2012). Domestic workers: how to give them their due. Researching Reality summer internship working paper. New Delhi: Centre for Civil Society.

Tatano Beck, C. (2005). Benefits of participating in internet interviews: women helping women. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(3), 411–422.

Taylor, C. and Gibbs, G.R. (2010). How and what to code. [Online QDA Web Site]. Available at: onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/Intro_QDA/how_what_to_code.php [Accessed 10 April 2012].

Taylor, S.J. and Bogdan, R. (1998). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*, 3rd edn. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Tellis-Nayak, V. (1983). Power and solidarity: clientage in domestic service. *Current Anthropology*, 24(1), 67–79.

Teotia, M.K. (2013). *Planning for the Urban Poor in Northwestern India: Emerging Policies, Practices and Issues (A Case Study of Chandigarh)*. Chandigarh: Centre for Research in Rural and Industrial Development (CRRID).

Thapar-Björkert, S. (1999). Negotiating 'otherness': dilemmas of a non-Western researcher in the Indian sub-continent. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 8(1), 57–69.

Thapar-Björkert, S. and Henry, M. (2004). Reassessing the research relationship: location, position and power in fieldwork accounts. *International Journal of Social Methodology*, 7(5), 363–381.

Tijdens K., van der Lippe, T. and de Ruijter, E. (2003). Working women's choices for domestic help. The effects of financial and time resources. AIAS working paper 03/17. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Institute for Advanced Labour Studies. [Online]. Available at: http://www.atria.nl/epublications/2003/Working_Womens_Choices_for_Domestic_Help.pdf [Accessed 15 November 2013].

Todd, S. (2009). Domestic service and class relations in Britain, 1900–1950. *Past and Present*, 203 (2009), 181–204.

Tomei, M. (2011). Decent work for domestic workers: reflections on recent approaches to tackle informality. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 185–212.

Torlina, J. (2011). *Working Class: Challenging Myths About Blue-Collar Labor*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Toynbee, P. (2002/2010). Introduction. In B. Ehrenreich. *Nickel and Dimed*. London: Granta, pp. ix–xiv.

Toynbee, P. (2003). *Hard Work. Life in Low-Pay Britain*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Toynbee, P. (2014). What if Downton Abbey told the truth about Britain? *The Guardian*. 22 December 2014. [Online]. Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/22/downton-abbey-truth-about-britain [Accessed 15 May 2015].

Træen, B. (2010). Sexual dissatisfaction among heterosexual Norwegians in couple relationships. *Sexual and Relationship Therapy*, 25(2)132–147.

Treas, J. and de Ruijter, E. (2008). Earnings and expenditures on household services in married and cohabiting unions. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 70, 796–805.

Treas, J. and Drobnic, S., (Eds.). (2010). *Dividing the Domestic: Men, Women, and Household Work in Cross-National Perspective*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Tregenna, F. (2011). What does the 'services sector' mean in Marxian terms? *Review of Political Economy*, 23(2), 281–298.

Triandafyllidou, A. (2013). Irregular migration and domestic work in Europe: who cares? In A. Triandafyllidou, (Ed.). *Irregular Migrant Domestic Workers in Europe. Who Cares?* Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, pp 1–16.

Triandafyllidou, A. and Marchetti, S. (2015). Paying for care: advantages and challenges for employers. In A. Triandafyllidou and S. Marchetti, (Eds.). *Employers, Agencies and Immigration: Paying for Care*. Surrey: Surrey, Ashgate, pp. 227–240.

Tronto, J. (2010). 'The servant problem' and justice for households. *Iris, European Journal of Philosophy and Public Debate*, II(3), 67–85.

Truss, C., Alfes, K., Shantz, A. and Rosewarne, A. (2013). Still in the ghetto? Experiences of secretarial work in the 21st century. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 24(4), 349–362.

Tsikata, D. (2011). Employment agencies and the regulation of domestic workers in Ghana institutionalizing informality. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law,* 23(1), 213–234.

Two Maids and a Mop. (2006). Hire a maid and save your marriage. *Twomaids Blog.* 19 September 2006. [Online]. Available at: http://blog.ineedamaid.com/2006/09/hire-maid-and-save-your-marriage.html [Accessed 28 April 2014].

Uberoi, P. (Ed.). (1993/2011) *Family, Kinship and Marriage in India.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Understanding Society. (n.d.). About the study. [Online]. Available at: https://www.understandingsociety.ac.uk/about [Accessed 16 August 2016].

United Nations. (2010). *The World's Women 2010. Trends and Statistics.* New York, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations.

University of Essex. (2015). Institute for Social and Economic Research, Understanding Society: Waves 1-5, 2009-2014 [computer file]. 7th Edition. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], November 2015. SN: 6614, http://dx.doi.org/10.5255/UKDA-SN-6614-7.

Usdansky, M.L. (2011). The gender-equality paradox: class and incongruity between work-family attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Family Theory & Review*, 3, 163–178.

Valk, R. and Srinivasan, V. (2011). Work–family balance of Indian women software professionals: a qualitative study. *IIMB Management Review*, 23(1), 39–50.

van Berkel, M. and de Graf, N.D. (1999). By virtue of pleasantness? Housework and the effects of education revisited. *Sociology*, 33(4), 785–808.

van der Geest, S. (2002). The night-soil collector: bucket latrines in Ghana. *Postcolonial Studies*, 5(2), 197–206.

van der Lippe, T., Frey, V. and Tsvetkova, M. (2013). Outsourcing of domestic tasks: a matter of preferences? *Journal of Family Issues*, 34, 1574–1597.

van der Lippe, T., Tijdens, K. and de Ruijter, E. (2004). Outsourcing of domestic tasks and time-saving effects. *Journal of Family Issues*, 25(2), 216–240.

van der Voordt, T.J.M. (2004). Productivity and employee satisfaction in flexible workplaces. *Journal of Corporate Real Estate*, 6(2), 133–148.

van Dongen, E. (2001). It isn't something to yodel about, but it exists! Faeces, nurses, social relations and status within a mental hospital. *Aging & Mental Health*, 5(3), 205–215.

van Hooff, J.H. (2011). Rationalising inequality: heterosexual couples' explanations and justifications for the division of housework along traditionally gendered lines. *Journal of Gender Studies*, 20(1), 19–30.

van Walsum, S. (2011). Regulating migrant domestic work in the Netherlands: opportunities and pitfalls. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 141–166.

VanEvery, J. (1995). *Heterosexual Women Changing the Family. Refusing to Be a Wife!* London: Taylor and Francis.

VanEvery, J. (1997). Understanding gendered inequality: reconceptualizing housework. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 20(3), 411–420.

Varghese, L. (2006). Constructing a worker identity: class, experience, and organizing in Worker's Awaaz. *Cultural Dynamics*, 18(2), 189–211.

Varia, N. (2011). 'Sweeping changes?' A review of recent reforms on protections for migrant workers in Asia and the Middle East. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law*, 23(1), 265–287.

Vasanthi, N. (2011). Addressing paid domestic work: a public policy concern. *Economic and Political Weekly*, XLVI(43), 85–93.

Veltman, A. (2004). The Sisyphean torture of housework: Simone de Beauvoir and inequitable divisions of domestic work in marriage. *Hypatia*, 19, 121–143.

Vera-Sanso, P. (2008). 'Who's money is it?': on misconceiving female autonomy and economic empowerment in low-income households. *IDS Bulletin*, 39(6), 51–59.

Verma, S. and Larson, R.W. (2001). Indian women's experience of household labour: oppression or personal fulfillment. *Indian Journal of Social Work*, 62(1), 46–66.

Visram, R. (1986/2015). *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes: the Story of Indians in Britain, 1700–1947*. London: Routledge.

Wadley, S. (1977). Women and the Hindu tradition. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 3(1), 113–125.

Walby, S. (1990). *Theorizing Patriarchy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Walker, J., Barrett, H., Wilson, G., Chang, Y.-S. (2010). *Relationships Matter: Understanding the Needs of Adults (Particularly Parents) Regarding Relationship Support Organisation*. Research Report DCSF-RR233, Newcastle: Family and Parenting Institute, Institute of Health and Society.

Wall, S. (2015). Dimensions of precariousness in an emerging sector of self-employment: a study of self-employed nurses. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 22, 221–236.

Walters, P. and Whitehouse, G. (2012). A limit to reflexivity: the challenge for working women of negotiating sharing of household labour. *Journal of Family Issues*, 33(8), 1117–1139.

Walters, S. (2005). Making the best of a bad job? Female part-timers' orientations and attitudes to work. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 12(3), 193–216.

Warhurst, C. and Nickson, D. (2009). 'Who's got the look?' Emotional, aesthetic and sexualized labour in interactive services. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(3), 385–404.

Warren, T. (2000). Women in low status part-time jobs: a class and gender analysis. *Sociological Research Online*, 4(4), n.p. [Online]. Available at: http://www.socresonline.org.uk/4/4/warren.html [Accessed 23 July 2014].

Warren, T., Fox, E. and Pascall, G. (2009). Innovative social policies: implications for work–life balance among low-waged women in England. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(1), 126–150.

Watts, J. (2006). 'The outsider within': dilemmas of qualitative feminist research within a culture of resistance. *Qualitative Research*, 6(3), 385–402.

Weeks, K. (2011). *The Problem with Work. Feminism, Marxism, Antiwork Politics and Postwork Imaginaries*. Durham: Duke University.

Westwood, S. (1984). *All Day, Every Day: Factory and Family in the Making of Women's Lives*. London: Pluto Press.

Wheen, F. (2012). *The Lady* and the vamp. *Vanity Fair*. [Online]. Available at: http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/2012/10/english-magazine-the-lady-revival [Accessed 30 October, 2013].

White, J. (1980). *Rothschild Buildings. Life in an East End Tenement Block 1887–1920*. London: Pimlico.

WHO. (2012). *Progress on Drinking Water and Sanitation*. 2012 Update. Geneva: World Health Organization. [Online]. Available at: http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2012/jmp_report/en/ [Accessed 25 August 2015].

Wilhoit, E.D. (2014). Opting out (without kids): understanding non-mothers' workplace exit in popular autobiographies. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(3), 260–272.

Williams, C.L., Giuffre, P.A. and Dellinger, K. (1999). Sexuality in the workplace: organizational control, sexual harassment, and the pursuit of pleasure. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 25, 73–93.

Williams, Z. (2012). A cleaner conscience: the politics of domestic labour. *The Guardian*. 10 March 2012. [Online]. Available at: http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/mar/10/childcare-nanny-cleaner-housework-feminism [Accessed 24 December 2013].

Wills, J., May, J., Datta, K., Evans, Y., Herbert, J. and McIllwaine, C. (2008). *London's Changing Migrant Division of Labour*. Department of Geography and The City Centre, Queen Mary, University of London. [Online]. Available at: http://www.geog.qmul.ac.uk/globalcities/reports/docs/workingpaper10.pdf [Accessed 15 January 2015].

Windebank, J. (2007). Outsourcing women's domestic labour: the Chèque Emploi-Service Universel in France. *Journal of European Social Policy*, 17(3), 257–270.

Windebank, J. (2010). Barriers to outsourcing domestic chores in dual-earner households. *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 30(7/8), 387–398.

Wing, S. (1994). Market-procured housework: the demand for domestic servants and female labor supply. *Labour Economics*, 1(3–4), 289–302.

Wolkowitz, C. (2007/2012). Leakiness or really dirty? Dirt in social theory. In B. Campkin and R. Cox, (Eds.). *Dirt: New Geographies of Cleanliness and Contamination*. London: I.B. Taurus, pp. 15–24.

Wollaston, S. (2015). *Modern Times: the Secret Life of Cleaners* review – dusting down a complex working relationship. The Guardian. 27 May 2015. [Online]. Available at: http://www.theguardian.com/tv-and-radio/2015/may/27/modern-times-secret-life-cleaners-review [Accessed 12 June 2015].

Womenology. (2012). Interview with Siobhan Freegard, Co-Founder of Netmums. Womenology.com The Labby aufeminin. [Online]. Available at: http://www.womenology.com/women-behaviour/english-gender-marketing-encounters-interview/ [Accessed 5 August 2014].

Wright, E.O. (1988). Exploitation, identity, and class structure: a reply to my critics. *Critical Sociology*, 15(1), 91–110.

Wright, O. (2013). Revealed: £4.7bn corporation tax lost through evasion and avoidance as Royal Mail is sold for £650m less than it is worth. *The Independent*. [Online]. 11 October 2013. Available at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/revealed-47bn-corporation-tax-lost-through-evasion-and-avoidance-as-royal-mail-is-sold-for-650m-less-than-it-is-worth-8874873.html [Accessed 23 March 2015].

Wright, T.D. (1867). *Some Habits and Customs of the Working Classes. By a Journeyman Engineer*. London: Tinsley Brothers.

Zick, C.D., McCullough, J. and Smith, K.R. (1996). Trade-offs between purchased services and time in single-parent and two-parent families. *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 30(1), 1–23.