

children serving children



Exploring relations between child domestic workers and the children of employing families in Mwanza, Tanzania

Jonathan Blagbrough, September 2020

Author's Note and Acknowledgements

This report has been developed from a doctoral thesis entitled *Children Serving Children: Exploring relations between child domestic workers and the children of employing families in Mwanza, Tanzania* – undertaken from 2017 to 2020 at the University of Dundee, supported by an ESRC grant from the Scottish Graduate School of Social Science. While a number of academic articles on aspects of the research are planned or in progress, the purpose of this publication has been to make the original research findings more widely accessible to a policy-oriented audience. Thus, the intention of this report is to contribute to policy debates and practical action on hitherto unexplored aspects of the child domestic work practice. Constructive feedback on this report and its findings are welcome, as are any questions and thoughts – either directly to the author (see details below), or via the Children Unite website: www.childrenunite.org.uk.

This thesis would not have been possible without the time that many current and former child domestic workers as well as current and former children of employers dedicated to talking to me in Mwanza. It cannot have been easy to open up to a stranger asking questions about your lives, sometimes about subjects which were difficult to share. Thank you. Special thanks goes to members of my Children and Young People's Advisory Group in Mwanza, who provided me with guidance throughout the process of collecting information and making sense of it.

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Table of contents

1.	Summary of findings	4
1.1	Implications of this research for policy and practice	5
1.1.1	<i>Engaging with employing families is essential for achieving positive outcomes</i>	5
1.1.2	<i>More than labour: understanding child domestic work in the context of gender, age and social obligation</i>	7
1.1.3	<i>The importance of the meaningful engagement of children and young people</i>	9
1.1.4	<i>Legal approaches require localisation and contextualisation</i>	10
1.1.5	<i>Evidence gaps and areas for future research</i>	11
2.	Setting the scene	13
2.1	Understanding child domestic work	14
2.2	Causes and drivers	15
2.3	The gendered nature of child domestic work	17
2.4	Known impacts	18
2.4.1	<i>Positive impacts of child domestic work</i>	18
2.4.2	<i>Negative consequences of child domestic work</i>	19
3.	The research study	22
3.1	Methodological underpinnings	23
3.2	Research design and implementation	23
4.	Child domestic worker perspectives on their lived experience	25
4.1	How the present lives of child domestic workers are influenced by their aspirations for the future	25
4.2	The desire to be valued as a worker, and treated like a relative.....	25
4.3	Feelings of belonging and alienation among child domestic workers.....	26
5.	Children of employer perspectives on their lived experience	28
5.1	Becoming an 'employer'	28
5.2	Living with a child domestic worker	29
5.3	The emotional challenge of being a child from an employing family	30
6.	Understanding social relations between children in employing households	31
6.1	Secret keeping and sharing among children in the household.....	31
6.2	The influence of children's friendly relations on their mobility and social opportunities beyond the household	32
	References	33

1. Summary of findings

Under the spotlight in this report are relations between children and young people who are brought to households to work, and those from the families who employ them – relationships which remain unexplored both at policy and practice levels, as well as in the scholarly literature

The findings presented in this report were developed as part of doctoral research by the author in Tanzania during 2018-19 (see Author's Note). In this research, the aim has been *to understand the lived experience of child domestic workers and the children of employers in Tanzania and their intra- and inter-generational relations and emotions within employing households*.¹ In so doing the study has illuminated the active influence of interdependent relations between child domestic workers and the children of employers on their lived experience. In applying a variety of concepts including 'friendship', 'belonging' and 'care' to child domestic work, the research has lifted the lid on employing household relations from the perspectives of the children living within them – including, for the first time, with children of employers. More specifically, the findings indicate that:-

- Despite often deep economic and social divides, children of employers and child domestic workers in this context play an active and centrally important role in each other's daily lives and can leave an influential legacy in each other lasting into adulthood;
- Children's lives are relationally and emotionally interdependent, constituted by gender, affected by space and time, and impacted by the flow of power between the children;
- The power dynamics between child domestic workers and the children of employers are influenced by their respective age seniority; these dynamics impact upon, as well as are impacted by, wider household adult-child hierarchies;
- While seeking to belong to, and to be cared about, by members of employing families, child domestic workers are also active in their pursuit of their future goals of a financially secure future for themselves and their birth families;
- Child domestic workers and children of employers gain emotional and material benefit from their friendly, if uneven, social relations between each other. As secret allies they are able to resist adult control over their mobility and social opportunities, demonstrating that while occupying a lower status than adults, children are collectively able to negotiate greater influence over aspects of their own lives.

¹ In this study, *children of employers* have been defined as children and young people who are living with their adult relatives and alongside other children who are employed as domestic workers. *Child domestic workers* are broadly defined in this study as children and young people under 18 years who live and work in households other than their own, doing domestic chores and caring for other children, among other tasks.

Thus, this research has, for the first time beyond the anecdotal, revealed the power-laden and deeply interdependent relationship that exists among children in employing households, including the discovery of the 'not-quite-friendships' existing between child domestic workers and the children of employers. This new insight and understanding not only offers a novel contribution to academic knowledge, but also the promise of a wider – more relational – understanding of the practice of child domestic work, of significance to policy-makers and practitioners.

1.1 Implications of this research for policy and practice

During the course of this research, the deeply relational nature of child domestic work has emerged as a fundamental pivot around which the rest of the analysis flows. The research indicates that relations between child domestic workers and children of employers are inextricably intertwined and interdependent. This not only influences the children's actions and mutual interactions, but also has implications for their relations with adults in the employing household.

Applying a relationship lens to child domestic work reminds us of the **interdependence** and **mutuality** of children's lives – including in relations among non-family members. The study indicates the significance of *place* (including the location, household spaces, and relative circumstances) in the making and shaping of these relationships, as well as in influencing the power- and emotion-laden nature of these interactions in the context of age and gender. The study emphasis on the lived experience of children on both sides of the employer/worker divide has presented new angles on concepts such as 'friendship' and 'belonging' among children beyond the Minority World situations in which they have largely been applied.² In particular, the conception of these relationships in the context of care-giving and receiving has provided an opportunity to consider child domestic work in relation to wider adult-centred care discussions, such as the situation of adult migrant domestic workers.

1.1.1 Engaging with employing families is essential for achieving positive outcomes

The research confirms that the voices of employers and their families remain sidelined in efforts to understand the practice of child domestic work (Klocker, 2014). Employers and their children are all too often considered to be obstacles to improving the lives of child domestic workers, and not as potential allies when it

² In this report the terms Minority World and Majority World will be used to denote settings often referred to respectively and more pejoratively as the 'developed' or 'Western' world' and the 'developing world'. While any generalisation of this kind risks the over-simplification of many and varied settings, the use of these terms acknowledges where the majority of the world's population, poverty, land mass and ways of life lie, and seeks to challenge the privileging of Minority World views (Punch and Tisdall, 2012).

comes to consideration of responses to domestic work. Interventions in some contexts have identified the utility of engaging adult employers as well in some places as their children in acting to support child domestic workers (Blagbrough, 2010).

This research supports the idea that harnessing local advocates among employers can be a powerful way of changing attitudes and behaviour among their neighbours and other community members, given their belief that they are supporting a child and a family in need. Here, the significance of the relational interdependence of child domestic workers and members of the employing family is particularly important to consider. Helping employers and their families to understand their own interests as well as obligations in enhancing treatment of child domestic workers may prove effective in improving household relations. Understanding their (adult) dependence on (child) domestic workers, as well as the impact of their (adult) behaviour on the safety and security of the children in the household is an important step towards more harmonious relations; as are interventions which seek to support or reinforce employers' understanding of their responsibilities towards child domestic workers as children and young people 'in their care'. At the same time, previous research and practice suggests that taking such an approach – while sustainable – is not a quick fix, requiring longer-term policy cycles (of at least 10 years) to fully embed behaviour gains (UNICEF, 1999).

What this research also evidences for the first time is the significance of relations between children in the household, and therefore of the potential for children of employers to support improvements in the lives of child domestic workers in their own homes. The familial bonds of children of employers to their adult kin, as well as their alliances with child domestic workers, put them in a unique position to support the creation of a household environment more sensitive to the needs of working children. Not only can children of employers be reached through community advocacy, but their high levels of school attendance indicate the promising avenue of working through schools as a way of reaching into employing families.

In engaging with employers, experience from a range of contexts in Africa, Asia and Latin America has indicated the importance not only of sending the right 'message' to employers about their role in improving the lives of child domestic workers, but also in seeking the right 'messenger' to ensure that the message is taken seriously (Black, 2002). Thus, current policy responses, often developed at national level, need to be localised and messages to employers contextualised at ward or similar level of community for the strongest effect. The right messengers may be locally-elected officials, but may equally be religious leaders or respected individuals in the community.

Evidenced by this report, messages with the most impact for improving the lives of child domestic workers in this context are focused around formalising conditions of work in the household, including by agreeing regular pay, as well as establishing

community remedial and redress mechanisms involving respected local officials in dealing fairly with disputes. The report also indicates that providing young workers with time off and permission to attend local skills training sessions is a key 'ask' of employers. The research indicates the high value placed by child domestic workers on opportunities for training to furnish them with skills with which they can develop an independent income for the future. At the same time, Thorsen (2012) notes the general paucity of vocational training opportunities – both in availability and quality – and the lack of assessment of local labour markets to identify viable options for developing sustainable future incomes. Consequently, the availability, quality and suitability of skills training for child domestic workers should be a key policy focus, alongside efforts to establish relations with their employers to allow them to participate (ILO, 2013a).

Key considerations (employing families):

- Children of employers have the potential to provide emotional support to child domestic workers, and can support the development of more harmonious household relations;
- Promoting employer understanding of their own behaviour and its impact on children's household safety and security within their homes can help improve household relations and end abuse;
- Finding and supporting local employer advocates for child domestic workers in the community is an effective way to change attitudes and behaviour; messaging for employers needs to be localised and the right messengers found to deliver them;
- Employers need to support child domestic workers to pursue quality training opportunities in order to develop an independent future income.

1.1.2 More than labour: understanding child domestic work in the context of gender, age and social obligation

In addition to furthering scholarship on children's relationships, the study contributes learning to global and national discussions on children's work. Since the mid-1990s, international and national debate surrounding the acceptability or otherwise of children's economic activity has continued to reflect largely dualistic thinking about children as either capable actors or vulnerable and dependent victims (Abebe and Bessell, 2011). Despite a shift towards a focus on actual and potential harms to children, the conception of children as defenceless and dependent has tended to homogenise the situation of working children (Morrow, 2015). In the case of child domestic workers, this tendency has failed to consider the range of children and young people's circumstances, their perspectives and their motivations. By emphasising the harms done to children, it has also frustrated responses to their

situations – in particular by blighting employers (and by extension their families) as 'the problem' without understanding their perspectives (Klocker, 2014).

Not only has this research contributed to growing evidence of the varied experiences of child domestic workers, it has demonstrated the significance of employing families in their lives – whether for worse or for better, and of the need to engage with employing families in efforts to improve the household situation for all. The research has also encouraged child domestic workers to be conceived of as givers and receivers of care in employing households – not just as working children. This wider conceptualisation of their situation is a prompt to policy-makers to consider the significance of gender alongside (and not subservient to) age in policy and practice responses.

While mitigating the risk of obscuring the challenges faced by child domestic workers in the shorter term, there is a need to understand their circumstances in the wider context of gender, age and class-based structural inequalities. Prevalent perceptions of domestic workers' low social status and their poor working conditions can be linked to notions that domestic work is of low value, isn't 'real work' and is simply an extension of the unpaid housework that girls and women would normally perform in their own households (ILO, 2017). Child domestic work is part of a continuum of age, gender and class inequality over the life-course, and requires responses which work to counter these foundational considerations.

Improving the lives of children and young people in domestic work situations requires a broader consideration by policymakers and practitioners of their situation. This means not considering the practice as simply another form of children's work but as one which is closely linked to many other forms of neglect, exploitation, abuse and violence against children and young people - and which shares many of the same underlying root causes and which require a less 'siloes' approach to children's work, education, and sexual and reproductive health interventions (such as in HIV prevention efforts: Erulkar, 2018a). The literature reviewed in this research has shown close links between child domestic work, street-connectedness, sex work and early marriage, which indicates the need for a broader approach to protecting children. Ingabire *et al.* (2012) suggest, for example, that working with 'house-girls' is an important target group for activities aimed at preventing sex work.

Consideration is also needed in how to explore the potential differences in treatment between those staying with family out of kinship obligation and those in situations in which children and young people have been more involved in negotiating their move. Those placed with relatives or family friends through a social obligation (such as a kinship fostering arrangement) are usually under greater social pressure to endure hardship in order to avoid shaming their family or upsetting the social order. A powerful but intangible mutuality of obligation between the family of the child and the employing family may result in the child's better treatment by the employing family, the arrangement may also result in the child feeling less able to

leave in the event of poor treatment. For example, Roby *et al.* (2014) note (in relation to Uganda) that children in kinship care can experience intra-household disparity with regard to the family's biological children in the amount of household work they are asked to perform and in school attendance which could have negative implications for their long-term wellbeing.

Key considerations (more than labour):

- Child domestic workers are not just working children, and responses to their situation require broader understanding of their individual circumstances;
- Child domestic work is linked to many other forms of child rights concerns relating to violence, education and health – including street connectedness, sex work and early marriage;
- Many child domestic workers are living with employing families through a social or kinship obligation, and may be under greater pressure to put up with difficult conditions than those with more say in where and with whom they work.

1.1.3 The importance of the meaningful engagement of children and young people

Not only is the engagement of children and young people of key importance in studies of this kind, but their meaningful participation is also considered to be essential in policy and practice terms. Bourdillon (2009) notes that policies and practice relating to child domestic work are largely based on richer people's assumptions of what poorer people need; similarly adults presuppose a superior knowledge in what is best for children. The processes and findings of this study strongly concur with a growing literature demonstrating the importance of listening to and acting upon the voices of those with lived experience through research and in policy and practice, not only because it is the 'morally right' thing to do, but because their perspectives regularly provide insight missed by others (see for example Klocker, 2012a). Further, Jensen (2015) notes, in relation to research on child domestic work in Bangladesh, that policies and approaches on child domestic work remain chiefly based on a deficit model which emphasises potential risks while ignoring or diminishing children's competencies – resulting in policy and practice which is neither realistic nor relevant to their lives.

In particular, it has been found that the direct participation of child domestic workers themselves in interventions continues to have a major positive impact on their situation (including on their self-esteem, improved protection and engagement in education) as well as for wider policy action (which has brought visibility and action from governments and employers, as well as creating a platform for the emergence of new social movements of child domestic workers). This has been

done, for example, through the formation of participatory structures, seed funds to support fledgling groups of young people, training of young leaders, an emphasis on life skills and child rights training, the creation of independent forums specifically for current and former child domestic workers to contribute their views freely, as well as by working with employers and parents to understand and support children's engagement and to avoid conflict with and harm to children (Anti-Slavery International 2005; 2013a; Blagbrough, 2008; Thorsen, 2012, ILO, 2017). Also noteworthy is the experience that participatory advocacy goes hand-in-hand with service provision, the two being indivisible and interdependent (Anti-Slavery International, 2013b). Where service provision is strategic it lends legitimacy for advocacy, helps reach child domestic workers, motivates children and their families by offering alternatives, and provides a route for engaging employers.

Key considerations (meaningful engagement of child domestic workers):

- Listening to and acting upon the lived experience of children and young people ensures unique and essential insight into policy and practice;
- Developing participatory structures for child domestic workers within organisations and projects not only has benefits for the individuals concerned, but also aids more effective targeting of support as well as organisational transparency;
- Participatory advocacy with, and providing services for, child domestic workers are mutually-reinforcing.

1.1.4 Legal approaches require localisation and contextualisation

Regulation of child domestic work is a powerful tool but is not a panacea. Recent years have seen growing understanding that international legal instruments which use age alone as the basis for prohibiting such a complex and varied social phenomenon are too blunt and largely ineffective (Blagbrough and Craig, 2017). More nuanced legal approaches are proving helpful in bringing the situation of domestic workers of all ages to the fore, stimulating international and local debate (see in particular ILO's Domestic Workers Convention, 2011, No.189).

At the same time, those efforts which look to have worked the most effectively are activities to make child domestic workers more visible and to monitor their situation locally, such as the registration of children in source and receiving communities, the development of local laws, ordinances and locally developed and enforced employer codes of conduct. Indeed, a recent independent programme evaluation exploring the Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition's (TDWC) localised regulatory approaches recognised the beneficial outcomes of their grassroots approaches to by-law development and employer-worker contracts on the situation of child domestic workers (Emberson *et al.* 2020). The evaluation also found increased reporting of abuse as well as a discernible shift in child domestic work, employer and

local community attitudes, along with greater community willingness to intervene where child domestic workers face discrimination or abuse (Emberson *et al.* 2020).

Key considerations (regulation):

- The localisation and contextualising (at community level) of national and international regulations is essential to improving the lives of child domestic workers;
- Regulatory actions which make child domestic workers more visible and to monitor their situation provide the critical underpinning to other efforts to alleviate harm.

1.1.5 Evidence gaps and areas for future research

The predominantly English-language research literature that has been reviewed during the course of this study has revealed a strong tendency to pivot around the lives of children and young people **or** those of adults, and similarly to demarcate in-country and trans-national migration for work experiences. It is suggested, therefore, that to fully understand the contexts, motivations and trajectories of children and young people there is a need to straddle these literatures with a view to investigating domestic work as a life-course continuum which is understood and situated in the context of gender, age and status. With a longitudinal approach in mind, new research could usefully investigate the nature of connections between child domestic work trajectories and adult migrant domestic work scenarios, as well as the impact of the movement of girls and women into paid domestic work on those girls left behind.

Specifically, in revealing the strongly gendered nature of child domestic work, there is a need to further explore the contribution made by these predominantly girls and young women to the household economy and wider productivity levels, for example by releasing parents of young children to seek employment. More broadly, consideration is also needed of how child domestic workers contribute to the global care chain, for instance in allowing older females to seek work in other countries as migrant domestic workers.

At the same time, it is posited that future research needs to take a more nuanced approach to children's competencies, which considers the *interdependence* of their relations with others; and avoids seeing them in a binary way as either active, independent beings or dependent and vulnerable 'becomings' (Uprichard, 2008; Abebe and Bessell, 2011).

Child domestic work is rooted in cultural and community acceptance in Tanzania and many other countries. Beliefs around this acceptance is that the practice is formative for girls, is part of the intergenerational contract (or kinship obligation), and is a communal response to supporting economically

disadvantaged children – mostly girls – by providing them with an education, lodging and food in exchange for their work in the household. Some studies have shown that children in domestic work appear to face higher levels of abuse and exploitation in places where domestic work is still presented as a traditional, cultural practice exempt from the need for external scrutiny, and also when the children concerned feel a greater sense of duty to their families to put up with their situation (Anti-Slavery International, 2013a). Further investigation could examine the difference in the conditions and experience of child domestic workers who are ‘placed’ in domestic work, as against work situations where they have had a greater say in what they do, where they go, and how they get there.

National and regional studies are also needed to build on emerging (but limited and patchy) evidence indicating strong linkages between child domestic work, street connections and sex work, as well as child domestic work and early marriage – with a view to policy and programmatic action. Transitions to sex work among young women is a particular area requiring further enquiry.

It has been noted during the course of this research that independent data on the impact of interventions in this arena (whether in Tanzania or beyond, and whether policy or practice) remains somewhat limited. For example, a regional review of policy and programme initiatives on child domestic work in West and Central Africa (Thorsen, 2012) points out that scope for comparative analysis before and after an intervention is limited and that assessments of these interventions tend to focus more on the process and less on the outcomes for children; that is, if they exist at all. Reflecting wider sector trends, evaluations of interventions – where they exist – tend to focus on snapshot situation analysis, without revisiting longer-term effects and impacts.

Finally, more data is also required across regions and contexts to better understand the conditions and risk factors at home, during movement for work and at destination which can turn tolerable situations into unacceptable exploitation. Research on children’s perspectives of their situation is particularly needed – especially regarding what constitutes their ‘tipping point’ between acceptable and unacceptable situations.

2. Setting the scene

This report has been developed from a doctoral thesis, based on fieldwork in Tanzania in partnership with the Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition (TDWC).³ Under the spotlight in the thesis and this report are relations between children and young people who are brought to the households of others to work and those from the families who employ them – relationships which remain unexplored both in the scholarly literature and at policy and practice levels.⁴

A relational approach is useful for understanding children's lived experiences as they do not live their lives in isolation (Hopkins and Pain, 2008). In examining these relational connections through children's lived experience, the research uncovers the interplay of power between the two groups of children in the context of the inequalities of social status that divide them, as well as the generational processes which at times unite them in defiance of adult control. In doing so, the mutuality and interdependence of their relations of care within employing households are laid bare.

While some aspects of child domestic workers' lived experiences have already been brought to light in African contexts and beyond, evidence has emphasised their working conditions, the causal factors underpinning their situation and the challenges they face in the urban contexts where the large majority end up (Bourdillon, 2009; Thorsen, 2012). Furthermore, research with children in work or challenging situations has tended to focus on those who are visible such as street-working children, or those closely connected with issues of public concern such as children in sweatshop-type circumstances (White, 2009). Children engaged in hidden work carried out in private homes has received much less attention (Bourdillon *et al.* 2010). Yet, child domestic workers are considered by policy makers to be a particularly vulnerable and exploited group (ILO, 2013a).

At the same time, employer – child worker relations at household level are far less understood, and employing adult perspectives very rarely heard (Klocker, 2014 and Awumbila *et al.* 2017 are notable scholarly exceptions). Furthermore, an extensive review of the English-language literature reveals that, despite children of employers being the subjects of care from, and living cheek by jowl with, child domestic workers, there remains a complete dearth of scholarship about their lived

³ The full thesis, entitled *Children Serving Children: Exploring relations between child domestic workers and the children of employing families in Mwanza, Tanzania*, with funding from the UK ESRC, was submitted to the University of Dundee in August 2020. See Footnote 5 for TDWC contact details.

⁴ The term 'children and young people' is used interchangeably with 'children' to refer to people under the age of 18, as defined by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). The phrase has been used where possible to respect that many older children prefer to be referred to as 'young people' (Punch and Tisdall, 2012).

experience, their relations with other children as well as adults in the household, and the effects and impacts of these relationships.

2.1 Understanding child domestic work

Internationally, 'child domestic workers' have been broadly understood to be children and young people under the age of 18 who "work in other people's households, doing domestic chores, caring for children and running errands, among other tasks" (UNICEF, 1999: p2). As the definition indicates, the situation of children living and working in the households of others has tended to be positioned in the policy literature as primarily a **labour** concern. While aptly describing the harms experienced by many children in employing households, defining the practice as 'child labour' alone has its shortcomings.

As with other forms of work undertaken by children, problematising child domestic work as essentially an exploitative labour issue has resulted in a narrow understanding of the diversity of children and young people's lived experience and its impacts into adulthood (Jacquemin, 2006). Specific discussion around child domestic work continues to focus on the legitimacy of age-based approaches to proscribing work, with current policy discourse in particular still emphasising child domestic work as primarily an issue of labour exploitation and less as a phenomenon linked to social and gender-based norms (Blagbrough and Craig, 2017).

Internationally, the focus on child domestic work as employment, as codified in ILO standards on child labour and on domestic work, has resulted in definitional limitations which constrict a more holistic understanding of the practice (Blagbrough, 2017). This is particularly evident in the somewhat arbitrary dichotomising between children and young people in paid work situations and those engaged in reproductive care in the homes of their parents, or in the households of other relatives (Bourdillon, 2009; Jeffrey, 2010). In practice, limiting the definitional focus to those 'in employment' potentially conceals similar situations from view and from scrutiny; Jacquemin (2006), for example, contends that development programmes targeting 'economically exploited' child domestic workers in Abidjan (Cote d'Ivoire) mask the exploitation of child domestic workers under the cover of kinship ties and, "risk obscuring situations where children are put to work and actually exploited." (p389).

At the same time, it is important to establish the '**more-than-work**' nature of child domestic work. While varying in its manifestations, in many settings, including in Tanzania, the practice of child domestic work forms a significant part of a web of interdependent relations between and across generations – age hierarchical relations which need to be understood if a more complete understanding of children's situation is to be achieved.

Evidence from West and Central Africa indicates that the extent and nature of the work that children do depends on the households they enter, how they get there, whether they work alongside others (including employers and the children of their employers), as well as on their gender, physical strength and cognitive capacity (Thorsen, 2012). The lack of set working hours and the absence of boundaries between what is work and what is not has led some researchers and activists to declare that a defining feature of child domestic workers' situation is that they are on-call 24 hours a day (see Black, 1997; 2002; Anti-Slavery International 2005; UNICEF, 1999; ILO, 2004).

Across a range of contexts it is common to hear employers refer to children working in their homes as 'like one of the family', belying the existence of an employment relationship (ILO, 2010). Employers across diverse contexts routinely characterise their relationship with child domestic workers – regardless of their actual blood ties – as close to a familial one (Bourdillon, 2009; Blagbrough, 2010; Klocker, 2011; Jensen, 2014). However, working children and young people's lives are distinctively characterised by complex and ambiguous relationships with employing families (who may also be relatives): child domestic workers are both working, but not considered workers (with rights); and while living in a family setting, are not treated like family members (Blagbrough, 2010).

When considered from social and cultural perspectives, relationality becomes a major theme in the practice of child domestic work. Indeed, research from a number of Majority World settings has demonstrated the significance of social relations in assumptions surrounding the why, who, when and where of child domestic work – in particular in younger people honouring the 'inter-generational contract' of caring for older kin (van Blerk and Ansell, 2007a; Evans *et al.* 2019). In these contexts, including in Tanzania, child domestic work represents the embodiment of these interdependent familial and community relations – of expectation and obligation – in space and time (Evans, 2014).

As with Tanzania, a particular focus on the relationship between children and young people living and working with kin and non-kin is important across much of Sub-Saharan Africa, where informal 'child fostering' arrangements, described by Akresh (2009: p976) as "an institution where biological parents temporarily send children to live with other families", are commonplace. Indeed, comparable national Demographic and Health Survey data across 16 African countries indicate that the number of households with a foster child can be as high as 30 per cent or more (Akresh, 2009).

2.2 Causes and drivers

Much of the policy and academic literature on child domestic work situations continues to present familial poverty as a key driver for children's entry into domestic work. The large majority of child domestic workers come from poor families and, particularly in societies lacking social protection safety nets, are sent to work to supplement their family's income or simply to lessen the financial strain at home (UNICEF, 1999; Bourdillon, 2009; Cox, 2016). Camacho (1999) notes that child

domestic work can make a significant contribution to incomes of the poorest families. Pankhurst *et al.* (2016a) have identified the significance to the work that children do of family circumstances, especially in relation to poverty and shocks. Thorsen (2012) reflects that children can enter domestic work as a 'crisis management' response, or as a strategy to provide children with skills and opportunities to overcome poverty in the longer-term. At the same time, in Ethiopia, research by Jones *et al.* (2018) suggests that sudden economic shocks such as the loss of a breadwinner may indirectly result in more limited post-child domestic work opportunities as a result of less well-planned and more desperate migratory movement. Results from pioneering health research by Bwibo and Onyango (1987) record that child domestic workers from poorer families may also have better nutrition than if they had remained at home.

However, Kielland (2016) has reported that, in relation to rural Benin, a family's relative poverty is by itself not an accurate predictor of whether a child will leave the household for another family. Factors such as gender and ethnic discrimination, social exclusion, lack of educational opportunities, domestic violence, rural to urban migration, displacement, and the loss of close family members as a result of conflict and disease, are also important triggers (ILO, 2004). The loss of key family members through HIV/AIDS (for example) have resulted in children and young people working in the households of others (Ansell and van Blerk, 2004); including in Tanzania (Olsson *et al.* 2017; see also Daniel and Mathias, 2012). Significantly, Ethiopian working children's perspectives have shown how their work is grounded in reciprocal inter- and intra-household relations (Abebe, 2013).

The increasing participation of women in the labour force has also meant a considerable demand for domestic help to replace their household labour – with many employers opting for younger workers because they are cheaper and considered to be more acquiescent to employers' requirements (ILO, 2011). Klocker (2014) relates the preferences of employers in Tanzania for children due to their perceived pliability, submissiveness, and flexibility to fit with live-in arrangements, and also notes the dependency of many employers on their domestic workers. In relation to Bangladesh (but also of relevance to other Asian as well as African contexts) Jensen (2014) argues that the range of domestic work tasks is highly labour and time intensive, creating a demand for domestic workers.

In addition to being sent by parents to live in the homes of relatives or others, whether (or in combination) as a household survival strategy, through a kinship obligation or due to the belief in domestic work as a safe and suitable option for daughters, children and young people themselves can also decide to seek work to, for example, pursue an education, help their families or postpone marriage (Ansell and van Blerk, 2004; Hashim, 2007; Bourdillon, 2009). Children can also be 'pulled' into domestic work as a result of economic uncertainty, as well as the widespread belief that the move will offer an opportunity for better living conditions, and by siblings and friends already working in households (Blagbrough, 2008).

2.3 The gendered nature of child domestic work

In countries across the world, domestic work is a strongly gendered issue with a close association to, and continuity between, unpaid female household reproductive labour and paid work options for girls and women beyond the home (see for example, Anderson, 2000). Domestic work's gendered nature means that, although boys can also be found working in the households of others, their work is more often focused beyond the confines of the dwelling-place itself and is conceived of differently (Ansell and van Blerk 2004), for example as agricultural work or street vending (Abebe and Skovdal, 2010).

Relationships between worker and employer in the context of care represent the clashing interface of global and local structural inequalities. These highly gendered daily encounters – whether adult-adult or adult-child – largely witness female employers controlling, but also reliant upon, the labour of other women, or of children and young people (Klocker, 2014).

In rural Ethiopia, Abebe and Kjørholt (2009) note the highly gendered nature of household reproduction activities which requires girls to assist in preparing food and in looking after younger siblings. Furthermore, despite the invisibility of this work to conventional economic measures, the researchers point to the indispensability of this work to free up others in generating household income.

Erulkar (2018a) argues that most girls leaving their families to become domestic workers in part because the nature of domestic work is already familiar, as well as because of upbringing traditions in many societies which support children's movement to live with relatives and others (Olwig, 2012). Thus, in essence, girls and young women are structurally groomed for the role of domestic worker; in the context of limited options and societal norms, domestic work is the expected and accepted trajectory for those seeking, or required to seek, paid work beyond the home – whether in a neighbouring town, a capital city, or another country.

In some societies child domestic work is considered a stop-gap or even a rite of passage for girls and young women who have left school and are preparing for their adult lives. Critchlow *et al.* (2007) note, for example, the transitional nature of being a 'house-girl' as an occupation between school or childhood and marriage in Vanuatu. In this respect child domestic work is seen as preparation for marriage; a protected environment for girls where household reproductive skills can be learned and money and/or material goods accumulated. In Uganda, Namuggala (2015) notes the strong trajectory towards marriage of girls in domestic work, while also providing an opportunity to improve their economic situation.

The move to urban areas not only serves a familial socio-economic purpose, but can also be an opportunity to delay marriage (van Blerk, 2016). Such reasoning may be a factor in why some girls and young women have stated, in Morocco for example, that they would rather stay in a less-than-perfect domestic work situation than return back home (Sommerfelt, 2001). In a 2014 study in Nepal, some girls being

reintegrated back to their natal homes following a period as child domestic workers were fearful of doing so because of concerns that they may face early marriage (Banos Smith, 2014). And in relation to adolescent migration in Ethiopia Jones *et al.* (2018) indicate that restrictive gender norms, particularly those surrounding girls' sexuality and marriage, are prominent drivers of girls' migration. Buchbinder (2013) discusses the conflicted feelings of young Togolese women who had been working as child domestic workers in Nigeria about whether they should fulfil their families' expectations to return to their rural homes for marriage, as against staying in a foreign city with greater financial security and opportunities, but with the associated stigma of being an unattached female in town.

2.4 Known impacts

The varied ways that children and young people begin work, as well their different ages, genders, ethnicities, family backgrounds, length of stay in the household and the types of relationships they have with employers makes it difficult to generalise about the implications of their situation (Thorsen, 2012). Evidence from studies in parts of Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that many children and young people in domestic work acquire practical skills and gain opportunities from their work situation, including greater social and economic independence and social recognition (Thorsen, 2007; 2012; Pankhurst *et al.* 2016a). However, other evidence also indicates a range of negative consequences resulting from their circumstances, particularly with regard to their physical and psychosocial (including emotional) health and wellbeing (Blagbrough, 2010).

Knowledge of the impacts of child domestic work focuses almost exclusively on the situation of the child workers themselves. Of the very few available studies, one survey of 80 live-in child domestic workers in Bangladesh found that the way children were treated generally had repercussions on the other children in the household (Blanchet, 1996), but this did not explore the implications for either group. No scholarly consideration can be found of the perspectives of child domestic workers and of 'served' children in an African context, while Klocker (2012b) notes that evidence of the longer-term effects of child domestic work on children in the household remains unexplored.

2.4.1 Positive impacts of child domestic work

Gamlin *et al.* 2013 report that, while significant numbers of child domestic workers are subject to violence and exploitation in some countries, in their research in the Philippines and Peruvian contexts many children "manage to combine education with work, appear to share good relations with their employers and are proud of what they do", concurring with earlier research in the Philippines which concludes "that [child domestic work] is a 'coping strategy' where a child assumes some of the responsibility for family well-being and survival" (p221). Psychosocial and emotional benefits to child domestic workers have also been reported in a range of African contexts (e.g. Bourdillon, 2009 in Zimbabwe; Klocker, 2011 in Tanzania; and Abebe,

2016 in Ethiopia). In relation to Bolivia, Punch (2007) notes the contribution children make to their families as a result of becoming a child worker, and the personal satisfaction and pride that have resulted. Punch's (2007) study also notes the increased bargaining power of these working children within their families as a result of contributing to the family income. In her review of evidence relating to child domestic workers in West and Central Africa, Thorsen (2012) reports on "...the pride children take in holding a job, acquiring a number of skills, earning money, as well as living in better-off households, sometimes with electricity and easier access to water and cooking fuel" (p8).

For some girls and young women, domestic work represents an opportunity to expand their future options. Looking back on their experience as working children, participants in Maia and Cal's (2014) Brazil study believed that, while not ideal, the conditions, resources and capacities which being a child domestic worker provided could (with luck) present opportunities to prepare for something better, and was an improvement on an alternative life as a farm labourer or sex worker. Chaiyanukji (2004) noted the options for undocumented trans-national migrating girls and young women coming to Thailand, in which domestic work compared favourably with sweatshop labour, working in a restaurant, begging or sex work.

Dependence on the assistance of their employers also plays a major part in the potential progression of young domestic workers in Uganda. Namuggala (2015) indicates that, in cases where employers had proved trustworthy, girls were able to save money to help realise their hopes for future economic improvement, whether by buying animals or investing in training; or perhaps through a substantial gift at the end of their service to aid income-generation back home (Jacquemin, 2004).

Researchers investigating the situation of child workers, including child domestic workers, recognise that they are able to exercise varying degrees of agency in their working lives (see, for example: Jacquemin, 2004; Klocker, 2007; 2011; Jensen, 2014;). In discussing the 'thin agency' of child domestic workers in Tanzania, Klocker (2007) notes that the girls she interviewed all said that they had decided for themselves to enter domestic work. Klocker concludes that "girls don't enter [child domestic work] or stay in it because they are weak or ignorant, they do so because they honestly believe that this decision will produce the best possible outcome for themselves and their families" (p92). In addition to being able to delay marriage, child domestic work was also seen by some as a way of avoiding practices such as 'female circumcision' (van Blerk, 2016).

2.4.2 Negative consequences of child domestic work

For children across a range of contexts the daily experience of discrimination and isolation in the employer's household can be a heavy burden (Blagbrough, 2008; Bourdillon, 2009). Pankhurst *et al.* (2016a) indicate that being live-in workers in unfamiliar urban areas can increase their social isolation and result in their

separation from social networks that could protect them. A study in Bangladesh found that the discrimination, exclusion, disrespect, ingratitude, and other assaults on their emotional needs negatively affected children in domestic work situations above all else (Baum, 2011). A worldwide literature review on the topic found that, even if their relationship with members of the household is good, these relationships are not on equal terms due to structural inequalities relating to being a child, a girl, and being poor (UNICEF, 1999).

Blagbrough (2010) argues that the child's isolated situation and her indistinct role in the employer's household can create vulnerability to physical, verbal, and sexual violence. The negative social connotations attached to domestic work in many settings compounds the ambiguity of the child domestic worker's relationships to the employing family members; this can work against the interests of children in these situations by disguising an exploitative arrangement and masking violence (Blagbrough, 2010; see also Olwig, 2012 in relation to the Caribbean and Roby *et al.* 2014 in Uganda). Bourdillon's (2009) review notes the vulnerability of child domestic workers to physical and psychological violence (such as being insulted, beaten or deprived of food and sleep), especially for those that live in their employers' homes (see also Human Rights Watch, 2007; Blagbrough, 2008). In a 2006 study in West Bengal (India), it was found that 68 per cent of child domestic workers had faced physical abuse, with almost half suffering severe abuse that had led to injuries. In addition, 86 per cent had experienced emotional abuse (Ray and Iyer, 2006).

In Ethiopia, a study established that child domestic workers aged 8-15 suffered more psychosocial disorders (such as phobia and separation anxiety) than other working and non-working children (Alem *et al.* 2000). Another large study, this time in Brazil, found that those in domestic work were particularly at risk of developing behavioural problems; the researchers concluded that this was due to child domestic workers being under the control of employers; excessive hours of working; lack of personal freedom; and physical, verbal and emotional abuse (Benvegnú *et al.* 2005). A psychosocial assessment study of *restavèks* (child domestic workers) in Haiti indicated that the behavioural and psychological symptoms they exhibited "may create subsequent difficulties in their reintegration into their families and other contexts" (Kennedy, 2015: p12).

Sexual abuse of child domestic workers by members of the employing family is common across a range of contexts, including Sub-Saharan Africa (Bourdillon, 2009; Blagbrough, 2010). A study of employing families in Lima, Peru, reported that 60 per cent of males had their first sexual experience with domestic workers (Boyden *et al.* 1998 in Bourdillon, 2009). While in West Bengal, more than 20 per cent of girl domestic workers said they had been forced or tricked into sexual intercourse (Ray and Iyer, 2006). As with other forms of violence, further enquiry is needed to determine the involvement of children of employers in this form of abuse, the ways in which they may protect their peers, as well as the factors which may increase or lessen the likelihood of abuse taking place.

Close links have also been identified between child domestic work, sexual exploitation and working and/or living on the street in a range of settings (see for example, Flores-Oebanda, 2001 (Philippines); Abdelgalil *et al.* 2004 (Brazil); Kennedy, 2014 (Haiti); and Olsson *et al.* 2017 in Tanzania). Evidence across parts of Sub-Saharan Africa has shown that child domestic workers may spend a significant amount of time each day working on the street as part of their duties; girls working as market porters or selling their employer's produce on the street are a particular example of this (Jacquemin, 2006). Erulkar (2018b) highlights the emergence of studies indicating that domestic workers are at higher risk of 'non-consensual sex' compared to those not working as a domestic worker. As a result, some child domestic workers run away or leave their employer's home and end up working and sometimes also living on the street (Ansell and van Blerk, 2004; van Blerk, 2016). Research by Muriuki *et al.* (2018) in Cote d'Ivoire found that two-thirds of their cohort of female street children had migrated for domestic work but had ended up in street-based commercial sexual exploitation. An earlier study in Tanzania established that more than a quarter of girls being commercially sexually exploited in Dar es Salaam were former child domestic workers – many of whom had previously been sexually abused by members of their employing family (Mwakitwange, 2002). At the same time, girls wishing to leave an abusive or exploitative relative risk family shame and are therefore under greater social pressure to endure hardship (Jacquemin 2004; Thorsen 2012).

In terms of the impact of child domestic work on formal education opportunities, some studies have noted the paradox that, while child domestic workers commonly attach great importance to the opportunity for a formal education and see becoming a domestic worker as a way of continuing their schooling, their daily work demands or employer prohibition directly impedes their educational opportunities (Blagbrough, 2008; Brown, 2012). Certainly, in some situations higher drop-out rates, a poorer perception of their own achievement and the increased likelihood of repeating school years are common features of child domestic worker's educational experience (Anti-Slavery International, 2013a).



3. The research study

In this section, the research study is outlined, including the methodological principles which underpinned it and the methods that were utilised to gather data.

The table below outlines the aim and objectives of the research study, as well as the principal methods for responding to the research purpose

Research aim	Research questions	Participant groups and main research methods
<i>To understand the lived experience of child domestic workers and the children of employers in Tanzania and their intra- and inter-generational relations and emotions within employing households.</i>	Investigate the lived experience of child domestic workers and the children they serve – particularly the social, emotional, spatial and temporal dimensions of children's lives and interactions on both sides of the server/served relationship.	Creative visual activities with child domestic workers (CDWs) and children of employers (CEs) in pairs or small groups Individual interviews with CDWs, CEs, former CDWs and former CEs Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with CDWs and CEs
	Explore how the experience of being a child domestic worker or a child in an employing family intersects with other factors such as age and gender, and how they might affect their relations.	Workshops with Children and Young People's Advisory Group Reflexive journal analysis
	Consider the impact of child domestic work on the future adult lives of those who have served and those who have been served.	Individual interviews with former CDWs and former CEs. Reflexive journal analysis
	Identify how relevant communities of practice, including local, national and international policymakers, may engage more effectively with child domestic workers and those who employ them for achieving positive outcomes.	Key informant interviews with TDWC member staff and other adult stakeholders in children and young people's lives. Reflexive journal analysis

3.1 Methodological underpinnings

Four main methodological approaches formed the framework for this research. Firstly, a participatory approach was employed with a view to: taking the views of children and young people seriously; reducing inequalities of power between the adult researcher and more structurally and socially marginalised younger people; and in supporting the potential for social impact (Von Benzon and van Blerk, 2017). This study contributes to knowledge in participatory methodology in particular through efforts to constitute and engage an Advisory Group of children and young people from the researched groups in the research, particularly in data sense-checking and analysis processes.

Secondly, this research adopted a rights-based, contextualised and situated ethical approach to the relational, emotional and ever-changing 'messiness' of social inquiry (Morrow, 2008). In doing so, the research has furthered understanding of the need for a contextualised ethical stance in work with children and young people that is guided, but not controlled or disenfranchised, by institutional and inflexible forms of ethical proscription.

Thirdly, the subjectivity of research encounters and an acknowledgement of the role played by the social researcher in affecting knowledge creation required close consideration of the author's positionality and reflexivity. In doing so the research has shown the significance, both positive and negative, of the power dynamics involved in working with gatekeepers with whom a previous relationship has been established, and of being male in research with children and young people (Horton, 2008).

Fourthly, this research sought not to allow the past to be neglected in favour of the present by recognising the significance of adult accounts of childhood from those with relevant lived experience. In exploring and benefitting from the fresh and insightful standpoints of these reflective accounts the research has demonstrated the benefit to be gained in research with children from the perspectives of adults with similar childhood experiences (Klocker, 2012b).

3.2 Research design and implementation

The research was located in the city of Mwanza in northern Tanzania and was conducted with the help of the Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition and its member organisations.⁵ Several localities within Mwanza were chosen to provide diversity within the context of a city case study (an approach which emphasised the collection of in-depth knowledge), as well as for practical reasons of access to

⁵ The Tanzania Domestic Workers Coalition can be contacted via email: tdwc2012@gmail.com; or facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Tanzania-Domestic-Workers-Coalition-TDWC-1485982401655566/>

research participants. Participant selection was undertaken through gatekeeping organisations, in schools, and expanded through snowballing techniques.

While acknowledging the challenges that can arise in utilising gatekeepers, the benefit to the research has been highlighted, including in accessing research participants, facilitating safe spaces to conduct research, and in providing a professional sounding board for the researcher's plans. As a key participatory approach, the establishing of a Children and Young People's Advisory Group – comprised mainly of child domestic workers – provided critical feedback at various stages of the research, including in the testing of research tools, sense-checking of data and in data analysis.

A total of 97 research participants were reached during the course of this research, including 71 children and young people. The following table provides disaggregated data relating to the type of participant, as well as their age and gender profiles.

Table: Numbers, average age and gender profile of research participant groups

Research Participants	Total numbers reached	Average age (years)	Female	Male
Child Domestic Workers (CDWs)	22	16.5	20	2
<i>CDWs in Advisory Group</i>	20		12	8
Children of Employers (CEs)	27	15	14	13
<i>CEs in Advisory Group</i>	2		2	
Former Child Domestic Workers	11	23	11	
Former Children of Employers	6	31	5	1
Professionals and officials	9		5	4
TOTALS	97		69	28

A range of qualitative methods were utilised in data collection, including semi-structured interviews, group discussions and a number of creative visual techniques. Research methods were chosen to take account of the range of ages, genders and confidence levels of participants, to maintain respondents' interest in the research process, and to support data comparison and triangulation.

4. Child domestic worker perspectives on their lived experience

In this study, child domestic workers shared their views on living in employing households, as well as some of the key factors at play in promoting their move from their birth families. The strongly relational nature of these transitions is in evidence not only from the intergenerational contract but also in the familial decision-making process surrounding the move. The evidence suggests that the completion of primary school is the principal lifecourse milestone upon which a transition to work is considered; this is coupled with children's gender, which determines their options for work and its alternatives. These circumstances and pressures form the foundation stones for children's subsequent choices and experiences.

4.1 How the present lives of child domestic workers are influenced by their aspirations for the future

In considering how the present lives of child domestic workers are influenced by their future plans and concerns the research has uncovered a powerful clarity of long-term purpose among child domestic workers in the desire to help themselves, support their families and make their own way in the world (Pankhurst *et al.* 2016a; Ansell *et al.* 2017; Veitch *et al.* 2014 forms similar conclusions in relation to child domestic workers in Nepal).

Whether working for strangers or supporting extended relations, children in this cohort have an eye to their families' futures, as well as their own. As such, being paid and saving money is a critical part of the value of being a child domestic worker. Working towards future goals not only motivates these young people but sustains them too. Their pursuit of a secure future supports them through a challenging present – acting as an emotional buffer to their complex relations and, at times, hurtful situations.

Their experiences also demonstrate the preparedness of many to subordinate their desire for care and belonging in the short term in pursuit of a more auspicious future. In their 'sacrifice', these child workers reveal an understanding of their current situation as temporary, as a stepping-stone towards their goals. As such, their plans are sources of solace and strength; buffers against mistreatment and tangible representations of their hopeful aspirations. These ambitions are deeply held and yet are fragile too, with some respondents in this study reluctant even to give them voice.

4.2 The desire to be valued as a worker, and treated like a relative

For child domestic workers in this study the 'sweet spot' is the combination of receiving a salary which helps them to realise their aspirations, with being treated

like part of a family. Rarely, however, does this seem possible given the dichotomous connotations associated with being a worker (with rights) and a family member (with responsibilities), as well as gendered assumptions surrounding domestic (care) work as just a natural requirement of being female.

Being 'treated like a relative' (like one of the employing family) is a consistently important theme among child domestic workers. This notion takes the form of seeking to be cared *about* by their employing families, generating feelings of belonging which look to be significant to their emotional well-being (Tronto, 1993). While not entirely contradictory, wanting to be 'valued like a worker' and the desire to be 'treated like a relative' can be difficult expectations to marry. While working with a relative may, at a theoretical level, be a closer fit to child domestic workers' expectations, there is evident disillusionment among children in the practice of relational reciprocity, which all-too-often seems to place the needs of their adult relatives above those of children. This represents a powerful disincentive for children to work in their relatives' homes.

4.3 Feelings of belonging and alienation among child domestic workers

Accounts from child domestic workers during the course of this study demonstrate the range of obvious and subtle ways in which some are made to feel part of the families they live with and, conversely, the manner of others' rejection. These experiences not only affect their own emotional life but, in turn, have consequences on the exercise of power relations between them and the children of employers.

The emotional and relational nature of domestic work indicates the interconnectedness and interdependence of their relations of care (Tronto, 1993), and also the importance of understanding "the emotions experienced by care-givers and care-receivers [...] within the broader context of existing socio-cultural relations, gender and age inequalities, stigma and poverty" (Evans and Thomas, 2009, in Evans 2014: p550).

At the same time, while seeking the comfort, safety and relational connections of feeling 'at home', child domestic workers are not seeking to replace their own families. They are aware of why they are there and of their 'difference' to others in the household. Their reason for being there is purposeful – a means to an end in supporting their families and their own futures.

There are several employing family behaviours which, for child domestic workers, reveal their emotional value to these families. Firstly, throughout the course of this research, child domestic workers have demonstrated an acute sensitivity to the **ways in which they are referred to** by their employing families, and of the effect this

has on their sense of belonging (or not) in the employing household, for example as a 'daughter' or a worker.

Secondly, a range of non-verbal behaviours look to be equally significant in evoking feelings of belonging, or alienation, among child domestic workers. Practices relating to **food and eating** generate some of the strongest emotions among child domestic workers and are remembered long into adulthood. This is perhaps because its consumption tends to bring all members of the household together and thus provides an obvious manifestation of who is considered important and insignificant within it, and a palpable sense of who holds the household levers of power. It is during these moments when feelings of belonging can spike, and conversely when child domestic workers can be at their lowest ebb.

Thirdly, similar feelings can be provoked at times when the displays of care towards children in the household are directly comparable, such as in the **buying of clothing and gifts**. Personal appearance is one of the ways in which child domestic workers are differentiated from other members of their household, both when they first arrive and during the course of their stay. Child domestic workers have reported being marked out as different and inferior by the rural unsophistication, age and/or cleanliness of their clothing.

Fourthly, for child domestic workers, being looked after by their employing family **during times of illness** is the embodiment of being *cared for* by them. Their employer's investment of time and effort, as well as money, is reflective not only of the child's value to the employer as a worker but on a more emotional, relational plane too. Responses from child domestic workers in this study indicate the sense of belonging generated by their employer's demonstration of care towards them and conversely, the strong resentment and alienation caused by employers refusing to take this financial and emotional responsibility.



5. Children of employer perspectives on their lived experience

A key purpose of the research has been to make visible, in their own words, the experiences of children of employers, perspectives which have lain hidden amid concerns about the vulnerabilities and treatment of child domestic workers. Through the lens of being a child of an employer, the research has aimed to examine the relational and emotional challenges for children of employers of living with child workers in their homes. In doing so, the research has explored children of employers' perspectives on household power dynamics, and the ways in which they negotiate and navigate these relations of power.

Understanding of relations between child domestic workers and their employing families has, up to now, revolved around **intergenerational** household hierarchies between child workers and their adult employers, played out within the context of structural inequalities of social and financial status and gender relations (Punch 2002a; Tisdall and Punch, 2012). In focusing on child-child relationships this chapter has sought to demonstrate greater complexity in employing household social relations than previously recognized, caused by the **intra**generational interplay between those children and young people in a serving role and those who are served, and by their respective relations to adult caregivers-cum-employers (Punch and Vanderbeck, 2018). A shift in the experiential spotlight towards hitherto unconsidered children of employers generates new insight into both their lives and the lives of working children – offering a more rounded picture of social relations at the household level.

5.1 Becoming an 'employer'

This research has brought to light two principal 'moments' when a family is most likely to seek domestic help in their homes (this is consistent with other research - see, for example, Thorsen's (2012) review of child domestic work-related studies in a range of African contexts). Firstly, the birth of babies and the requirements of young children result in an increased domestic work burden and the need for additional care help. The second follows the transitioning of offspring from primary to secondary education, resulting in greater scholastic demands on young people's time and consequently less household capacity to fulfil lengthy domestic tasks. Kielland and Tovo (2006) in their book on child work in African contexts note the commonplace practice of taking in children to undertake housework and to relieve their own children to focus on schoolwork.

The research has identified the considerable physical and temporal burden of household reproductive labour that exists in Tanzania, and that the heavy weight of responsibility for this work falls squarely on the shoulders of women and girls. Passing this burden onto a child domestic worker undoubtedly lessens the physical strain and frees up time for members of the employing family, but comes at the cost of greater

relational and emotional complexity in the household and a destabilising of adult-child power dynamics. The taking in of a child domestic worker often brings the advantages of greater independence and companionship to similarly aged children of employers, but potentially at the longer-term cost of their self-reliance and parental concerns of being a 'bad influence'.

The research reveals the palpably destabilising effect on household power arrangements of introducing a child domestic worker, with the resulting daily shifts in the dynamic between children of employers and child domestic workers emerging as particularly striking. Previous studies, which have largely focused on the situation of child domestic workers in relation to adult employers, have noted the challenges of being a child and worker in the household of another family (see for example, reviews of the literature in Bourdillon, 2009; and Thorsen, 2012). However, this research reveals that children of employers also lead lives of particular spatial and temporal complexity as participants in the ebb and flow of, and the jostle for, power between household actors. In doing so, the chronological age of children in the household relative to each other has been found to be significant in intra-generational power hierarchies.

5.2 Living with a child domestic worker

The research has revealed that far from the passive recipients of care (or its lack) at the hands of adults and older working children, children of employers are active participants in the relationships and constantly shifting power dynamics within their households. This is not only in how they read and manage their relationships with those who they live with, but also in how they seek to exploit power over child domestic workers when they have it, and how they seek to minimise personal damage at times and in spaces when the tables are turned.

Children of employers' experiences indicate the existence of a deeper precarity in the situation of child domestic workers residing in their homes, which younger as well as older children of employers understand. Child domestic workers' accountability to, and financial reliance on, their adult employers typically results in a degree of self-restraint which, on the one-hand can be a strategy to minimise maltreatment (such as described by live-in adult domestic workers in Awumbila *et al.* 2017), but is also exploitable by children of employers of any age.

Both working and employing family children know and understand that it is the child domestic worker who will principally be required to account for household incidents, and both groups also understand that typically it is the child of the employer who will be believed by their adult caregivers. This position has been loosely characterised as that of being the 'boss' in the household – an awareness that despite perhaps being less powerful in one aspect of their identity (i.e. being younger), children of employers remain relatively more powerful than child domestic workers in the grander scheme of social and economic markers of difference. This chimes with Bell and Payne (2009) who have noted how young people are active in contesting,

negotiating and shaping their identities in differing physical and social contexts (see also Evans, 2006).

While inequality of power between adult employers and child domestic workers is more obvious, evidence in this section has shown that power hierarchies between children in the household are no less significant, albeit more contested. A predominant predictor of power advantage among children in the household is age seniority, although relations between employing family members can and do disrupt this. The physical superiority that tends to come from being an older child remains significant in children's attempts to dominate one another, but other forms of manipulation are also evident, including the ability to exert control through access to food in particular.

5.3 The emotional challenge of being a child from an employing family

The research also indicates that children of employers are engaged in navigating a complicated and sometimes dangerous path between the behaviour and expectations of their adult caregiving relatives and the needs and demands of young workers brought in to serve the household. While by no means a universal experience, for many in this cohort being caught between family loyalty and the perceived detrimental treatment of child domestic workers by family members is a difficult line to walk and can cause lasting emotional upset. While their junior position in the household leave some feeling powerless to intervene, others seek to protect child domestic workers by taking the heat for infractions, out of sympathy and the *quid pro quo* opportunities it creates. Former children of employers record strong emotional reactions to memories of growing up with child domestic workers, demonstrating the deep and lasting emotional attachment between them and the interdependence of their relations.

The emotional effects and impacts of their relations with child domestic workers not only indicate the significant bonds between them but also reveal the profound interdependence of their relational lives. Evidence suggests a complex picture of opportunities and challenges for children of employers. Many benefit from having a child domestic worker in their home in a variety of tangible and intangible ways; from the care they receive to the temporal and spatial freedoms and companionship it affords them. At the same time, the relationship can leave them living in fear from anger and reprisals, losing valued life skills and, crucially from a wider social context, imbibing early lessons in the manipulation and protraction of social inequalities (UNICEF, 1999).

6. Understanding social relations between children in employing households

The research demonstrates the strength and depth of child domestic workers' feelings of social isolation, and that employing family relations with child domestic workers, as previously discussed, are critical to the latter's experience of loneliness.

At the same time, alliances are also deliberately sought and formed between child domestic workers and the children of employers with a view to gaining independence from adults and some control over their lives, as well as (in the case of child domestic workers at least) reducing their feelings of isolation.

While both child domestic workers and the children of employers refer to being 'friends', relations between them can more aptly be described as (at times) friendly, rather than fully-fledged friendships. In addition, despite living under one roof, for child domestic workers the household represents their workplace, while being home to children of employers. Spatially, therefore, the household is not what Cronin (2014) describes as a "neutral backdrop", but is instead "an active part of the intersubjective space of friendship"; a space which shapes friendship creation and brings people together who may not otherwise have met (Cronin, 2014: p77). At the same time, the existence of friendly relations look to be largely affected by age and gender factors – with the majority of friendly relations constituted between similarly aged and matured young people of the same sex.

6.1 Secret keeping and sharing among children in the household

In exploring friendly relations between children in this context, secrecy (in the form of the sharing and keeping of secrets) has emerged as a key mechanism between child domestic workers and the children of employers in the household which can facilitate a sense of belonging for child domestic workers and greater autonomy for both groups from the adults in the household who shape their lives. A dual effect looks to be at play: by forming alliances child domestic workers and children of employers create opportunities to undermine adult authority over them; at the same time intra-generational household power inequalities are laid bare, with child domestic workers generally at greater emotional, physical and financial risk from potential breaches of trust.

Also, while both groups of children gain practical advantage from their secrecy, and power ebbs and flows between them, their actions do not look to trouble the established generational social order in the household. Both groups of young people recognise that children of employers still have the upper hand by virtue of their closer relationship connection with household adults – whose power, in turn, to set and enforce rules for children's behaviour remains undisputed. Thus, the practice of 'friendship' which secrecy facilitates in this context can both undermine and

reinforce social and cultural power structures simultaneously, by affording the children under discussion social opportunities while at the same time underlining their dependence (Dyson, 2010).

6.2 The influence of children's friendly relations on their mobility and social opportunities beyond the household

For both child domestic workers and the children of employers, the social opportunities beyond the household that are enabled by their alliances are not only highly valued by the children concerned, but are identity forming and essential to their engagement with the world around them (Skelton, 2013). At the same time, their movements remain subject to the flows of power caused by the social disparities between them, including in this case their relative ages, gender and household status (Bowlby, 2011). Thus, the dualistic nature of their alliance is revealed; that while their covert pacts enable the (albeit temporary) undermining of the adult authority which controls their lives, it serves to highlight the socially unequal structures which underpin it.

While it is evident that employing family children are in the driving seat of these not-quite-friendships, they also recognise their own 'stake in the game'; that they too derive valued benefit from their alliances with child domestic workers, and stand to lose influence, increased mobility and social opportunities by not supporting them, including by the potential exposure of relationally-damaging secrets and closer scrutiny of their movements beyond the household.

Uncovering the existence and nature of friendly relations between child domestic workers and the children of employers not only reveals the interdependence of relations between child domestic workers and the children of employers and the positive difference they can make in each other's lives (not least in helping child domestic workers form a sense of belonging), but is also suggestive of the household power-breaking role played by the latter group. This requires a much more nuanced understanding of relations within employing households than has hitherto been explored, and one which has significant implications for research, policy and practice on the subject of 'children serving children'.



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