



RESEARCH WORKSHOP  
SEMINAR SERIES 2025

## A multidisciplinary approach to the study of Urban Crisis:

A focus on the City of Johannesburg

**28 AUG**

Time: 130–3.30pm

Venue: PARI OFFICES

Register to attend in person

AND ONLINE

<https://rebrand.ly/tm0ndyl>

# Polishing the City of Gold

## Paid Domestic Work in Johannesburg, South Africa

by **DAVID DU TOIT**

For most paid domestic workers, the workplace is an urban household. This study focuses on the experiences of domestic workers in Johannesburg, South Africa, revealing how the intersection of local context and international standards shapes labour dynamics. Specifically, I examine the impact of ILO Convention 189 and the COVID-19 pandemic on domestic workers' lives. Drawing on decade-long studies employing diverse methodologies, this study provides insights into the daily challenges and adaptive strategies of domestic workers. While most traditional analyses compare national legal frameworks, I argue for the importance of city-level comparisons and explore the realities of domestic employment based on three key aspects— transportation, stigma and employer-domestic worker relationships. Finally, I advocate for more city-level research to inform policies for improving domestic workers' well-being.

**DAVID DU TOIT** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of Johannesburg and an NRF Y2-Rated scholar. He teaches third-year Social Science Research Methodology and SPSS for the Advanced Social Research course for MA students. His research mainly focuses on the transformation of paid domestic work. David is also serving on the Faculty Higher Degrees Committee (FHDC), the editorial board of *The Sociological Review*, and on the executive board of the International Sociological Association's RC46, Clinical Sociology.

### DISCUSSANT

**RUTH CASTEL-BRANCO** is a Senior Lecturer at the Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, University of the Witwatersrand. Her research is focused on the casualization of labour, worker organizing and the redistributive role of the state. She holds a PhD in Sociology from the University of the Witwatersrand.