



DOMESTIC WORK: A DESTINATION OR A JOURNEY?

UNDERSTANDING THE LIFE STORIES OF
DOMESTIC WORKERS IN ADDIS ABABA,
ETHIOPIA



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Domestic Work: A Destination or a Journey?

Understanding the life stories of domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Master thesis International Development Studies

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Abstract

This research aims to understand the life stories of domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The key concepts used in this research are capitals, empowerment and the capability approach. Using expert interviews, life story interviews and graphic elicitation, this research investigates how domestic work can be empowering, what factors contribute to the empowerment of domestic workers and what their aspirations say about their capabilities. The research finds that domestic work has empowering properties, however overall it is a disempowering occupation. Furthermore, there are many factors that both positively and negatively impact a domestic workers empowerment. Finally, the wide range of aspirations that the domestic workers interviewed had, shows that their capability is equally wide ranged and not limited to the field of domestic work. Overall, the research argues that the capitals and empowerment play a major role in the life stories of domestic workers in Addis Ababa. The research suggests that more attention is needed to the individual in domestic work and the situations of these individuals will only improve if this is done.

Key words: domestic work, capitals, empowerment, capability approach, life stories, expert interviews, graphic elicitation

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Introduction

Globally there are estimated to be 100 million domestic workers, a number which considers undocumented domestic workers as well (ILO 2011a). Of these it is understood that 83% are women. The International Labour Organization (otherwise known as the ILO) (2018) also states that worldwide 1 in every 25 women are domestic workers. Therefore the discourse on domestic work isn't solely focused on domestic work itself. The discourse heavily touches upon and contributes to discussions on gender issues, labour issues, economy, social issues and even politics. Therefore, the domestic worker discourse has repercussions for many discourses and thus is a topic of great importance. An example of this can be seen in Beletu's life story. Beletu is a live-in domestic worker originally from the Oromia region. She came to Addis Ababa initially to get medical treatment. Her uncle brought her with the intention of getting the treatment. However, after this she stayed for 5 years with her uncle; in the role of a domestic worker. Unfortunately although her uncle promised to send money to her family in Oromia for her services, he lied. No money was being sent back. Beletu decided that she needed to earn money. Her uncle disliking this, fought with her and eventually turned her family against her. Alone, Beletu happened upon a broker who found her employment in a house. She has been working with this employer for a year now and since being with this employer has begun education again at a night school. Yet this doesn't come free to Beletu and she has to pay the employer 50 birr each month to attend. Since running away from her uncle, Beletu hasn't had contact with her family. What this life story shows is that the life of a domestic worker is one of ups and downs. Empowerment fluctuates and factors along the way both limit and increase their capitals. It also shows how issues of gender, labour, economy, society and politics all play a part in the story of a domestic worker.

This thesis has major contributions to the academia of domestic work. It takes a very personal look at the lives of domestic workers and shows how their capitals and empowerment influence their life stories. By showing this story, this thesis aims to show the correlations between life stories and the factors that contribute to the fluctuates these people face in their empowerment. This thesis also shows how graphic elicitation works in understanding the domestic worker's life stories and how it can contribute to the discussion.

In this research domestic work is studied through the life stories of the domestic workers themselves. Expert interviews are utilized to try and understand the life stories better and lay a foundation for the interviews, whilst also allowing for an understanding of how the views of experts and domestic workers differ. To compliment the domestic worker interviews, graphic elicitation was utilized to illustrate more creatively the life stories of domestic workers. This thesis is ordered as follows; after this the theoretical framework and literature review will begin, focusing on what has been researched extensively before and also the key concepts used in this thesis. The research objectives and questions will also be presented here. After this section, the methodology is given. Following this is the research context, looking at Ethiopia as a case study, the legalities of domestic work in Ethiopia and the unique case of domestic workers in the Middle East. This section will also see the first use of the data collected in the field. This can be found in the section regarding perceptions of domestic work and the reality of it. Using the expert interviews and countering claims with the domestic worker interviews, this section aims to show the context from both sides of the discourse. Finally in research context, support in the field is also briefly mentioned. Analysis and discussion of the data collected is next. Finally the thesis reaches its conclusion and brings together all the threads of the thesis. Future potential research will be discussed and what this research means for recommendations will be divulged. First, it's important to begin by explaining briefly what a domestic worker is.

What is a domestic worker?

The definition of what a domestic worker is and what is in their scope has always been a challenging question to answer. The ILO Convention 189: Decent Work for Domestic Workers (2011) states that domestic work is that work which is performed in a household, and a domestic worker is a person who is engaged in this domestic work within an employment setting. This definition fits well with the generalized understanding of domestic work, however it does fail to recognize how contexts can change what domestic work represents, and also who the domestic worker is. Domestic workers can be family members or outsiders, they may live with the employer or not, work full-time or part-time and other different aspects. The age at which one can become a domestic worker is also not fixed. Therefore even though this definition helps to generally understand what domestic work is, each context has nuances to

it. Ethiopia is no different in this regard, and what makes it more difficult is that because there is no legal framework for domestic work, there is also no official definition from the government. This though will be discussed in more detail in the legal context of Ethiopia section. In the following section the theoretical framework and literature review will be presented.

Theoretical framework & literature review

A literature review is as much about what has already been widely researched, as it is about knowledge gaps. As such this section will begin by discussing what has been extensively researched and some key concepts that are already heavily used. Although these concepts are not used in this research, it is important to acknowledge them and understand their use. Domestic work has been discussed in a plethora of different ways and contexts. Much of the academic literature on domestic work has focused on the laws and rules that govern their lives, and specifically what they don't have. Therefore this will not be the focus of this research, as it has already been well covered. Instead this research will focus on the individual, and their lives up to the point of the interview. It will also look at their aspirations for the future and what they want or expect to happen. As a result, certain concepts would be more suited to this research than others. This literature review will first look at those concepts that have already been widely researched, namely the feminization of labour, global care chains, exclusion and imagined communities/ nationalism. Then the concepts that will be used are divulged, which are capitals, empowerment and the capability approach. First a discussion of the existing literature will follow.

Knowledge saturation: Who and what has been covered already?

Domestic work is a well-studied phenomenon and as such there is much existing literature on the subject. Much of this literature focuses on the migrant domestic worker who leaves their country of origin to work in another country. Particularly those who migrate from South East Asian countries to Hong Kong, Singapore and the Middle East. For example Silvey (2006) looks at the migration of Indonesian migrant domestic workers to Saudi Arabia and the abuses they face there. Yeoh and Huang (1999) also look at South East Asian domestic workers, predominantly Indonesian, Filipino and Sri Lankan traveling to Singapore to work as domestic workers. A commonality in these two papers is the focus on their lack of rights in the destination country. Although other movements have been researched, these ones are the main case studies that have been given the greatest attention. Why this is the case could be due to a number of reasons. These case studies are given the greatest media attention, due

to the violent cases of abuse recorded and the more overt movements that are protesting for change. In these case studies, organizations advocating for domestic worker rights are more visible and outgoing. They often stage protests and make headlines. Therefore, much of the literature concerning domestic work is actually more focused on the organizations and not the individuals. Constable's (2009) article on embassy protests is a good example of this. Although it does concern itself with domestic workers and their rights, it can be seen to focus more on the organization and protesting for those rights. An important subject no doubt, but it does veer towards seeing domestic workers as a group and not individuals. Seeing them as people with homogenous wants and needs and forgetting the diverse nature of these people. Likewise there is more focus on the domestic workers labour rights and how to gain those rights. Though this is important, it neglects the domestic worker themselves and suggests that without these rights the domestic worker is without hope.

Interestingly there is less literature on those domestic workers who migrate within their own country and even less on domestic workers in Africa. Reasons for this are similar to the reasons why domestic workers from South East Asia get more attention. African domestic workers are less visible in the media, and often do not have such great movements as those in Asia. Ethiopia for example has no domestic worker movement, and this can be assumed to be the case for other African nations. As for the lack of literature on those who migrate within their own country, the factor of ethnicity plays a lesser role if one comes from within the country they intend to work. Difference isn't as big an issue and aspects like racism and xenophobia do not play a great role. It would be misguided to say that all peoples and cultures are the same within a vast country like Ethiopia, but the similarities are greater than say that of a Filipino domestic worker and their Middle Eastern employer.

Conceptually domestic work is often studied from several well documented perspectives. A global perspective is often utilized in domestic work literature and often reflects a commonly held belief that domestic work itself is a global phenomenon. As a result a global understanding of domestic work has been formulated, called the feminization of labour and the global care chains. Firstly feminization of labour refers to the understanding that certain occupations are highly feminized (Gutiérrez - Rodríguez 2014). Domestic work is one such feminized occupation and is often seen as women's work in many cultures and societies.

Piper's (2008) discussion notes the feminization of migration and focuses more on the Asian case. This then shows that even from a more global perspective, a focus on the Asian context dominates. This then brings us onto global care chains. This concept developed by Hochschild (2000), argues that there are personal links between individuals based on care work (Which domestic work falls under the banner off). It argues that domestic workers not only give practical support but also emotional support. For example domestic workers often act as surrogate mothers to their employer's children. Yeates (2004) goes on to argue that in this global care chain there are winners and losers; employers benefit from employing domestic workers, as it frees up their time for career development; whilst the domestic worker loses out as they are subjugated to a role that has little opportunity for growth. These two concepts help to show the bigger picture on domestic work, and how far reaching the effects of this sector are. For example Folbre (2006) argues that domestic workers can help alleviate the costs of publicly funded care. Therefore, domestic workers not only benefit the household they join but the society at large. Although these concepts show the global reach of domestic work, they also generalize the debate and overlook the heterogeneity of domestic workers. They enforce cultural heterogeneity, which is erroneous for obvious reasons. Cultures are not the same and thus what is seen as desirable in an Asian society may not be so in an African one. Likewise, this concept seems to insinuate that domestic work is inherently negative for those involved. This is evident in Anderson's (2000) book that suggests domestic work is dirty work and a burden imposed on women. These negative connotations show a lack of academic interest in the positive aspects of domestic work, and the potential empowerment it can facilitate.

Another well studied concept is exclusion. A well-known understanding of this comes from Sibley's (1995) geographies of exclusion, which argues that exclusion is fostered by stereotypes and prejudices formed from visual difference. Sibley (1998) has acknowledged that exclusion can sometimes be voluntary, with groups of similar people coming together at will. In terms of research done using this concept, Erulkar and Ferede (2009) argued that social exclusion does occur in Ethiopia and especially amongst young women in domestic work. Furthermore this social exclusion is used to coerce these women into sexual activity. This then shows how gender and exclusion are inextricably linked, with gender being both the visible difference and potential catalyst for abuse. Thus we can go into the field knowing that

exclusion does exist in Ethiopia. Imagined communities is another concept related to exclusion and likely a reason for it. Developed by Anderson (2006) this concept argues that a community has a shared sense of identity, even though the members of that community do not know everyone in it. This sense of nationalism then excludes those who are minorities or come from different places. Kobayashi (2015) noted this exclusion in Singapore, and also how the government maintained that exclusion by reinforcing difference and hierarchy. So we can see this phenomenon does occur in places that employ domestic workers, however it may not be so easily distinguishable in Ethiopia. This is because most of the domestic workers are from Ethiopia, and therefore will identify as Ethiopian like anyone else there.

So, the above has shown that much research has been done on domestic workers in terms of social exclusion and the global care chains. They are important concepts to keep in mind throughout any research regarding domestic work. Yet the research already done on the above concepts is plentiful and would not necessarily contribute a great deal to such a personal approach as this research. Likewise very little more could be said about the above concepts, that hasn't already been said before. The following concepts are the ones that are utilized in this research. They are the focus of this research as they represent a gap in the knowledge, especially concerning the life stories of domestic workers. That isn't to say these concepts haven't been used in domestic worker research before, but they haven't really been approached in the same way as this research does.

Capitals: Maintaining and building empowerment

There has been extensive discussion on the various capitals that academics have put forward. For this thesis it is beneficial to acknowledge the sustainable livelihoods approach and the capitals it puts forward: human capital, natural capital, economic capital, physical capital and social capital. The sustainable livelihoods framework is a widely accepted framework for capitals (Krantz 2001). However, the sustainable livelihoods approaches use in this thesis stops here. Continuing the use of this framework muddles things too much and brings sustainability into the debate. This isn't necessary and only causes more confusion. Likewise, from these capitals only human capital, economic capital and social capital are utilized. The reason for this is that the other capitals, natural and physical, have little relevance to the domestic

worker. The domestic worker isn't producing anything tangible, so physical capital isn't necessary. Also domestic workers do not own natural resources. If they did they wouldn't work in a service orientated occupation. Therefore, natural capital is also redundant in this research.

Popularized by Becker (1962), Human capital refers to the talent, skills, knowledge and education attainment one has which can be used as a resource to better one's life, particularly in terms of economic prospects. A key way of investing in human capital is via education (Throsby 1999). Becker (1994) goes onto argue that these investments produce human capital and not other capitals as he argues one cannot separate a person from their knowledge and skills, whereas something like economic capital can be transferred between individuals. Although economic income is a key aim of human capital accumulation, Sen (1997) also notes that human capital not only allows people to produce more but also gives them capabilities beyond the solely economic. For example, being able to read and write not only helps attain better jobs but also enables the individual to engage with others and have a voice (Bebbington 1999). Therefore this shows that human capital is much more than learning with the aim for monetary gain.

Economic capital refers to the financial level and property rights of an individual (Bourdieu 1986). Therefore, this capital is the most straightforward of the three and can be identified easily. Lynch and Moran (2006) argue that economic capital is the most convertible of all the capitals and can be used to obtain the other capitals. For example, economic capital can be used to gain access to education at respected institutions. In Lynch and Moran's (2006) study they showed how the availability of economic capital enables wealthy parents to choose private, fee paying schools. Therefore, having economic capital can give you a massive advantage in gaining the other capitals.

Social capital is the final capital used in this research. As Alder and Kwon (2002) have shown in their article, social capital is less tangible than other capitals. Helliwell and Putnam (2004) note that the core principle of social capital is that social networks have value and can have both negative and positive effects. Perhaps one of the most well-known interpretations is from Putnam (1993), who argues that social capital is made up of three components: moral

obligations, social values and social networks. He goes on to explain how these work in his seminal book *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (2000). Using the example of bowling teams in the USA, he shows that the number of people playing in teams has decreased, indicating that players are not interacting. He argues that bowling teams in the USA are one form of social networks. Without the social interaction this activity gives, a sense of community and other trust related networks are undermined and thus can result in a low voter turnout, public meeting attendance and other political and civil engagement activities (Putnam 2000). Another major contribution to the social capital discourse comes from Bourdieu. He argues (1986) that social capital is one of the resources an individual can use to gain or maintain power. Conversely social capital can be taken away from someone or even used against them. It can also reinforce inequalities, by keeping the elites in a society in positions of power and shutting out anyone outside of their mutual connections and network (Bourdieu 1998). Therefore this shows how social capital isn't always a positive resource and can be used maliciously. Putnam and Bourdieu are often seen as contrasting interpretations of social capital (Siisianinen 2003). Hence using them together helps understand the concept better.

Measuring human and economic capital is quite an easy task. Human capital can be seen in the skills and knowledge one has, and more concretely their education attainment. Certification is often a way of understanding an individual's human capital. Economic capital can be seen in how much money and resources you have. However, social capital is more intangible and thus requires more scrutiny. Lin *et al* (2001) suggest ways in which to measure social capital, because they argue that the ambiguous nature of social capital makes it difficult to empirically show it. They argue that there are two ways: the name generator and the position generator. The name generator is where questions are posed about the informant's contacts. On the other hand, the position generator asks informants about contacts with certain positions in society, such as doctors or lawyers. Lin *et al* (2001) argue that the position generator is more reliable, but they also argue that more work needs to be done to fully understand what factors contribute to an individual's social capital. What this paper tries to do is show how social capital can be used in real life. Although the position generator will not be used explicitly, some of the questions during the domestic worker interviews aim to

uncover whether the informant has friends and if so, what occupation they are currently in. This then gives a sense of their social capital and who is a part of their networks.

An interesting aspect to social capital that makes it stand out from economic and human capital is that of the role of technology and social media. Technologies like mobile phones enable communication across long distances and instantaneously. Ling (2004) points out that the mobile phone is well suited to the maintenance of social capital, as it enables continuous connectivity with others. For example Wei and Lo (2006) found that college students in Taiwan use their mobile phones to strengthen relationships with family members. Subsequently Chan (2013) also argues that mobile phones serve another function than simple voice communication; they allow access to social media like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which can extend your social network virtually. In their study on Facebook, Ellison *et al* (2007) found that there was a strong correlation between the use of Facebook and the creation and maintenance of social capital. In a separate study, Steinfield *et al* (2008) also found that the use of Facebook can have beneficial psychological effects, such as raising self-esteem and satisfaction with life. Though Ellison *et al* (2007) note that there are issues of privacy and other image related issues, overall both studies show that using social media can improve one's social capital and develop their networks. Social capital then becomes even more intangible, as someone may have a large network made on social media but a small network in their day to day lives.

What's interesting about these capitals is the debate surrounding the importance of each, especially over the others. Coleman (1988) provides one perspective, arguing that human capital in particular is of little use without social capital underpinning it. He uses the example of a parent's role in the intellectual development of their child. If the parent's human capital is not supplemented by social capital (in the form of expectations and presence of both parents in the home), then the effect that their human capital can have on the child will be limited (Coleman 1988). What's more Coleman (1990) argues that social capital can mitigate the effect of a lack of economic capital. Again using the example of parents with a child, he (1990) suggests that by investing social capital into their child, which in turn raises their human capital, can in time enable them to gain economic capital. Furthermore Alder and Kwon (2002) argue that social capital requires maintenance and the ties with others need renewing,

whereas something like economic capital doesn't necessarily need this maintenance. Another reason for the inclusion of social capital is that it can lead to both negative and positive outcomes (Fukuyama 2001). On the other hand, Bourdieu (1986) argues that economic capital is at the root of all capitals and what the other capitals aim to produce is greater economic capital. By gaining a network or learning a new skill, the objective is to earn more and gain more economic assets. What these differing opinions show is that each capital can both impact and be affected by the others. They are so intrinsically related that it is fruitless to discuss one without the others.

Overall this discussion on the three capitals shows that although there are contrasting opinions on the importance of each one, it can be seen that they are all important and work together to raise the overall capital of each individual. Which one is most important is therefore not necessarily that useful a query. Especially with regards to this thesis, where each of the capitals can be seen to hold importance in the lives of domestic workers. What's more, each of the capitals contribute to the other concept used in this thesis: empowerment.

Empowerment: Activating the confidence within oneself

Empowerment is the key concept underpinning this thesis. This concept can mean many things and is often interpreted in many ways. According to Scheyvens (2009) empowerment is defined as how a previously disadvantaged individual activates the confidence and capabilities within themselves and can reclaim control over their own lives. Capitals are key to empowerment and are both the drivers and result of empowerment. It must be noted that this definition is based on a human geography perspective and therefore does not necessarily encompass everyone's understanding of empowerment. Empowerment has been researched in the context of domestic work before. For example education is often cited as a way to become empowered. This can be seen in Belete's (2014) article, which discusses how night schools and educational support can be opportunities for domestic workers to gain new skills and qualifications. However these opportunities are difficult to access due to the inherent nature of domestic work. Thus this article is interesting as it shows that there are opportunities for empowerment, but it can be a challenge to realize them. Another example can be seen in Hong Kong. Again, Constable's (2009) article on the embassy protests shows how the social

capital created by being a part of the domestic worker organizations has empowered them to protest against the inequalities they experience. Therefore it can be seen that research has been done on these concepts, but not necessarily in the intimate way this thesis does. Most of the research hasn't focused on each of the domestic workers lives, and especially haven't given much acknowledgement to the inherent heterogeneity of their life stories. Therefore this research will address empowerment and capitals in new ways, and effectively plot them in the lives of the domestic workers interviewed.

Through the looking glass: the capability approach as a lens on domestic work

What is clear from discussing capitals and empowerment is that this research is focused on the individual within society and therefore requires an approach that compliments that focus. The capability approach fits in well with this research focus and topic. Developed by Sen (1985), this concept argues that everyone has capabilities to function. What they presently are able to do are referred to as achieved functioning's; such as working, being a member of society and engaging with activities. There are also potential functioning's which are what individuals want to achieve, what they can be; their aspirations so to speak. As such an individual's capability is based on what they believe is reasonably valuable to them; what livelihood they think is desirable. Robeyns (2005) argues that the potential functioning's of this approach rather than the achieved functioning's are more important. This is because what one aims for, better articulates the individual's notion of a good life. Therefore, what someone already has isn't the driving force for them to improve; what they want is the driving force. This can be understood as means (achieved functioning's) to achieve ends (potential functioning's). Sen's approach has been criticized for not creating a universal list of capabilities. Nussbaum (2003) has been a key critic in this regard, arguing that by having no list of capabilities one could argue for any capability to be valuable, such as abusing one's power or consuming too much. However, others argue that the context specific approach he takes is the strength of the capability approach (Robeyns 2006). Likewise, Sen (2004) counters such criticism by arguing that having one predefined list of capabilities is flawed, because each different context requires a different list of capabilities. As such, they should be democratically selected based upon public discussion and reasoning. Finally the capability approach has been

criticized for being too individualistic (Stewart and Deneulin 2002). However, in their study Dre`ze and Sen (2002) show that the capability approach is a people orientated approach. They argue that *“The options that a person has depend greatly on relations with others and on what the state and other institutions do. We shall be particularly concerned with those opportunities that are strongly influenced by social circumstance and public policy”* (Dre`ze and Sen 2002, p.6). This quote shows that even though the capability approach is centered on the individual and their agency, it still considers what surrounds the individual. As such, for this research it is highly useful and allows a focus on the individual without forgetting the society around them.

Due to the nature of the capability approach, it can clearly be seen that the capitals discussed prior are intrinsically linked to achieved functioning's and the achievement of potential functioning's. For example, human capital influences what people aspire to be and gives them the necessary knowledge and education to gain the functioning's they want. Economic capital can be used to achieve such functioning's and social capital can help the individual look around them and see what they want to do and be. Therefore, the capability approach isn't a theory for explaining inequality but is a tool for evaluating the phenomena that results in inequality (Robeyns 2006); in this thesis that phenomena being the capitals. Likewise, the capability approach heavily emphasizes the role of empowerment of individuals to become agents of change, both individually and collectively (Ruger 2004). Therefore, the capability approach succeeds in creating a framework that gives equal importance to both the capitals and empowerment of individuals and society, whilst acknowledging the context specific nature of functioning's.

In the following section the objective of the research and the main research question and sub questions will be introduced.

Research objectives and questions

The objective of this research thesis is to understand the life stories of domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Using these stories the aim of the research is to put it in the context of capitals and empowerment, and to understand how the life stories of these domestic workers

shape and have been shaped by the concepts mentioned above. Furthermore this research aims to use the expert interviews to see how those who are not domestic workers see the situation and also how the structures and institutions surrounding them have an effect on their life stories and importantly their capitals and empowerment.

Below are the research questions used for this thesis. The main research question is:

How do capitals and empowerment play a role in the life stories of domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia?

Then these are the sub research questions:

- **What factors impact the empowerment of domestic workers? And in what ways?**
 - **How can domestic work be empowering for the domestic workers?**
 - **In what ways do the capitals impact the capabilities of domestic workers?**

These questions have undergone extensive changes over the course of this research process. The final research questions above aim to bring out the life stories of domestic workers and understand the capitals present and the empowering factors in each story. The main research question aims to bring all the concepts discussed together and show the intricacies that bind capitals and empowerment. It also maintains the focus on the life stories of these domestic workers and prevents too big a perspective from being taken. The sub research questions then aim to help answer the main research question. The first sub research question aims to understand the various factors, both good and bad that have impacted the domestic workers. The second sub research question then questions whether domestic work itself can be

empowering or not and if so, how. The last sub research question then returns to the capitals discussed previously and questions their impact on the capabilities of domestic workers.

In the following section the methods used to understand these concepts will be discussed.

Methodology

This research deployed two types of methodologies. One was interviews and the other was graphic elicitation. With regards the interviews, there were two types used: life story interviews and expert interviews. This section will discuss the methods used, the sampling strategy, reflection on the methods, researcher positionality and the limitations of the research.

“A conversation with a purpose”: Expert and life story interviews

This research is highly qualitative, both in themes and practicalities. As the research is focused on understanding how domestic workers get into domestic work, their lives in domestic work and what may or has occurred after; no quantitative method would be able to uncover such a personal story. Especially in the detail needed. Thus this research utilizes interviews. In general, an interview is understood as a “conversation with a purpose” (Burgess 1984 p.102). Therefore it is a method by which knowledge is gained on a situational basis, on a particular topic (Mason 2002). What this means then is that interviews are usually aimed at a certain topic related group. In the case of this research then, it makes sense to interview domestic workers, but for example it would be fairly useless to interview a fruit vendor. Therefore interviews are not so much about getting a consensus, but more about finding out, somewhat niche information.

However the interviews for this research are slightly more different still. The first type of interview conducted is called expert interviews. As the name suggests this interview type is with individuals who are experts in some way that is related to the research topic. For example, one of the experts is an academic who has done research on domestic work before, and another expert is a researcher who has worked with the ministry of labour and social affairs. It can therefore be seen that these individuals are linked to the topic of domestic workers in some way. This type of interview is advantageous as it enables a more efficient way of collecting data during the early phase of the research (Bogner *et al* 2009). Likewise the data produced by expert interviews is usually of good quality and has all the information needed

to lay the groundwork for the context of the research site. This is crucial for this research topic because there is limited research on domestic workers in Addis Ababa and their role in the society. Appendix 1 shows the expert interview guide used. Although used for all experts, it is more of a suggestive guide that allows for other follow up questions to be asked.

The second type of interview deployed is what Atkinson (1998) refers to as “life story interviews”. The major difference between this type and a standard interview is that life story interviews are much more focused on the informants and their lives thus far. These interviews will be semi- structured with open ended questions already prepared and in depth, which according to DiCicco- Bloom and Crabtree (2006) allows for the researcher to delve deeper into personal matters. This type of interview is ideal for this research, as a personal, in depth approach is needed to discuss life stories. Also, being semi- structured allows the interviewer to follow up any predetermined questions with spontaneous follow up questions that aim to deepen the conversation. Finally, the informal nature of semi- structured interviews also puts the informant at ease, which helps them recall their life stories and talk about personal matters. Appendix 2 shows the guide used for the life story interviews. Open ended questions are essential for these interviews, as any difficult questions may stop the interview process from flowing the way life story interviews should.

Graphic elicitation activity

As well as interviews, this research utilizes a method often referred to in academia as graphic elicitation (Varga- Atkins and O’Brien 2009). The aim of this method is to engage the informant in a more creative form of expression. This method has been noted by Copeland and Agosto (2012) as being highly useful in certain situations, especially when concerning emotions and emotional experiences. Likewise, this method as Bagnoli (2009) suggests, allows the expression of nonlinguistic dimensions in research and can allow the researcher to access information and experiences that cannot be communicated verbally. *Figure 1* shows two examples created by two different domestic workers. These two examples illustrate how each domestic worker approaches the activity differently. Appendix 3 shows a guide for the graphic elicitation activity. This guide is used as prompts in case the informant doesn’t know what to draw or why they need to draw. Therefore, this is not a guide that must be kept to but can

help to begin the drawing activity. This method complements the interview and can help give additional information that a standard interview may miss or overlook. The way that the domestic worker draws is completely up to them. The paper is blank for them to choose how and where they draw. This then gives them the freedom to do as they like and makes the whole process more comfortable and organic. Moreover, this activity can be done at any point during the interview and when to do it is based on the individual and how the interview is going. For example if the informant is comfortable to begin with they may choose to draw at the beginning, but sometimes it is better to ask some questions first to ease them into the situation. What is most exciting about this method is the freedom it provides. For example an informant may draw whatever they like, with whatever structure they like too. This allows them to be as imaginative as they like with the activity, which is perfect for the research. With 24 drawings out of a possible 28, this method was a success and adds considerable value to the research.

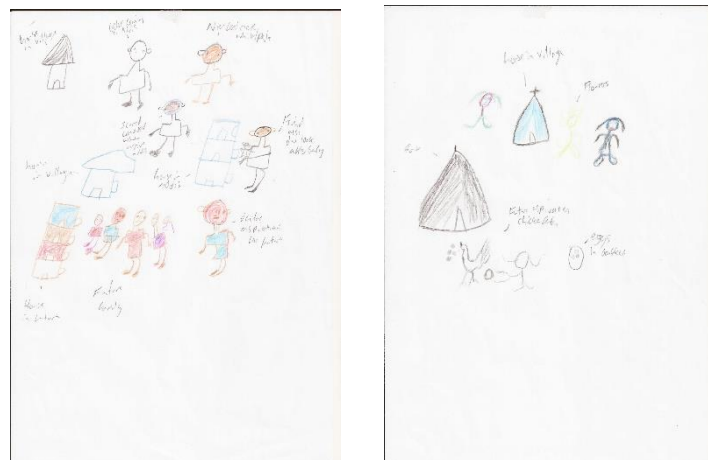


Figure 1: An example of graphic elicitation from two different domestic workers

Sampling strategy & analysing the data

The informants were selected based on the advice of the translator. This was beneficial as the translator was a local and therefore understood the context better. She also knew where to find domestic workers and already knew some. The criteria for finding domestic workers was quite relaxed. So long as they were currently domestic workers or had been domestic workers

they fitted the criteria for the research. Of course, there is always some difficulty finding informants to begin with. This is especially true of domestic workers, who are usually working most of the time and are often in the employer's home. This then means that often the employer's permission is required to interview the domestic worker. In this case, the translator approached the employer first to ask if it were OK to speak with the domestic worker for a short period of time. Then if the employer allows this, the same would be asked of the domestic worker. As it can be imagined the translator asked many employers to speak to their domestic workers and met many refusals. Many of the interviews came from a night school that was visited. This was made possible by contact with an employee within the government who was able to connect with someone who oversaw the night schools. Therefore, permission was granted to visit the night school and interview domestic workers there. Similarly, the interview with the programme officer of AGAR, created the opportunity to return to the organisation and interview the women there. Therefore, these two opportunities helped to alleviate the difficulty of finding informants.

Prior to arriving in Ethiopia, there was very little information or databases concerning domestic workers. As the Ethiopian government does not keep a record of who is a domestic worker, there was no way of creating a sample before arrival. Once in Addis Ababa, it became apparent that the translator was to be the key gatekeeper for the research and was the person who found the informants. Through discussions with experts and others, it became apparent that there were very few male domestic workers. Due to this rarity, the research focused on female domestic workers, as it was well documented that this line of work was highly gendered. Throughout the whole research process, a male domestic worker was never found. Also, only domestic workers who were in Addis Ababa at the time were interviewed. This does not mean that they had to be domestic workers at the time of interviewing. If they were domestic workers at some point in their lives, then they were eligible for the sample. From the beginning the objective was a sample of 25 domestic worker interviews and 5 expert interviews. In the end there were 29 domestic worker interviews, with 23 drawings and 7 expert interviews with the addition of written answers from one informant. Therefore, the sample target was met well, giving ample data to work with. In the analysis quotes will be in the third person instead of the first person. This is because of the use of a translator, and instead of presuming that what the translator said was the same as what the informant said,

this way of presenting the quotes reflects better the interview experience and the information given at the time. All the domestic worker interviews have been anonymised except for the interview with the translator, who once was a domestic worker. Even though consent was given by all the domestic workers, it is more secure use different names. As for the translator as she is no longer a domestic worker, it seems more appropriate to use her real name as there are few repercussions for her involvement.

Concerning how the data was analysed, it was first transcribed and then coded using NVivo. Although NVivo hadn't been used before, it was decided that it was good to use it in this thesis as it enabled easier coding and kept all the data in one place. The expert interviews and domestic worker interviews were coded separately, since this would benefit the comparison and because the codes would be quite different as the experts were outside of the domestic worker sphere and therefore were not necessarily discussing it in such a personal way, as domestic workers themselves do. As for the drawings these were coded by hand as that was found to be more practically efficient. Likewise, during the interviews notes were made on the drawings to describe what each meant. This was done so that nothing from the interview was forgotten and to make sure the drawings were not mix up. By asking what each drawing meant, the question of why they drew it could also be brought forward. This was important in both understanding the drawings and contributing to the interview data.

Reflection on methods

The methods were effective in understanding the life stories of domestic workers. The expert interviews were useful as they helped to lay the groundwork for meeting domestic workers and also provided an overview of domestic work in Ethiopia and the perceptions of those not in its occupation. By beginning the research process with expert interviews, this helped to create contacts and also ease into the research.

The domestic worker interviews worked well, as they remained highly focused on the informant and rarely strayed from them as the focus point. What was found with these interviews was that the reason behind the interview was well understood by the informant and that they felt comfortable with the whole process. A key part of this was making sure the

translator also understood the reasoning, as she was the only way for the domestic worker to understand. This method may have benefited from more planning, more so with preparing the informant. Perhaps in the future it would be effective to meet with the domestic worker twice, once to explain and familiarize the informant with the research and then again to conduct the interview. This though would create its own difficulties, primarily concerning the availability of the domestic worker and also may run the risk of having domestic workers backing out of the interview after the first meeting.

Coming to the drawing exercise, it was found to be a unique aspect of the interview process. Although it did add a new dimension to the interviews, it did sometimes hinder the interviews too. It often felt as though it came out of nowhere and took the informants by surprise. Therefore throughout the research it was introduced at different points during the interviews. For example sometimes the interviews would start with the drawings or there would be a break from asking questions to do some drawings or the process would end with drawings. Each way had its benefits and drawbacks. Overall though the drawing exercise was very much influenced by the informant's inclination to such activities. If a domestic worker wasn't confident with drawing or even talking about their lives, the likelihood of getting drawings was limited and the quality was even more limited even if they did. Often, they did so reluctantly. As with the interviews themselves, it may be beneficial to introduce this method to the informants in a meeting before the actual interview. Then they can prepare themselves to draw or even do the drawing before the interview. This was done for some of the interviews, where domestic workers were allowed to draw before the interview began. It was also found that the lack of structure to the drawing exercise was sometimes a drawback. Although it was also beneficial as it allowed creative freedom, perhaps for future research it would be beneficial to give the domestic worker some guidelines. For example, a researcher could tell them they want three individual drawings based on three different questions or they could have used a timeline. These of course have their own limitations, but it seems like that may have helped the domestic worker more.

Researcher Positionality

Researcher positionality is a very important aspect of the research process. As England (1994 p.87) argues *“fieldwork is intensely personal, in that the positionality and biography of the researcher plays a central role in the research process, in the field as well as in the final text”*. This quote summarizes perfectly how intrinsically linked the researcher is to every decision and output in a research project. It is impossible to completely detach oneself from the research. However the key to good, reliable research is to understand your positionality and prepare for whatever your subjectivity influences.

This research was conducted with a high awareness of positionality as a researcher and steps were taken to limit the role of positionality on the research itself. As a white, foreign male in Ethiopia studying domestic work, this could have potentially limited the research’s potential. However on reflection it seems as though there was not much trouble on account of positionality. A key reason for this was because this research was conducted with the right translator. The translator was an Ethiopian woman, who had previous experience of being a domestic worker in the Middle East. This then meant that she had prior knowledge of domestic work and therefore understood the situations of domestic workers easily. Furthermore as she was a local, she also knew the language and had contacts in the city herself. As a result, the translator became the gatekeeper for the sampling and provided many of the opportunities for domestic worker interviews. Finally as the translator was a friend, no payment was asked for. This then made the cost of the research minimal, and also meant that her motivation to be the translator was not financially driven. This then shows that she had a genuine interest in the research, which should then produce more reliable research. Therefore this research had the best possible translator.

Another way of alleviating researcher positionality was to visit the ministries and bureaus to get a letter of authorization to conduct research in certain parts of Addis Ababa. This activity, although long and bureaucratic, enabled the research to be conducted in schools and organizations with consent from the authorities. This then meant that individuals and organizations were more likely to allow interviews to take place, due to the permission being

granted. This then doesn't change the positionality or necessarily lessen it, but it is an attempt to work with the Ethiopian authorities and create a sense of professionalism.

As it is often shown in research, one's positionality will always influence the research itself. Yet the steps mentioned above should help to decrease the influence of positionality and also put informants at ease with the researcher's presence. Due to the nature of this research, subjectivity will always be present in some form. However the role of a researcher is to prevent that positionality from influencing too much, and more importantly using the experience of research to understand all the perspectives.

Limitations of the research

As with any research, there are limitations. Due to the qualitative nature of the results, there will not be as much data to work with than if it were quantitative. It is also much more subjective as a result. Furthermore as the research is based solely in Ethiopia, it is not possible to do much of a comparison to other places that also use domestic workers. This is purely a case study-based research and not for comparison purposes. However, these limitations are also benefits in a way. Due to the focus and use of highly personal methods, this research will give a face to the people who are labeled domestic workers. Likewise, this research also enables future research on the topic and gives scope to compare and contrast other countries that use domestic workers.

Using a translator will of course influence the data received. It is not possible to get the exact wording back from the informant, however a translator is a necessity in Ethiopia. Also, the translator's ability to convey the information as accurately as possible was highly trusted. The presence of a white foreigner was also well understood to impact the interviews and potentially create the possibility of discomfort for the informants, who may not be experienced in the interview setting. To solve this issue, it was made sure of that the translator explained the situation and researcher to the informant and made sure that the informant consented to being interviewed and more importantly to use the information in this thesis. This consent was recorded on a mobile device and therefore a record is kept. As mentioned

before, names have been changed to reduce any potential issues that may arise from the domestic workers involvement in this research.

Finally, another potential limitation concerns the use of drawings in this research. Of course, the researcher's perception of the drawings may be different to other individuals and even may not entirely be what the domestic worker intended. However it was highly important to interpret the drawings in relation to the interview as well, so that what was said is given attention during the drawing analysis. The graphic elicitation activity was also explained by the translator, which is important because for many of these domestic workers the aim of the drawing wasn't apparent to begin with and therefore an explanation was needed.

There were some practical challenges involved in this research. Obtaining the letter of authorization from the officials was taxing. Much time was spent visiting different offices in the city. However, in hindsight this was necessary for the success of the data collection. Another practical issue was that during the time spent researching in Addis Ababa, there was a state of emergency declared. Initially it was believed that this may affect the research, however there was little disruption. If anything, it may have caused government officials to be more cautious about talking to outsiders. This was evident when attempting to contact the office of the ministry of labour and social affairs. The response was that there was no time to discuss this topic. Overall though the state of emergency had little impact on the research and therefore doesn't factor into the limitations that much.

In the following section research context will be discussed.

Research context

In this section the country specific information about Ethiopia will be discussed. This will be followed by a discussion on the history of domestic work in Ethiopia, then the legal context of domestic work in Ethiopia. After this, Ethiopian domestic workers and the Middle East will be discussed. Then the perceptions and reality of domestic work in Ethiopia will be examined and finally a brief discussion about the support in the field.

Ethiopia: country specific information

Ethiopia is a low-income landlocked country that can be found in the horn of Africa, bordered by Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Sudan, South Sudan and Eritrea (World Bank 2018). Ethiopia has a total population of approximately 105 million people (CIA World Factbook 2018). Also, according to the CIA World Factbook (2018) there are several ethnic groups in Ethiopia: Oromo 34.4%, Amhara 27%, Somali 6.2%, Tigray 6.1%, Sidama 4%, Gurage 2.5%, Welaita 2.3%, Hadiya 1.7%, Afar 1.7%, Gamo 1.5%, Gedeo 1.3%, Silte 1.3%, Kefficho 1.2%, and other 8.8%. Of course, this is an estimate of the ethnic groups and doesn't consider mixing of ethnic groups. However, for this research it proves useful to know of these ethnic groups, for comparison reasons and to understand how cultures may be different.

The official language spoken is Amharic, however Oromo is also a highly used language. Regarding religion, Ethiopia remains a highly religious country, with Ethiopian Orthodox, Islam and Protestant Christianity being the three major religions practised. Furthermore, Ethiopia remains a patriarchal society, with women being subjugated via the excuse of religious and cultural necessity (Gebre 2012). In recent times society has become more equal, however patriarchy continues to exist and dominate. Finally, Ethiopia's economy now depends on the service industry (42%), followed by agriculture (35.8%) and lastly industry (22.2%). This then is a shift from the past, where agriculture was once the highest earning sector. Yet 70% of the population are still employed in the agricultural sector (CIA World Factbook 2018), which shows that agriculture remains a dominant sector in Ethiopia. This then correlates with the fact that 80% of the population continues to live in rural areas (CIA World Factbook 2018).

This information is useful for the research as they are all factors that may influence the life stories of domestic workers in Ethiopia.

Additionally, in the domestic worker sector of Ethiopia, there are approximately 248,600 people engaged. 91% of these are women, and overall domestic work accounts for 1.5% of female employment in the country (ILO & WIEGO 2013). These statistics are somewhat dated; however, they show that the sector is highly feminised. Also compared to the population of Addis Ababa itself, which is 4.4 million (CIA 2018), the domestic worker population is a significant minority. Domestic work is also found to be a highly urban phenomenon, with 81% of domestic workers being employed in urban areas (ILO 2013). *Figure 2* shows that the research was conducted in Addis Ababa, which is situated approximately in the centre of Ethiopia. Therefore, the choice of research site and focus on women makes sense, as this is where and who most domestic workers are. However now it is important to understand what the history of domestic work is in Ethiopia.

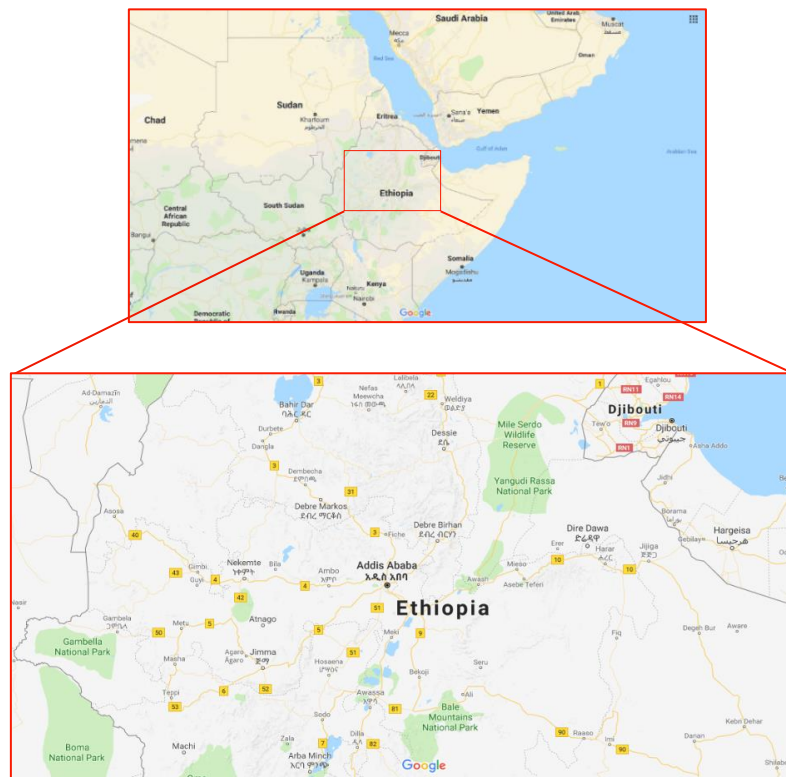


Figure 2: Google maps of Ethiopia and zoomed in on Addis Ababa.

A brief history of domestic work in Ethiopia

Domestic work has been a common feature of Ethiopian society for much of the country's history. However, it is difficult and unnecessary to go back too far, because domestic work has changed considerably over time. Domestic workers 200 years ago do not reflect domestic work as we know it today. Back then it would have purely been slavery, without payment of any kind. This is evidenced in Pankhurst's (1985) book, where he notes that female servants were mentioned in Ethiopian society as far back as the 15th century. In the 18th and 19th century, the ownership of slaves was common with most rich households owning several slaves, who would do the household chores (D'Abbadie 1980). During this time these individuals received little remuneration. What's more, slaves in the home were primarily female, whereas male slaves were used for agriculture and other outside tasks (Pankhurst 1968). This then shows that domestic work has always been feminised and has continued in this tradition up to the present. Then according to Belete (2014), the 1974 revolution changed the history of servants in the country. Under the new communist government servants were banned, and the modern understanding of domestic workers came to be. Since then though little has changed for domestic workers in Ethiopia. Overall this shows that domestic work is nothing new to Ethiopia. Although it could be said to have evolved from servant to domestic worker, little has changed except for payment of services. This then leads onto the next section of this research context: the legal context of domestic work in Ethiopia.

Legal context of domestic work in Ethiopia

To understand the current legal context of domestic work in Ethiopia, we must go back to the 1960 Civil Code. In the 1960 Civil Code, domestic workers were referred to as domestic servants and much of the legalities surrounding them were based on the employer's own fairness and what conditions they set for their domestic servant (Empire of Ethiopia 1960). Since then the 1960 Civil Code has been the only legal document that addresses domestic workers (Gebre 2012). In 2003 the labour proclamation was enacted that repealed previous laws from the 1960 Civil Code. However, this law excluded domestic workers entirely and therefore domestic workers only have the 1960 Civil Code to fall back on (Gebremedhin 2016). Being as old as it is, the 1960 Civil Code is outdated and cannot serve the needs of modern Ethiopia and its domestic workers. Yet during the enactment of the 2003 labour proclamation,

the Council of Ministers promised that a special domestic workers regulation would be introduced. As Gebremedhin (2016) found, there was no further action on this special regulation and the research needed to formulate the legislation had not been started. Likewise, Biadegilegn (2011) was told a regulation was being drafted. Yet nothing has come of it and at the time of writing there has been no further action by the government on the topic of domestic workers. What can be seen is that there is potential for a legal framework to be set up, yet the government chooses to ignore this. Overall it can be seen that the legal framework for domestic workers in Ethiopia is non-existent. So then if this is the case for inside the borders, what laws are there internationally to protect domestic workers?

In 2011 the ILO Convention 189: Decent Work for Domestic Workers was created to cover the issue of domestic work. This convention outlines the ways in which domestic workers should be treated. Furthermore it clarifies what a domestic worker is and thus formalizes this type of work (ILO 2011b). The ILO urged member states to sign it and many did, with strong support shown for it. However, Ethiopia up to the point of writing has yet to ratify the convention. By ratifying the convention, the member states promise to adhere to the rules set forth. By not ratifying it, Ethiopia has shown that domestic workers will not benefit from its regulations and pronouncements. Even though it is a voluntary convention and there are no penalties for not adhering to it, the ILO Convention 189: Decent Work for Domestic Workers is a good way of ensuring that those who do sign, feel an obligation to improve the lives of domestic workers. It also signals that the countries involved do care about domestic workers. It has been noted that other African countries that have ratified the convention have taken positive steps in legislation concerning domestic workers. For example Tanzania prohibits all forms of forced labour (United Republic of Tanzania 2004). Similarly, Zambia's law prohibits the use of children as domestic workers, and provides details on the minimum wage, working hours and other essential provision directly related to domestic work (Government of Zambia 2011). Outside of Africa, other countries in the convention have made changes. For example the Philippines Domestic Workers Act No. 10361 article II section 5 (2013) provides the standard of treatment to domestic workers. All this shows that those countries that ratify the convention either already had domestic worker related legislation or put into action legislation once they became members to the convention. This shows that such a convention can be effective and unite the members in the common goal of improving the situation of domestic workers.

What is interesting is that Ethiopia has ratified other, similar conventions in the past. A notable one is Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). As the name suggests CEDAW (1979) is an international treaty that serves to eliminate all forms of discrimination towards women. As Hainsfurther (2008) argues, the equality guarantee of CEDAW obliges a state to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination and holds them accountable for violations to the human rights of women. As domestic workers around the world and in Ethiopia are predominantly women, this treaty should cover Ethiopian domestic workers both home and abroad. However of course it can be seen that it doesn't. This also shows that being part of a treaty doesn't necessarily mean a country does all it can to fulfil the specifics of the treaty.

Ethiopian domestic workers and the Middle East

As in any country with domestic workers, Ethiopia also has a large number who migrate abroad to work, with a key destination being the Middle East and Gulf States (Fernandez 2011). According to a report by the ILO utilizing statistics from the ministry of labour and social affairs in Ethiopia (2017), more than 2 million Ethiopians live outside of Ethiopia. Of these, approximately 460,000 Ethiopians migrate legally to the Middle East, of which 86% of them are women from rural areas with limited education. However these numbers are likely to be higher in reality than the estimates suggest and there is of course a considerable amount of irregular migration, that is not recorded by any authorities. Overall though this shows that there is a significant diaspora in the Middle East. Of those in the Middle East, Assefa *et al* (2017) found that domestic work was the occupation with the highest percentage in Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman and Qatar. This shows that the occupation of these individuals travelling to the Middle East is majorly domestic work.

Perceptions and reality: How accurate are the perceptions of the experts?

At this stage in the thesis, it is appropriate to discuss the perceptions of domestic work in Ethiopia and whether these perceptions are reality or not. This section will use data from the

expert interviews because it is during these expert interviews that perceptions were discussed. Similarly these were the interviews with people who are not actually domestic workers, and therefore do not have firsthand experience of the domestic work sphere. It was widely considered by all experts interviewed that domestic workers are essential to Ethiopian society. A telling statement came from Dr Asmelash Haile of the World Bank, who opined that *“I think I cannot work or raise kids if I don’t have domestic workers”*. This alone shows the need for domestic workers and shows that many families would be at a loss without them. An important aspect is how essential they are to the women of Ethiopia. As Dr Adamnesh Bogale from Addis Ababa university states, *“particularly for women they are of great help, now women can go to work, they don’t have to be stay at home mum”*. So, this shows that domestic workers are even drivers of equality and empowerment for the other women of Ethiopia, allowing many of them much like Dr Adamnesh Bogale herself, a career. This then reiterates the contribution domestic workers have made to Ethiopian society.

Yet as it has been noted, the government doesn’t see the issues facing domestic workers as a problem. Yohannes Kassa (a former ministry of labour and social affairs researcher) argues that *“The government and the people do not recognise as a problem”* and that for the government *“it’s not prioritised (...) when I was there (The ministry of labour and social affairs) the issue of disability, the issue of old age has been given priority”*. This can be seen to be true in Ethiopia presently. As mentioned in the section on legal context, on an international scale Ethiopia hasn’t ratified the ILO Convention 189: Decent Work for Domestic Workers (ILO 2011b). It can also be seen that domestically; the Ethiopian government has not given any legal protections to domestic workers beyond the 1960 Civil Code. Therefore, the experts are correct in their understanding that the government isn’t concerned with domestic work.

According to the expert interviews the attitude towards domestic work in Ethiopian society is also quite negative. It is often seen as the lowest form of work and is not seen in high regard. Sehin Teferra from the Setaweet feminist movement, argues *“You don’t find even poor city girls doing domestic work (...) it’s just really looked down upon, nobody want to be a domestic worker (...) erm sex work more common for city girls to get into than domestic work”*. This statement shows that domestic work is poorly viewed, even compared to sex work which is illegal. This is a revealing quote as it shows just how little people think of domestic work and

how even the poorest of the poor in the cities don't want to be a part of it. In the domestic worker interviews, most of the women interviewed were from outside Addis Ababa. Although it remains true that domestic work is looked down upon by many of those in society, what was gathered from the interviews was that for the domestic workers themselves, domestic work was a better life than what they had before. Therefore, even though domestic work might be looked down upon, it remains a viable employment option for many. As for the sex work aspect, none of the domestic workers interviewed had been or even considered sex work. One domestic worker, Redet, even recounted how her former employer's children asked for sex and she refused. This shows that there remains a distinction between domestic work and sex work in the minds of some domestic workers. It also shows that sex work is no more desirable than domestic work and doesn't occur to all domestic workers as an option.

What's more, Aynalem Megersa from the Gender studies centre at Addis Ababa university, argues that employers who are with domestic workers for a long period of time *"don't want them to just be a domestic worker forever (...) they have to you know start their own life so one way of doing it is like, by at least helping them (...) they would give them start-up money"*. This then suggests that some employers do form a good relationship with their domestic worker, especially if they have been with them for a long period of time. From the interviews it was found that many of the domestic workers didn't spend that long with each employer. Therefore, the relationship as described by Aynalem Megersa didn't often exist. This then shows that the experts are correct in their assumption that the dynamic between domestic workers and their employers has changed. However, it was also found that even though employers may not treat their domestic workers as Aynalem Megersa believes, some employers do allow their domestic workers to go to night school and allow some free time. Therefore, it is perhaps wrong to suggest that the relationship is worse than before. A more correct understanding is that the relationship has modernised. It has become what it essentially has always been; an employer/ employee relationship.

Domestic work is seen as highly gendered and as a result the expectations of society are influenced by this traditionally feminine role. Although domestic workers are often not a member of the family, and certainly not the housewife, they are still treated as such. Sehin Teferra argues that *"it's an extension of the expectation of Ethiopian womanhood and that's*

what women do they serve they serve men and if you're lucky and if your family has a bit of money erm you can hire somebody else to do the work you would do otherwise as a woman".

This shows that Ethiopian society continues to have an expectation of who does domestic work and even though the female employer may be empowering themselves, they are in fact disempowering other women they employ and upholding the traditional values. This also ties into Bourdieu's (1998) sentiments on power and can be understood as the female employers gaining power at the expense of the domestic worker employees losing some. Coming back to the domestic worker interviews though, domestic work itself is evidenced to be capable of being empowering. This can be seen in the stories of some of the women interviewed. For example, Faizah was married off to someone at the age of 15, without her consent. She ran away from this marriage and sought her independence via domestic work. Getachew (2006) has noted this unwanted and early marriage as being one of many push factors in making individuals move to the cities and become domestic workers. Therefore, she escaped what could have been a disempowering position and was able to choose her own path. This then counters the idea that domestic work can't be empowering. It shows that for many women it gives them the financial and social independence they didn't have previously.

This then shows how perceptions and reality can be markedly different. Although some of the perceptions cannot be cross examined with reality, such as essentialness to society; what some people think about domestic work isn't how the domestic workers themselves view it. Although not explicitly stated, domestic work was an empowering move for some of these women and often gave them an independence they rarely had before. Likewise, domestic work isn't seen as the worst situation by these women. Of course, in their opinions, having nothing is the worst situation. This seems to have been overlooked by the experts and shows that domestic work at least gives them something to build upon. Although it's true that there aren't many occupations worse than domestic work, no occupation at all is always a poorer situation. Therefore, many of the domestic workers interviewed were grateful for even being able to be a domestic worker. This alone shows the empowering ability of this occupation and rebukes the idea that domestic work is the worst. The analysis section will discuss in greater detail the effect becoming a domestic worker has on these individual's empowerment.

Support in the field

During the research in Addis Ababa, an organization called the Horn Economic and Social Policy Institute (HESPI) played host. This organization was formed in 2006 as an independent think tank, which analyses and researches different issues of interest for the horn area (HESPI 2018). Their office was used as a base of operations, even with some interviews with experts being conducted there. It was highly useful to have a connection in the field and enabled the research to be conducted more efficiently, as they were able to provide contacts that were of use in the research process.

Analysis and discussion

This section aims to bring the data together and discuss it in relation to the topics outlined in the theoretical framework and literature review section. *Table 1* shows the main characteristics of the domestic workers interviewed. These characteristics were chosen as they help to understand how each domestic worker differs and will also help with understanding the factors that influence their individual empowerment. This is an important starting point for this analysis.

Name	Age	Place of origin	Marital status	Children Yes/ No	Worked overseas Yes/No	Education attainment (1 low- 12 high)	Drawing Yes/No
Ayana	30	Amhara	Divorced	Yes	No	6	Yes
Bathsheba	18	Amhara	Single	No	No	6	Yes
Chinua	22	Oromia	Single	No	No	4	Yes
Diarra	20	Amhara	Single	No	No	1	No
Edna	18	Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region	Single	No	No	3	Yes
Faizah	20	Amhara	Divorced	No	No	3	Yes
Gyasi	23	Amhara	Single	No	Yes	10 & level 2 in Auto electricals	Yes
Habiba	17	Oromia	Single	No	No	2	Yes
Ife	20	Amhara	Single	No	No	2	No
Jamila	20	Amhara	Single	No	No	1	No
Kadida	21	Oromia	Single	No	Yes	4	Yes
Liya	23	Tigray	Single	No	Yes	11	Yes
Mazaa	30	Addis Ababa	Married	Yes	Yes	9	Yes
Nuru	25	Oromia	Single	No	Yes	Unknown	Yes
Orit	30	Oromia	Separated	Yes	Yes	Unknown	Yes
Persinna	20	Amhara	Single	No	No	5	Yes

Redet	18	Addis Ababa	Single	No	No	6	Yes
Subira	20	Oromia	Single	No	No	6	No
Taci	30	Oromia	Divorced	Yes	No	7	Yes
Uma	20	Oromia	Single	No	No	7	No
Webit	37	Oromia	Single	No	Yes	8	Yes
Yalem	22	Oromia	Single	No	No	1	Yes
Zaher	21	Amhara	Single	No	No	8	Yes
Abeba	23	Amhara	Single	Yes	No	10	Yes
Beletu	20	Oromia	Single	No	No	6 in Oromo Unknown in Amharic	Yes
Chereka	20	Oromia	Single	No	No	1	Yes
Debre	20	Oromia	Single	No	No	1	Yes
Eddel	25	Oromia	Single	No	Yes	1	Yes
Selam	28	Amhara	Married	No	Yes	10 and TVET	No

Table 1: Basic characteristics of domestic workers interviewed.

In the following section how becoming a domestic worker can be empowering will be discussed. This section will provide an analysis that will dismiss the overriding presumption of many, that domestic work can't empower.

How becoming a domestic worker can (or cannot) be empowering

Domestic work is often portrayed as being a disempowering occupation for the individuals involved. However, this presumption is flawed and doesn't consider the possible empowering mechanisms that domestic work can foster. In this section the ways in which domestic work itself can be empowering will be looked at from the perspective of the experts interviewed and the domestic workers themselves. Further to this, the section will be structured by capitals. This then will make it easier to understand how domestic work is affecting each of the capitals, which in turn explains whether domestic work is empowering or not. Due to the

nature of capitals, there will be overlap and all the capitals will appear in each of the sections below. However, the aim of the headings is to put that capital at the forefront of the section and use the other capitals to cross examine the capital in question.

Economic capital

Becoming a domestic worker often but not always offers the increase of economic capital, as domestic work often equates paid work. Aynalem Megersa argues that *“employment by itself is an empowering, it’s a resource by itself which enables empowerment”*. It can therefore be seen that Aynalem is referring to the economic capital that comes with employment of any kind. This links to Bourdieu’s (1986) sentiments on capitals being resources that can be utilised and his understanding that economic capital is the root of all other capitals. It also links to Lynch and Moran’s (2006) argument that economic capital can be used to obtain the other capitals. From the domestic worker interviews, earning money was the most cited reason for becoming a domestic worker:

“She want help her family with that money” (Liya)

“first time when she come to Addis of course she want to work and get money by working”

(Persinna)

“She just want to earn money” (Bathsheba)

These are some examples of this economic orientated reasoning for becoming a domestic worker. Why such an economic capital focus can be understood as coming from the domestic workers desire to help their family economically. Many of the domestic workers interviewed argued that they wanted to earn money to remit back to their families. The translator for this research and former domestic worker Selam, acknowledges this motivation: *“I love my mum so much (...) I was thinking maybe I have to change her life at least by going Middle East”*. This shows that domestic workers are aware of how economic capital can elevate their family and

their own livelihoods (Bourdieu 1986), which empowers them. This then shows that economic capital is perceived as the most important capital to foster.

Another interesting benefit of increased economic capital was also argued by Aynalem Megersa: *“You know since she can earn income you know especially in rural areas, she sends money to her family that means she is in a better position to negotiate with her parents in the rural are, like if they ask her to come back and get married to a person whom she doesn’t want, she will say no definitely”*. This shows that by becoming financially active, they have more bargaining power within their families. This ties in with Bourdieu’s (1986) discussion on power dynamics and shows the link between economic capital and social capital. In the case of domestic workers, economic capital can strengthen your social capital and more specifically strengthen the role you play in the social network. Therefore, having an income and subsequently playing a huge role in the income of their family, can be very empowering for these women.

An interesting point raised by Dr Bogale was that *“women because of the demand choose to get into the domestic work because as I said earlier they will not be housing problem issue their will not be food issue they will eat there, sleep there”*. This then could be argued as a positive of becoming a domestic worker. Instead of worrying about where they will live and what they will eat, becoming a domestic worker solves these issues. It also means that whatever they earn is theirs to keep and doesn’t need to be spent on housing or food. Therefore, their economic capital will be increased without having any costs deducted from it. However, this is only true of the domestic workers who live with their employers. Due to this it could be argued that living in has its own negatives. For example, being a live-in domestic worker can limit your social capital as you rarely leave the house and do not have the leisure of going out whenever you like to meet people. Likewise, as you are living in your workplace, the only people you interact with on a regular basis are your employers. This then isn’t a sufficient social network and doesn’t allow much room to develop your network further. So, whilst living with the employer has its practical benefits, it can also limit social capital. This then brings into question the importance of each capital and whether the loss of one is outweighed by the gaining of another. This is where Coleman’s (1990) discussion comes in. If social capital can mitigate the lack of economic capital, does living with the employer really give much

incentive? The answer is, it depends on the social network of each individual. Someone with a well-established social network in the destination would be more suited to rely on their social capital. However, those with no one in Addis Ababa for example would see the benefits of the live-in situation better.

An interesting point raised by Yohannes Kassa, was that *“People who are living in the city bring some relative from rural area to cover this domestic works, this people... may have or may not have income for this domestic work”*. This then shows that domestic work doesn’t always mean paid work, and therefore there is a good chance that becoming a domestic worker doesn’t result in economic capital. This could be seen in several of the domestic worker interviews. For example, Beletu moved to Addis Ababa for medical treatment, but ended up working for her uncle for 5 years as an unpaid domestic worker. *“Her uncle he said to her he send money back her family, every month he said I pay you but send it to your family, but he doesn’t”*. This then shows how there are still instances where domestic work is unpaid. What’s more, there are also instances where promises of payment are not kept. This point also shows that whilst paid domestic work has been shown to increase economic capital, unpaid domestic work does the opposite. In the case of working for a family member, it can be argued that social capital is to blame for the lack of economic capital. As Putnam (1993) has stated, moral obligations play a pivotal role in social capital. Yet, we also know that social capital can be used against other people (Bourdieu 1986). The case of Beletu shows how these two understandings of social capital can merge together. The moral obligation of being part of a family, can be used by someone to exert a power over the other. In this case the uncle took advantage of this moral obligation to solicit domestic work from one of their relatives. Likewise, Putnam’s (2000) study argued that social networks are based on trust. Yet, in this case the trust that social capital creates has been taken advantage of. Beletu trusted her uncle to contribute to her economic capital. It can be argued that family ties and the social capital of that created the illusion of trust. Therefore, social capital has undermined the possibility of economic capital. This also goes against Coleman’s (1990) argument and shows that whilst in non-exploitative relationships social capital can mitigate economic capital absence, if the relationship is exploitative then the social capital deters any economic capital accumulation. Therefore, the understanding that social capital has both negative and positive outcomes (Fukuyama 2001) is valid and evidenced by Beletu’s experience.

This section shows that becoming a domestic worker can stimulate an individual's economic capital, which can subsequently provide the opportunity for the other capitals to increase. However, the other capitals can equally impact economic capital. This then brings us to the next capital: social capital.

Social capital

We have already begun discussing the relationship between economic capital and social capital. However, this section will focus more on social capital, and the ways in which domestic work influences its accumulation and dissipation. According to the experts interviewed, domestic workers have very little social capital. Dr. Bogale argues that due to their situation, *"I wouldn't say that they have accumulated much of a social capital"*. The network of domestic workers is often highly limited to domestic workers themselves and family members. A key question asked in the domestic worker interview was whether the domestic workers had friends and what they did for employment. The majority of those interviewed either had no friends or had domestic worker friends. According to Lin *et al* (2001) this then suggests that these domestic workers have a small network and therefore limited social capital. Due to the nature of domestic work, this suggestion is highly valid as domestic workers have limited opportunities to meet other people and those they do meet are usually domestic workers as well. Gyasi sums up the situation of domestic workers well, saying *"yeah she doesn't have any friends because she have to work, I mean if she go to work she have to use her time"*. Persinna also contributes to this understanding saying, *"she is very busy so she just want to come to her class and then studying and just go home, she didn't give attention for other friends no"*. These two examples show that becoming a domestic worker limits the amount of time you have to make friends and pushes these individuals to prioritise whatever free time they have. In the case of Persinna, she chose to study more and as for Gyasi, she simply doesn't have enough free time to begin with. Therefore, becoming a domestic worker limits the opportunities for developing and maintaining social capital (Alder and Kwon 2002), which limits the extent of an individual's empowerment.

As domestic work is often most concentrated in the big cities like Addis Ababa, migrating is a necessity to secure a domestic work role. This then means that the social ties and friendships

created back home are often broken or limited by the choice of becoming a domestic worker. Likewise, as Alder and Kwon (2002) noted, social capital needs maintenance whereas economic capital doesn't so much and to a lesser extent neither does human capital. This is equally true of domestic workers who go abroad to work. Selam's interview provides evidence for this observation. She says, *"Before I go (referring to becoming a domestic worker) yeah I have friends a lot like classmates and in neighborhood, which the friends who I grew up with"*. When asked whether she kept in touch with them whilst she was a domestic worker, she said *"I was disappear, I didn't contact anyone, yeah for about more than one year I didn't contact except my mom"*. This then shows how social capital can disintegrate once contact is lessened or lost altogether (Alder and Kwon 2002).

Selam's quote also suggests that becoming a domestic worker makes other people look down on and distance themselves from the domestic worker. Or at least makes the domestic worker feel as though people will be like that to them. Sehin Teferra made an interesting claim, arguing that *"they are at a disadvantage (referring to social capital) a lot of employers will not let them leave the house at all and if they are seen to talk to other domestic workers it's really seen as oh you know what are they planning (...) so it's not encouraged so I think they are actually very poor in terms of social networking"*. This claim shows there is a sense of mistrust towards domestic workers, which prevents them from being able to build social capital. The mistrust also indicates that the domestic workers do not have a social network outside of domestic work as no one trusts them. As we have noted, trust is a key part of network forming (Putnam 2000). This then suggests that even if a domestic worker wanted to extend their social network, the perceptions of others prevent her from doing so; limiting the achievement of social capital. Thus, it can be seen that the value placed on domestic work is very low and as a result this contributes to the poor opinion of domestic workers about themselves. This is evidenced in Orit's story. She already has children in another part of Ethiopia but hasn't met them in person since becoming a domestic worker because *"she afraid maybe they become disturbed by this"*. This then shows that domestic work has changed Orit's perception of herself which has damaged her social capital. She goes onto say that *"she feel like she's lesser than other people"*. This shows becoming a domestic worker is not only viewed negatively by society at large, but also seen negatively by the domestic workers themselves in some cases. This then upholds Sehin Teferra's comments on public perception of domestic work: *"You*

don't find even poor city girls doing domestic work (...) it's just really looked down upon, nobody want to be a domestic worker (...) erm sex work more common for city girls to get into than domestic work". These perceptions on both sides makes domestic work seem like an unworthy occupation and thus this perception influences the potential social capital that domestic work could achieve. Coming back to Putnam's (1993) argument, we can see that one of the components of social capital, social values, has negatively impacted the social capital of domestic workers. Society has valued domestic work poorly, and this has imprinted onto domestic workers the feeling that they themselves are of little value. Therefore, perceived social value has dissipated their social capital. Again, Helliwell and Putnam's (2004) understanding remains valid and shows the negative effects social capital can create.

On the other hand it could be argued that becoming a domestic worker has some positive effects on social capital. By moving to a big city and gaining independence, these domestic workers have more opportunity to create and control their own social networks. Yet, independence isn't the aim of social capital. Social capital is about using connections and relationships to help yourself. Becoming independent may empower an individual but in terms of their social capital, independence has little benefit. Putnam's (2000) example of the bowling teams in the USA proves this. Whilst independence may fuel confidence in one's own abilities, it undermines social networks and contributes to low levels of public participation and other engagements.

What this section has shown is that becoming a domestic worker does very little for your social capital. In reality it often can limit and reduce it. So, for domestic workers little empowerment is created through social capital.

Human capital

Domestic work doesn't require any formal qualifications, nor does it often require much experience (Anderson 2000). Therefore, individuals who become domestic workers are not generally highly educated. Domestic work does have the benefit of providing experience to these individuals, which means they can use this experience to secure better paying domestic work. Dr Haile argues that *"if she is a skilled one she can also demand so, she will tell me that*

she can cook different foods and she can use a washing machine and she has been working at somebody houses and for this years and I can pay her some double salaries. So, the skills and the training would help them to earn more". Therefore, this shows that there is some hierarchy within domestic work, where the more skilled and experienced domestic worker can earn more than the others. As such having human capital related to domestic work can increase their economic capital. Yet, beyond practical skills as mentioned by Dr Haile, there is very little skill and knowledge development in other areas. So, this ties in with Sehin Teferra's assumption that *"whatever kind of position you get is often vertical its within domestic work"*. Arguably this then limits the empowerment of domestic workers and suggests they will not venture out of the domestic work sphere. However, as Sehin Teferra also claims *"they've become a scarce resource it quite hard now to find a good domestic worker and they also can afford to ask for a lot more money than use to be the case because now there is a shortage either perceived or real"*. This then suggests that skilled domestic workers have more bargaining power and can claim greater economic capital. Yet from this it can be seen that domestic work does provide some human capital, in the way of skills and experience (Becker 1962). This then is beneficial for the empowerment of these individuals, to an extent.

The opinion of Dr Haile can also have the opposite effect. Aynalem Megersa argues that *"the only thing they will have to do is use their you know skills if they don't have skills they will just lower the price"*. This quote suggests that going into domestic work with low human capital can severely impact your economic capital. This quote shows how the capitals both impact and are impacted by one another. As Lynch and Moran's (2006) study showed, economic capital had the ability to give someone a greater chance of increasing their human capital. Yet, this quote shows the opposite is also true. Without enough human capital to begin with, some domestic workers must settle for lower salaries. What's more, as the discussion is on how becoming a domestic worker can be empowering this has shown that every new domestic worker will begin with few skills and little experience. Therefore, almost all domestic workers start out with little human capital, and subsequently receive little economic capital as a result.

Coming back to the domestic workers perspective, another issue of becoming a domestic worker is not having a formal education; which is highly disempowering (Belete 2014). As Selam recalls *"I feel like I missed some things only education (...) if I didn't go to Middle East I*

would have gone to university (...) yeah maybe you will miss many things inside your life (...) you cannot be somewhere where you want to be". Selam's quote suggests that domestic work can potentially prevent you from doing many things and this shows that to some extent Selam regrets her decision to become a domestic worker. It also links to Sehin Teferra's opinion that even with the human capital from domestic work, there is little opportunity to use it outside of the domestic work realm. The objective of accumulating economic capital in this case has harmed the accumulation of human capital. Although domestic work is often a sound economic option, it does hinder human capital. Thus, the paradox of the capital's is evident in this case. Gaining one capital can often lead to losing another, with a compromise needed based on the present priorities of each individual.

So whilst this section has so far acknowledged that becoming a domestic worker does little for one's human capital, previously it has already been noted that domestic work does often bring economic capital with it. This then arguably can lead to human capital in its own way. Using their newly acquired economic capital, some domestic workers may invest in their human capital. This is done primarily through education, either vocational or academic (Throsby 1999). However, due to the nature of domestic work and the limited free time each domestic worker has, they often cannot spend their economic capital to increase their human capital. Kadida said because of becoming a domestic worker she was unable to study more, *"she doesn't study so (...) she feel sad about that"*. Again, this shows that becoming a domestic worker can prevent some from continuing their education, which in turn prevents them increasing their human capital and thus disempowers them.

An interesting point to raise in this section is that of Coleman (1988), who says that human capital is of little use without social capital underpinning it. This point is raised because it's good to be reminded of the inherent nature of domestic work. Time consuming and with little social interaction, the domestic worker has little social capital. Therefore, according to Coleman (1988) their human capital suffers as a result, as there is little support and encouragement for the domestic worker to improve their human capital. Of course, if the domestic worker has a family, then there is some social network available. Yet, this itself can be detrimental to a domestic workers empowerment too. For example, it was also found that the promise of education was sometimes a reason for becoming a domestic worker.

Unfortunately this promise was often unrealized. Subira told me that *“She come with her aunt, she said for her family I will send her to school (...) so her aunt she doesn’t keep her promise, she doesn’t send her to school”*. instead her aunt used her as a domestic worker, without any payment. This then shows that whilst Subira wasn’t coming to Addis Ababa initially to become a domestic worker, she was tricked into becoming one with the promise of education and increasing her human capital. This then ties into social capital and contradicts Dr Haile’s opinion that *“as a society I mean we have very, we believe in extended families and even though it is little bit deteriorating this time we believe in social network and social supports”*. Although this may be true for many cases, Subira’s story shows that family members can force individuals into domestic work, which then limits their capacity for human capital building. This also reiterates how social capital can have negative outcomes (Fukuyama 2001), in this case preventing the increase of human capital. It also upholds Bourdieu’s (1986) idea that social capital can be used against someone. In this case the family is using the social network to exploit Subira’s labour. Subira’s example also shows that domestic work is sometimes not the original intention and not the aim. Therefore, becoming a domestic worker is viewed as not reaching the goal these individuals were aiming for. This failure is detrimental to their empowerment.

This discussion on how domestic work can be empowering or not has shown the intricate relationship between the three capitals. it shows that domestic work can affect each capital differently, and these impacts can be felt by the other capitals too. Moving on from this discussion, looking at the factors that do impact empowerment is an important next step. Whilst these factors were hinted at in this section, they will be elaborated on more in the following section.

Factors enabling or hindering empowerment

There are a plethora of factors that can both enable and hinder empowerment. Below several of the important factors will be discussed. The ordering of the factors aims to enable the factors most linked to be easily cross examined. There is also a sense of chronology to the order, with migration beginning and AGAR ending. Therefore, life stories remain integral to the way this discussion progresses.

Migration

As *table 1* shows most of the women interviewed are from outside Addis Ababa. This is generally true for all domestic workers in Ethiopia. What's more, as most domestic work opportunities are in big cities like Addis Ababa, these individuals must migrate from their place of origin to work. Dr Haile argues that *"people are using migration to cope with some problems and to cope with some changes"*. Likewise, looking back in history, Sehin Teferra noted that *"A big change in the last 5-10 years has been the opening of migration for domestic work"*. This migration is a factor that heavily influences the empowerment of these people. Leaving family and friends behind, means taking a step out of the social network already established. Which can prevent one from maintaining that existing social network (Alder and Kwon 2002). One of the questions asked was how they felt when they came to Addis Ababa. This was also one of the suggestions for the graphic elicitation activity. Some of the domestic workers were not happy when they first arrived in Addis Ababa. For example, Ayana said *"She wasn't happy at the first time when she's here because she just confused about things"*. This shows that there is some culture shock for these women who come from the rural areas, which are obviously a massive contrast to Addis Ababa. Another example comes from Bathsheba who said, *"she was so much stress at the first time (...) she don't know the places very new for her"*. This shows that moving to Addis Ababa can be a very emotional event. For many of these individuals, this was the first time they ever left their hometown and their family. So, it is naturally quite scary and isolating to be in such a different place, pretty much on their own.

Confusion was a major theme amongst the domestic workers, which stems largely from their lack of experience in a big city like Addis Ababa. For Uma, although she wanted to come to Addis Ababa very much she found that *"when she come here, she doesn't see anything what she expect there, so she was very disappoint with that"*. This shows that prior understanding of what Addis Ababa is like can sometimes contrast the reality. On the other hand, some of the domestic workers interviewed were happy about their move to Addis Ababa. Chinua explained *"she was so much exciting to see Addis so she never afraid when she come, so she always that her dream"*. This shows that moving to Addis Ababa was her aspiration and made her feel empowered. It shows that moving to Addis Ababa can have positive effects on these individuals. The drawings of some of the domestic workers showed their surprise and nervousness on arriving in Addis Ababa. *Figure 3* shows Yalem's expression on arriving in Addis

Ababa, which is one of shock. It shows that Addis Ababa for some can be overwhelming and alien.



Figure 3: Yalem's drawing. Circle indicates the section showing her reaction to seeing Addis Ababa for the first time.

Aynalem Megersa raised an interesting point, saying *“When a domestic worker, she migrates to Addis Ababa and then she gets back to her village, she actually tells what she has experienced here and then being alert by that you know they just also migrate to Addis”*. This point is interesting for several reasons. One is that this shows the power of social capital and how it can continue to exist even when someone migrates. This can then be understood as a way of maintaining social capital (Alder and Kwon 2002), by visiting home. It also shows the desirable nature of domestic work and how even though domestic work is often viewed negatively, for some it is an opportunity of a lifetime.

Brokers

Brokers were often considered to have a major influence on the lives of domestic workers, according to the experts. So much so that Sehin Teferra argued that the path to the occupation was *“very common really, they come from villages and brokers help them find jobs (...) it’s a very similar start their almost always come from rural places (...) go to a broker’s house, the broker places you at a home and that’s it”*. This observation shows that brokers are perceived as intrinsic to the domestic work sphere in Ethiopia. Other experts agreed with this view, with Alem from the Yeka Sub city administration office saying that *“the brokers bring them from their areas”*, and Dr Bogale stating *“(Brokers) provide them travelling from their area to here”*. This shows that the experts see brokers as major players in the domestic workers life stories. Brokers are also often responsible for sending domestic workers abroad, particularly to the Middle East. Fiseha from the AGAR organisation affirms this saying that *“they send them to Middle East (...) so the agency or the brokers connect them with other brokers or other agency to at the destination country”*. The brokers influence therefore is wide reaching and not contained within Ethiopia.

The role of brokers is seen as both positive and negative for the empowerment of domestic workers. Dr Bogale argues *“I would say they are networked with brokers definitely”*. This then suggests that brokers can create opportunities for domestic workers to find better jobs. It also suggests that brokers contribute to the social capital of these individuals. Therefore, according to Lin *et al’s* (2001) position generator, domestic workers with broker contact should have better social capital than those without. Likewise, according to Aynalem Megersa *“As a positive side you see (...) they are the ones who are helping them to get employed”*. So, this then shows that brokers are often the ones who create the initial opportunity for empowerment. Without brokers, finding domestic work roles may be more difficult for some individuals. Brokers are then seen as an essential factor for some women, which only increases the brokers influence over their lives and empowerment. This brings the discussion of power back and suggests that brokers play such a big role in some of the domestic workers lives that they have a power over them (Bourdieu 1986). This then can be both empowering and disempowering (Fukuyama 2001). Empowering in the sense that they can use this power to help find employment but disempowering in that they can control the domestic worker.

Fiseha explains how they can be disempowering concerning those domestic workers who go abroad: *“the brokers is illegal, so they can mislead, mis promised our beneficiaries”*. Due to the often-illegal nature of brokering, many brokers are not held responsible for their domestic workers.

Tofeike, a broker interviewed, said that he continues to keep in contact with the women he finds work for. Therefore, if they have any trouble with the employer they can find other employers through him. Yet even he said that there were brokers and agencies that deceived domestic workers and never contacted them again, especially if they go to the Middle East. As such if there is any trouble there, the domestic workers have no one to support them. It was important for this research to talk to a broker as well as the other experts. Although the translator conducted this interview alone, it shows that some brokers do care about their domestic workers. He also admitted that there are only a few brokers who treat domestic workers well. Therefore, what the broker says collaborates with what the experts say. All this shows that brokers have a huge influence on how individuals become domestic workers. It also suggests that some brokers can empower the domestic worker by helping them in times of difficulty. Yet, this will have limited empowerment capacities. The domestic worker is still relying on someone else to help them and this suggests that they are not empowered enough to solve the issue themselves. It also goes back to the power dynamics at play and suggests that the broker is the only one who has the power to solve the issue. This suggestion alone gives the broker more power, which they can use to abuse and exploit domestic workers under their influence.

What is interesting is that most of the domestic workers interviewed were not brought to Addis Ababa by brokers and some didn't use brokers at all. Those who did use brokers found their experiences with them to be varied. Ife sums up the experience of brokers well: *“Brokers also like that, there is bad and good”*. Therefore, brokers can vary considerably and so can their influence on the domestic workers empowerment. Ayana recounted her experience of brokers as follows *“she feel like I wish I didn't meet the brokers because she get confused about things (...) she feel like oh why he do, he explain many things for her and then she feel why I'm do this (...) she feel confused”*. It could be suggested from this encounter, that brokers unnecessarily confuse matters so that the domestic worker loses power in the relationship.

This then is highly disempowering, as it takes away what confidence they have and causes them to entrust their future to a broker. Often enough this leads to exploitative situations.

All the domestic workers who went to the Middle East used a broker or agency to get there and to find the contract there. The opinion about brokers in this case swayed more to the negative side. Often brokers severed contact with the domestic workers once they were there or did very little to help them in difficult situations. For example, Selam wanted to leave her job as she didn't like the situation she was in. Her agency said, *"no you cannot change because otherwise you didn't pay your money (...) if you didn't stay you go without any money to Ethiopia"*. This shows that to the agencies there is little care for the women, especially if they owe some money. This experience links to the opinion of Dr Haile, who argues *"They are used them selling them like slaves. What they agree on the paper, with the other agencies and the Middle East is different from what they tell the domestic workers"*. Therefore, this shows that there is a pervasive atmosphere of exploitation and deceit in this relationship.

Gyasi's drawing (*Figure 4*) shows her being greeted on arrival in Addis Ababa by a friend. This then shows she independently travelled to Addis Ababa, and already knew someone there. This shows that brokers were not involved in her decision to come to Addis Ababa and therefore were not a factor in her decision to be a domestic worker. She did eventually use a broker, however the broker she used was a friend from her hometown of Lalibela. Therefore, she utilised her existing social capital to find a broker she trusts. Hence, although a broker was involved in her life story, he didn't hold the same sort of power over her as the experts suggest. As a result, the broker didn't directly influence her empowerment. By contradicting the perspective of the experts, this shows that the importance of brokers is limited and not as widespread as they think. Connections in Addis Ababa and existing social networks play a major role in migrating to the big cities like Addis Ababa. Therefore, these individuals benefit from their connections in the city, who can provide initial help on arrival.



Figure 4: Gyasi's drawing.

Living situation & employment type

Becoming a part-time domestic worker was a significant factor that enhanced a domestic workers empowerment. Being part-time means that they no longer must live with their employer, which can be highly empowering. Chereka argues that *“this is a better way because its more freedom, that one (referring to full-time live-in) there is not so much freedom so also work pressure every time, so she want to be a little bit free that’s why she change it”*. It also hints at one of the major issues with full-time domestic work, which is the long work hours and high amount of work (ILO 2018). Becoming part-time meant that Chereka was able to control how much she worked and for how long. This regaining of free time is a huge influence on human capital, as it gives her time to focus on herself. She uses the free time to study at night school and simply enjoy herself by watching TV. This is empowering as it means she can do whatever she likes and isn’t told to follow what someone else wants all the time. Being able to reclaim control over one’s life is the very principle of empowerment (Scheyvens 2009). Surprisingly the experts never really mentioned this change in occupation and shows that this aspect of domestic work is often overlooked. Instead if this aspect was focused on, a good understanding could potentially solve many of the issues surrounding domestic work. By becoming part-time, employers still enjoy the benefits of a domestic worker, but the domestic worker themselves also benefit from the free time. In many ways it is a win- win situation, which unfortunately hasn’t been fully realised yet.

Being a full-time, live-in domestic worker can be highly disempowering. For example, Gyasi's life as a full-time, live-in domestic worker was miserable for her. *Figure 5* shows another of her drawings. In the circle she drew herself crying. This part of her experience was so prominent that she put much detail into illustrating this aspect of her story. This further shows the harmful emotional and mental effects of being a full-time, live-in domestic worker.



Figure 5: Gyasi's drawing. The circle highlights her drawing of crying whilst working as a domestic worker.

Education

Having an education is often agreed to be an enabler of empowerment (Bebbington 1999). However, domestic workers generally do not have a high level of education attainment. Therefore this factor refers more to ongoing education than already attained education. *"their best hope is to try to get better as a domestic worker, so to learn to learn kind of more complicated dishes or that kind of stuff or to learn English by going to school so they can then be hired at the homes of expatriates and make more money"* (Sehin Teferra). This quote shows the perception that domestic workers can only better their situation within domestic work. However, many of the domestic workers interviewed were attending night school. As noted by Bebbington (1999) education not only grants opportunities to garner higher economic capital, but it also can increase an individual's social capital, by offering other ways of

communicating with people. Therefore, education is a major factor in the empowerment of domestic workers.

Starting night school was highly positive for most of the domestic workers interviewed. Education has been noted previously as being a highly empowering phenomenon (Bebbington 1999). As many of the interviews were at a night school, the sample was able to show more about their experience of education. What became apparent was that attending night school seemed to elevate their capabilities to the point where most of those who attended wanted to progress to an occupation outside of domestic work. This then validates Belete's (2014) findings, about how night schools provide opportunities for empowerment. This will be discussed more in the section on aspirations. What starting night school also shows is that the employer of those domestic workers are somewhat happy for them to be going to school. This pertains more to those domestic workers who live with their employer. However interestingly one of the domestic workers needed to take a pay decrease to go to night school. Beletu said *"She ask them to go to school, and then they say o we have to make less price from your salary, so she have to pay for it (...) actually they find out this school"*. This show that although Beletu was in a sense penalised for wanting to go to night school, her employers did help her find the school. This shows that they didn't prevent her going. It could be surmised that this is a common occurrence, as going to night school is within the hours domestic workers are expected to be working. Further to this Zaher mentioned that she has been studying for two years, in which time she has changed employers and they let her come. This shows that even if the education was started before the employment, some employers allow it to continue. This suggests that Zaher must have negotiated with the employer in some way to continue her education. This shows that some of these domestic workers are empowered enough to stand up for what they want (Scheyvens 2009). Likewise, Jamila asked if she could start classes, and her employers said yes, which she explains is *"why they are good"*. This then brings us onto the next factor: the employers.

Employers

The employer they are with can significantly influence a domestic workers empowerment. For Ayana, the first employer was good to her and *"see her as a family, also they are push her to*

study more". This shows that employers still treat some domestic workers as family, which in a sense contradicts what some of the experts said about present relationships. There is still a connection between some domestic workers and their employers, which shows that a good relationship can develop that is more than employer-employee. However, it was found in many of the interviews that there were many bad experiences with employers. This was found in the Middle East especially. For example, Liya *"Were crying so much when she was there in the Middle East"* and *"they are screaming at her every time (...) all the time they are angry"*. This shows that verbal abuse can undermine the confidence of these individuals and make their lives difficult. Liya's drawing (Figure 6) shows her crying and her employer shouting. This shows that for her, this was a significant aspect of her time in the Middle East; for the worse.

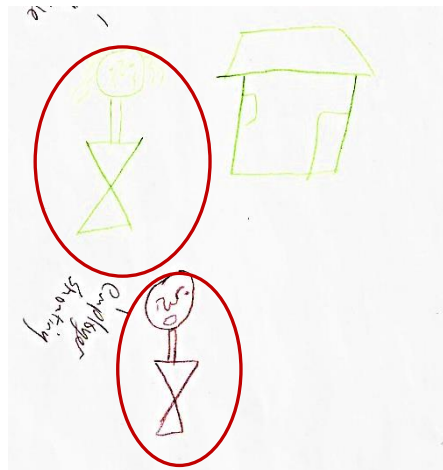


Figure 6: Liya's drawing. The two circles indicate herself crying (left most) and her employer shouting (right most).

In Ethiopia, there are also many cases of bad employers. Redet recalled one of her past employers *"she got there, employer is like children, they have child, but they are older already so they difficult (...) yeah they ask her like to do sex with them like so when she doesn't want, when she got uncomfortable with them, they become angry at her"*. This shows that as mentioned before gender plays a huge role in the lives of domestic workers and can create difficult situations for them. Likewise, it collaborates with what the experts say about sexual abuse and the expectation of domestic workers, that they are expected to serve in every way. It also shows that Redet was able to defend herself and was confident enough to say no, which

highlights her independence and empowerment (Scheyvens 2009). This could be a result of her being from Addis Ababa as well, which means she is more aware of her situation and more at home in the city. Likewise, although there are many cases of abuse and exploitation at the hands of employers, a quote from Ife shows that some of these women won't stand for it, *"Yeah she have her power, if she want she can do that work otherwise if she doesn't want she can just quit yeah"*. This shows that some are empowered enough to know they have a choice and have a right to choose who they work for. This then shows an awareness of their situation and of how they should be treated.

Technology use

It was noted by several experts that technology use can play a huge role in the empowerment of domestic workers. Dr Haile argues that the use of mobile phones and other technologies like the radio can *"helped them to report it. In the previous years it used to be trouble to report"*. Sehin Teferra agrees saying that mobile phone use *"it's a great way to get connected to your family and the village (...) it's kind of made people more accessible to them"*. Mobile phones enable the domestic worker to sustain contact with family members (Wei and Lo 2006), which helps maintain their social capital. For example, Webit recalls *"She doesn't see them often because they are really busy also she is busy, she work all day then she have to come to class, but they keep in touch with phone"*. This then shows that when face to face meeting isn't possible, the mobile phone use provides a way for them to remain in touch and thus maintain their social capital.

What's more, using a mobile phone often means that these domestic workers have access to social media. Whilst several domestic workers interviewed didn't use social media at all, those that did were positive about the experience. For example, Uma explained *"like Facebook to have like fun things or like picture or music, but other social medias like Viber, or WhatsApp, telegram to keep in touch with other people like foreigners or in middle east somewhere like friends"*. This then shows she is using social media to maintain her social capital. Therefore, her social capital remains good due to her maintenance of it (Alder and Kwon 2002). This shows that social media can facilitate this and provide meaningful, if somewhat intangible social networks. This correlates with what Ellison *et al* (2007) found in their study, in that using

social media allows a network to be maintained. If not a tangible one but at least an intangible one. It can be seen then that using communication technology and social media can allow that most needed interaction and thus help maintain their networks and social capital.

Working abroad

A key factor that can influence the empowerment of domestic workers is whether they have worked abroad or not. Fiseha states *“most of our beneficiaries come with high level of mental stress and mental problem”*. This then shows the risk of going abroad and being subjected to abuse. This is unfortunately common in the Middle East (Silvey 2006) and was evident when visiting AGAR. However, it must be noted that working abroad can significantly raise an individual’s economic capital, due to the higher salaries present there (Assefa *et al* 2017). So, in a sense working abroad can also be empowering at least economically.

One domestic worker, Mazaa, went to Sudan to work as a domestic worker. As she had also been to Dubai prior, she was able to compare the two places. She reasoned that *“Dubai is clean of course (...) but when she see Sudan there is freedom, like if she want if she have something emergency like (...) she can visit any time her family, but in Dubai she have to finish her contract”*. This then shows that for her the freedom associated with Sudan was more important than the money of Dubai. Her reasoning about seeing family also shows the strong sense of community that is still prevalent in Ethiopia and the continued relevance of social capital. This then ties in with Dr Haile’s comments on Ethiopian communities. For her Sudan was somewhere she felt more empowered, as she was able to see family.

A key issue arising from working abroad was the missed opportunities that come with getting a fixed contract abroad. Kadida explains, *“sometimes she feel she could have studying more but she doesn’t study so only sometimes she feel sad about that”*. This shows how working abroad prevents her from studying, which in turn made her feel sad. This then infers that she felt disempowered by the restrictions on her education attainment. Thus, the pursuit of economic capital restricted the increase of human capital, as such contradicting Lynch and Moran’s (2002) statement that economic capital can be used to gain the other capitals like human capital. In this case, the increased economic capital from the Middle East was only

achieved by forfeiting the achievement of human capital. Remaining in Ethiopia, even as a domestic worker, would likely still enable her more opportunities to receive an education. So, whilst going abroad is attractive due to the higher wages, the other capitals can and will suffer. Subsequently the benefits of going abroad are somewhat nullified by the disempowering nature of working somewhere like the Middle East.

AGAR

The discussion on working abroad brings us to the final factor to be discussed in this section. Organizations that are concerned with domestic workers and their welfare can have significant impacts on the empowerment of these individuals. There are very few organizations in Addis Ababa concerned with domestic workers, and even fewer who actually provide practical help to them. AGAR is one of the organizations located in Addis Ababa that provides shelter, food, training and counselling to domestic workers coming back from the Middle East. In the words of the programme officer Fiseha, *“they will attend the vocational skill based on their choices, for example if they want to attend a vocational skill training in, in driving or for food or in hairdressing like that, err we choose training based on their choices”*. Whilst discussing AGAR, Dr Bogale argued that *“the skills that they are getting is not just on domestic work, its diverse. So, these organisations try to accommodate the interest of the... these service recipients the beneficiaries”*. This then shows that AGAR is preparing its beneficiaries for life outside of domestic work. Not only that but they are also letting the beneficiary decide what they want to do. This is highly empowering as it allows them to regain control over their lives, which is an important part of empowerment (Scheyvens 2009).

AGAR means a lot to those women who reside there. Giving them a chance to become who they want; the organization seeks to rehabilitate and empower these individuals. Nuru sums up this feeling of appreciation well with her drawing (Figure 7). According to her *“this is the light for AGAR, they give her life new life again, this mean this one the organisation this the is the light. So, if she doesn’t reach this company she would have she feel like how I can become but now because of them she see the light”*. This shows the effectiveness of AGAR in helping these domestic workers regain their empowerment.



Figure 7: Nuru's drawing, depicting AGAR.

Concluding thoughts on factors and empowerment

Overall it can be seen that there are many factors that can impact a domestic workers empowerment. These are just a handful of many factors; however these are the most important for the discussion. What has been interesting in this section is that empowerment isn't just one variable. As it has been discussed in the prior section on becoming a domestic worker, the capitals do not equally rise and fall. This is true when concerning factors impacting empowerment. Whilst something like working abroad can raise economic capital, it often also lowers social capital and prevent increases to human capital. Even though all the capitals are linked and contribute to empowerment, this section has also shown that they are individually adjustable based on what the context is. So from this discussion about factors effecting the present situations of domestic workers, the next section will look forward at the aspirations of these domestic workers in the context of their capabilities.

Aspirations as indicators of the domestic workers capabilities

Aspirations seems to be a good place to end this analysis. Aspirations are important to discuss, as they show the potential functioning's of domestic workers (Sen 1985). According to Robeyn's (2005), the potential functioning's are important because it shows what the individual believes to be a good life. Hence what drives them to reach such goals is more important than what they already have. Understanding how becoming a domestic worker can be empowering was looking back, whilst the factors impacting empowerment were looking back and in the present. As such this section is about looking forward and why that looking forward is important.

As for this thesis, aspirations are a key part of the life stories of domestic worker. Furthermore, as Dr Haile argues *“what they value about life livelihood is changing so they are aspiring to greater”*. Hence, the attitude of these individuals towards their futures has changed. It is vital then to understand what their aspirations are.

Aspirations in education

Sehin Teferra argues that *“their best hope is to try to get better as a domestic worker”*. This then suggests that there is little opportunity for these domestic workers outside of domestic work. Such thinking would then suggest that aspirations would follow suit. Yet from the domestic worker interviews, these individuals aspire far beyond the domestic worker sphere. Several of the domestic workers wished to continue education in the future. Below are several examples showing this ambition:

“she was always thinking if she studying she will study engineering, yeah that’s why she choose that department to be. Always it’s been her dream” (Debre)

“she’s been dreaming about being doctor when she’s baby (...) that’s why she study so still she feel like she will make it she will go to university and being doctor, she will be doctor that’s why she study” (Persinna)

“she want just to be study but she want really go university if she can otherwise she just want to develop more, more to her studying” (Redet)

These examples show that these domestic workers not only want to study but want to really advance in their studies. Going to university is highly ambitious but also shows that these individuals believe in their abilities. They are driven by what they see as a good way of life and have understood and begun the way to achieve such aspirations.

There were also instances where domestic workers wanted to learn more vocational skills. For example, Yalem thinks *“maybe she will study cooking”* and Nuru is already beginning her

training, saying *“now I am go to school for driver”*. This shows that some domestic workers are utilising the skills they may have learned whilst being a domestic worker to apply to other occupations. This shows a transferability of skills that may provide a way out of domestic work. If these education aspirations come to fruition, then the human capital of these individuals would increase (Becker 1994). Thus, the aspirations of these domestic workers in education shows that they consider increasing their human capital to be highly important for the development of their other capitals (Bebbington 1999) and generally their livelihoods. This discussion naturally leads us to their aspirations in other employment because education attainment is often the way towards these other employment ambitions.

Aspirations in other employment

“I think they can only improve their earning as a domestic worker not for graduating to other places”, argues Dr Haile. This opinion shows that there is a belief that domestic workers can’t move onto other occupations. Whilst Dr Haile’s opinion cannot be contradicted by the interviews with domestic workers, their aspirations show that the domestic workers fully intend to “graduate to other places”. For some these other occupations will be reached via education. *Figure 8* shows Persinna and Bathsheba’s drawings. These drawings show their aspiration of becoming doctors. Persinna explained the reason for her aspiration, saying *“she want to be doctor because when she’s young (...) she get vaccinating here for like polio or something, then there is one doctor when she give her injection for other diseases and then when she see her she’s always very nice she treat patient very well, so every time people give her respect (...) since that time she feel like she want to be a doctor”*. This shows how her early experiences with an empowered woman inspired her. It also shows that her early interactions with the doctor, which is a part of her social capital, influenced her capabilities. Thus, showing the positive lasting effect of social capital on an individual (Fukuyama 2001). This example also shows that aspirations from before becoming a domestic worker can be kept and remain an ambition even whilst being a domestic worker. Therefore, her current functioning’s haven’t been detrimental to her potential functioning’s. Zaher also stated she wanted to become a doctor, reasoning that *“she feel sad there is some people which they don’t have money to get medical treatment. Maybe if she is a doctor maybe she wants to treatment them for free or something”*. This then infers that there is a sense of moral obligation and social value (Putnam

1993). By becoming a doctor, she hopes to help those in her community, which shows that she sees the importance of social capital. Therefore, one of her potential functioning's is the increase of social capital and her ability to provide social capital to others.



Figure 8: Sections of Persinna's (left) and Bathsheba's (right) drawings.

Other domestic workers also wanted to leave domestic work and start a different occupation. Below are a few examples of this:

“she think about to opening a restaurant for a future” (Yalem)

“OK she wants to be driver for ambulance” (Nuru)

“She want to be singer for a church” (Diarra)

These examples show the broad range of occupations that these domestic workers are interested in. Diarra's quote also shows that her social capital, from going to church, has provided her with this aspiration. Therefore, social capital is playing a large role in the accumulation of human capital (Coleman 1988) and can promote her achievement of potential functioning's. Another example of aspiring to other occupations can be seen in *figure 9*, which shows a drawing by Chinua. She drew her aspiration of becoming a chicken farmer. Her reason for this was that *“when she were young before she have some experience”*. This

then shows again that domestic workers use past experiences to formulate aspirations. In this case too, Chinua says she wants to return to her hometown in a few years. This then shows that she doesn't want to stay in Addis Ababa and wants to be with her family. This to some extent validates what Dr Haile argues, *"usually they don't stay in Addis Ababa. Their plan is to either go back home with their money and start a small business like a coffee shop or tea shop or small restaurant"*. Therefore, going home is also an aspiration and what's more this infers that they are aware of the cost of living and working in Addis Ababa. It could also be inferred from Chinua's quote that she wants to go back home because she doesn't feel as close to her family. As a result, Kwon and Alder's (2002) comments on the need to maintain social capital are evidenced here.



Figure 9: Chinua's drawing showing her ambition to be a chicken farmer.

What this section has shown is that there are a wide range of occupations that domestic workers would like to move into. Therefore, this shows their aspirations are larger than domestic work and shows that their potential functioning's are not limited by their current situation.

Aspirations in domestic work

Some domestic workers also aspired within the field of domestic work. A major aspiration within domestic work was to work abroad, specifically in the Middle East. Yohannes Kassa noted this, saying *"most of the women they think that you know err at the Middle East there are you know big opportunity to make money"*. This shows that there is a belief that the Middle East has greater economic reward. As for the domestic workers themselves, some did want to go abroad. Chereka explained *"OK she have plan to go actually, then I said to her maybe there is bad news about another people get hurt what do you think, she say she's fine her friends also going now"*. As it can be seen, the translator suggested that perhaps the news of abuse

in the Middle East would put her off going. However, this isn't an issue in her opinion. The economic incentive of the Middle East would seem to be more attractive than the reports of abuse. This was evidenced when she was asked the reason for wanting to go to the Middle East: *"Yeah erm one the main reason is money of course but also second she want to go because she want to see more countries after her country, so she want to visit more like in Middle East"*. This shows her aspiration to see the world, but also suggests that she is somewhat unaware of the issues in the Middle East. This then indicates that she has a limited, poorly maintained network beyond Ethiopia and as a result a lack of social capital.

What is interesting is her assertion that because her friends are in the Middle East, it must be OK for her to work there. Uma also had friends in the Middle East and used this as a reason for going. This ties into the idea that social capital is based on trust (Putnam 2000) and therefore Uma trusts that because her friends went to the Middle East, it is also a good option for her. Another reason was also economic, *"Yeah until now she doesn't have that thought, but now she have because she want to earn more money so maybe she will go for a next time"*. Again, this shows how economic capital is highly sought after by domestic workers. Due to the convertibility of economic capital (Lynch and Moran 2006), gaining economic capital is seen as the priority and the way to gain the other capitals.

Other reasons for why they would go abroad was brought up by Zaher, who states *"she want to make feel happy to her family, father and mother and because to earn more much money. So, she want to see she want help her family"*. This shows the lasting strength of social capital in Ethiopian society and the social values that this society finds important (Gebre 2012). It also shows there is some validity in Dr Haile's comment *"as a society (...) we believe in social network and social supports"*. This again shows the societal values are continuing to shape what these individuals think should be their responsibility and thus aspiration.

Other than the Middle East, some of the domestic workers wished to go to other countries. For example, Debre said *"OK she doesn't like to go Middle East, but she want to go South Africa or America"*. This shows her aspiration goes beyond the Middle East and that in her opinion at least, she has a chance of going elsewhere. What's interesting here is that there is an indication of her social capital. She says, *"she have family but just far family, like not very*

close". This then shows that the social network has given her an opportunity to go abroad. Therefore, in this case there is a reliance on her social capital to gain her aspiration. This goes against the definition of empowerment, which is to activate the confidence within oneself and reclaim control over their own lives (Scheyvens 2009). Depending on someone else to realise their aspirations, means that they are not taking control and responsibility for their own development and if the situation didn't turn the way she expects then this would further diminish her empowerment. Abeba had a similar dependence on others, *"she have some uncles aunts in America she will contact them (...) when she lost her family they were thinking maybe they can take her to America they start process or something and then they just quiet she don't know why"*. This then shows the perils of perceived social capital and how lost opportunities can have a disempowering effect.

Other aspirations

Of course the aspirations of domestic workers weren't limited to education and employment. Like anyone they also wanted things like houses, cars and families in the future. *Figure 10* shows a selection of different drawings to illustrate how these kinds of aspirations appeared several times. What these drawings indicate is that to achieve such ambitions they will likely have to come out of domestic work. Therefore, inadvertently these drawings show that these women also aspire to leave domestic work.



Figure 10: A collection of drawings, each from different domestic workers.

Finally, *figure 11* shows two drawings from the interview with Taci. The drawing on the left shows her illustration of a spiral. The word next to the spiral means difficult time in Amharic and the drawing was meant to show how she had a difficult time in the past as a domestic worker. However, on the right she drew a flower and argued that this represents that she is better now and has hope. This also infers that she has hope for the future and no longer feels trapped in a spiral. Therefore, from these drawings although domestic work is difficult for many, they often still have hope for something better in the future. Even if they don't know exactly what that is. These drawings are also on the front of this thesis and represent most of the domestic workers life stories: many domestic workers have difficult times behind them, but many also have much hope for the future. Therefore, by having this hope aspirations are still very much alive.

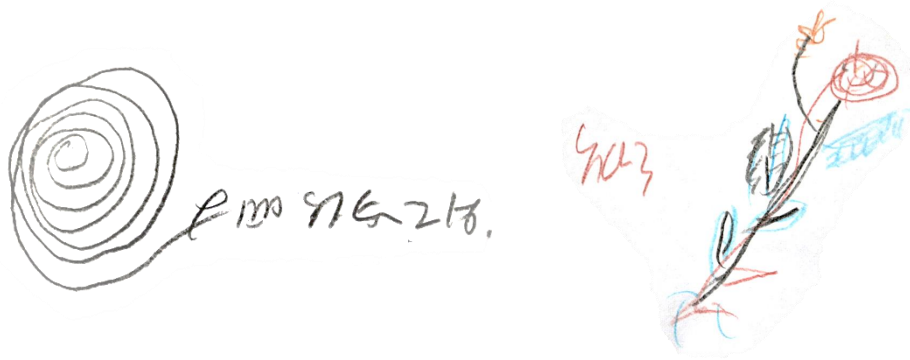


Figure 11: Sections of Taci's drawing.

Final thoughts on aspirations and the capability approach

Overall this section has shown how domestic workers have a huge variety of aspirations and upholds Sen's (2004) argument that there can't be a universal list of capabilities and that capabilities are context specific, and even specific to the individual. Though this was a critique of Sen's capability approach (Stewart and Deneulin 2002), in this thesis it is beneficial and helps to see how everyone has different understandings of what a good life is. Likewise, this section has shown that the domestic workers social situation has also impacted their aspirations, which evidences the assertion that the capability approach does consider the social surroundings (Dre`ze and Sen 2002). A domestic worker's capabilities are clearly impacted by their surroundings, and this is reflected in their aspirations.

Conclusion

This research has given a deep insight into the life stories of domestic workers. Although there are many similarities in the stories of these women, there are also intimate differences. By taking a life story approach to this topic, the understanding of domestic work as one big group has been discarded. Instead, this research has shown the individuals in domestic work and more importantly shown that domestic work is a part of their lives. However, importantly it is not the only thing in their lives and there is more to these individuals than the label of domestic work.

This research has shown that although there are many downsides to becoming a domestic worker, in some cases domestic work has empowered individuals. Although these examples are often rare, their existence alone shows that domestic work shouldn't be seen so negatively. Using the capitals, this research has shown that although some domestic workers may suffer a lack of one capital, they may also benefit from another. Therefore, this shows the varied impact that become a domestic worker has on the individual.

The research has also shown how there are many factors that contribute to the empowerment of domestic workers, both positively and negatively. This then highlights what should be concentrated on, where the negatives are and how these can be reduced or improved.

This research is useful because it shows both the positive and negative impacts of domestic work on an individual's empowerment. This then can be used to identify gaps in policy and develop areas that are lacking. By understanding domestic work within the context of someone's life story, it can be seen at which point in the life story that support is needed, or at which point there needs to be a change in how these domestic workers experience the phenomena they encounter. This research also shows that domestic work doesn't have to be a negative experience and shouldn't be stigmatised in society. Without the stigma attached, this occupation would gain more respect and awareness. This then would help domestic workers achieve the rights they deserve.

Overall, there is much work to be done on the side of the Ethiopian people and the government. This study has tried to humanise the domestic worker struggle and put a face on the dilemma domestic workers contend with in Ethiopia.

Implications for further research

This research has used life stories and graphic elicitation to understand how capitals and empowerment impact the lives of domestic workers in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Due to the open nature of this research, it is highly replicable. This research was relatively small scale. Therefore, for future research a larger sample would be beneficial. This would then enable more reliable statements on this topic and enable greater comparison. As this research was based in Addis Ababa, another development could be to conduct the research in multiple sites. This could be limited to Ethiopian cities or could be a cross country examination. Either would provide even more data and contexts to analyze. An interesting development could be to compare the case of Ethiopia with that of another African country that uses domestic workers. Therefore, the nuances in culture could be more identifiable and context specific issues could be acknowledged.

The use of graphic elicitation has added an extra dimension to this research and allowed the domestic workers involved to express themselves more freely. This method has a lot of scope in the future and should be tested in upcoming research projects. As it is in this research, it is very preliminary and therefore its use in more research would improve its reliability and usefulness. This method has a lot of potential both in discussing domestic work and other topics of development. With its encouragement of active participation in the research, it allows informants to truly express themselves. It would be highly interesting to see this method used as the main method of data collection in the future, and this would open up the possibilities of conducting other creative methods on topics like this one.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Expert interview guide

Expert interview guide

My name is Thomas Lowe and I am a masters student from Utrecht University. I am currently studying international development. This research aims to understand the life stories of domestic workers who work in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A series of questions will be asked in relation to domestic workers and their situation in Addis Ababa. Questions regarding the organisation and the individual's role in that organisation will also be asked. The information given in this interview will be used in my master's thesis and will be shared with Utrecht University. It may also be shared with domestic worker organisations. Unless you are happy for your identity to be used openly, otherwise your anonymity will be secure always, unless you are willing for your name to be used. I will also use my mobile phone to record the interview. Before the interview begins I will ask for your consent to the above. If at any time you wish to revoke your consent and no longer take part in the interview or have your information used, I will happily comply with your wishes. Once consent has been revoked, none of your input will be used in the future. If you have any questions regarding the interview process, your consent or any matter at all, you can ask at any time during the interview or contact me at tomlowe20@hotmail.co.uk.

Opening questions

- Can you tell me abit more about yourself and the organisation?
 - What is your role in the organisation?
 - What is the main objective or aim of this organisation?
 - How long have you worked for the organisation?
 - What is your previous experience?

Key questions

- How is your organisation involved or interacts with domestic workers?
- What do you think of the general situation of domestic workers in Addis Ababa?
- How do domestic workers coming back from the Middle East reintegrate into Addis Ababa?
- What opportunities do domestic workers have to learn new skills or gain qualifications?
- In your experience with domestic workers, what is the usual path to this occupation?
- Generally, how long do individual work as domestic workers?
- What is being done by the government in terms of domestic workers?
- What role do brokers have in the careers and livelihoods of domestic workers?
- What role do domestic workers play in Addis Ababa? Are they essential to society?

Closing questions

- How easy is it to contact domestic workers, and interview them?
- Who else would you suggest I interview, as part of expert interviews?
- What does the future hold for domestic work in Addis Ababa? Are there any developments coming?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 2: Domestic worker interview guide

Domestic worker interview guide

My name is Thomas Lowe and I am a masters student from Utrecht University. I am currently studying international development. This research aims to understand the life stories of domestic workers who work in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. A series of questions will be asked in relation to the participants life prior to their employment as a domestic worker and during. Their aspirations will also be discussed. During the interview we will also be drawing your responses on a timeline, to visualise your story. The information given in this interview will be used in my master's thesis and will be shared with Utrecht University. It may also be shared with domestic worker organisations. Your anonymity will be secure always, unless you are willing for your name to be used. I will also use my mobile phone to record the interview. Before the interview begins I will ask for your consent to the above. If at any time you wish to revoke your consent and no longer take part in the interview or have your information used, I will happily comply with your wishes. Once consent has been revoked, none of your input will be used in the future. If you have any questions regarding the interview process, your consent or any matter at all, you can ask at any time during the interview or contact me at tomlowe20@hotmail.co.uk.

Opening questions

- Can you tell me abit more about yourself?
 - Where are you from?
 - How old are you?
 - What year did you start your employment as a domestic worker?

Key questions

- How did you become a domestic worker?
- What reasons did you have to become a domestic worker?
- If you are not from Addis Ababa, how did you come here?
- Do you have friends in Addis Ababa, and if so are they domestic workers too?
- How do you feel about being a domestic worker?
- What else would you like to do instead of domestic work?
- What pastimes or hobbies do you have?

Closing questions

- What do you think of the drawing activity we just did?
- Do you know of any domestic workers who would be interested in being a part of this research?

Thank you for your participation.

Appendix 3: Graphic elicitation guide

Graphic elicitation/ drawing guide

- Freedom to draw and write whatever the participant would like. No limitation or structure so to speak. Use of colours would be good but not necessary. Crossing out anything or changing graphics allowed and encouraged if participant would like to.

Cues for drawings:

- How did it feel coming to Addis Ababa? What were your impressions of the city? Can you show me?
- How did this life experience make you feel? Can you show me?
- How is life different as a domestic worker compared to back home?
- How do you feel about domestic work? Can you show me?
- What kind of duties/ tasks do you have to undertake as a domestic worker?
- How do you see your future, what are your aspirations?
- What does a domestic worker look like to you?

Thank you for your participation.