



Migrant capabilities and domestic work

Agency and (dis)empowerment experiences of Latin American female domestic workers in Andalusia, Spain

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Abstract

This research set out to understand the (dis)empowerment experiences of Latin American female migrant domestic workers (FMDWs) in Andalusia, Spain. Paid domestic work in Spain, as well as around the world, is characterized by precarity and lack of legal recognition. Because of the overrepresentation of female migrants in this sector, abundant literature has addressed this topic by exploring how intersecting systems of oppression situate these women in a disempowered position in their host societies. But despite these constraining structures, FMDWs navigate their everyday lives implementing collective and individual actions to improve their personal situation. Engaging in labour migration is itself an act of agency that has ambivalent effects towards their empowerment and wellbeing. Some women are quickly successful in their projects, while most endure hard working and living conditions in the hope of eventually achieving a better quality of life. This research uses the capability approach to account for the wellbeing of FMDWs according to their values and interests, as well as the use of their individual agency for achieving their desired functionings. The data of this research was collected over a period of three months in Andalusia through interviews, observation, and one focus group. This research found that migrating and becoming a domestic worker in Spain has both empowering and disempowering effects on Latin American women. However, it is still a sector characterized by precarity and abuses. Relational factors and personal resources define the situation of each FMDW, although the migration status and time spent in the country are determinants on their (dis)empowerment. Overall, it was found that these women have high levels of agency and awareness towards their situation. However, how this translates to an increase of their wellbeing and capabilities is limited by a context of global inequalities and constraining institutions in Spain.

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List of abbreviations

ADWS	Association of Domestic Workers of Seville
MDW	Migrant domestic worker
FMDW	Female migrant domestic worker
INE	Instituto Nacional de Estadística (Spanish Statistical Office)
ILO	International Labour Organization
NGO	Non-governmental organisation

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Chapter 1. Introduction

According to ILO estimates, there are 11.5 million migrant domestic workers (MDWs) in the world, which represents the 17.2% of a total estimate of 67.1 million domestic workers (ILO, 2015). The sexual division of labour can be seen in the fact that over 73.4% of MDWs are women, although in specific regions, such as Andalucía, this proportion can go up to 95% (Junta de Andalucía, 2023). This research explores the ways in which Female Migrant Domestic Workers (FMDWs) from Latin America experience ambivalent processes of (dis)empowerment and attainment of capabilities in Andalusia, Spain. It studies the conditioning factors that influence these (dis)empowerment processes, and how FMDWs enact their agency to improve their situation.

The overrepresentation of international female migrants in the domestic sector has received increasing scholarly attention over the last two decades, on the account of being a phenomenon in which the strong interlinkages between gender, labour, and migration are clearly evidenced (Marchetti, 2022). The experiences of female migrant domestic workers are shaped by their embodiment of identity factors - gender, race, and class- that intersect and place them in an especially vulnerable position on the host country's sociocultural hierarchies. Furthermore, macro-structures such as a state's care, employment and migration regimes also intersect and play a significant role on the experiences of migrants.

In the case of Spain, migrant domestic workers are likely to find themselves in a situation of severe precarity (ILO, 2013; Junta de Andalucía, 2022; Oxfam, 2021a). Their *special* labour regime¹ situates them in a disadvantage in comparison to other type of workers, while the migration normative acts as a powerful structure determining their social inclusion and exclusion. These factors collide with, and reinforce, a care regime in which their cheap labour sustains the care deficits that the state fails to cover. Nonetheless, and despite the adverse contexts in which these women are immerse, they take on migration and labour journeys with the firm purpose of improving their life conditions and opportunities. To frame them as passive victims of oppressive structures would mean to deny their agency and complex subjectivities. Furthermore, it would mean to ignore the possibilities that labour migration can represent

¹ As will be further detailed in chapter 4.3.2, labour conditions and social security protections of domestic workers are covered by the Special System of Domestic Employees, within the Spanish labour normative. The judicial regime of this *special* labour relation was established in this system by the Royal Decree 1424/1985 of august 1st. Over time, the system has undergone significant changes for the betterment of the domestic workers' conditions, although they remain in a situation of disadvantage in comparison to employees in the General Regime of Social Security.

for the expansion of their capabilities. Studying these actions and strategies is important to understand the development perspectives of this population.

This thesis uses a qualitative approach to study in detail the situation and experiences of Latin American FMDWs in the community of Andalusia, Spain. This was done through in-depth interviews, interviews with experts from civil society and academia, a focus group, and participant observation in meetings with FMDWs and local organisations. These methods allowed to take a close and personal understanding of these women's perspectives. Thus, this research presents the intersecting structures that influence their social and legal discrimination in Spain, while delving deep into their life-stories to show their agency, achievements, and aspirations. This, in order to provide a comprehensive and nuanced analysis of their situation, demonstrating the ambivalences within this topic. Moreover, this research shifts the analytical focus from Spain's capital cities, where most of the research on domestic work has been conducted because of the higher concentration of MDWs. Thus, it seeks to decentralize knowledge on this topic by gathering stories from different cities and small towns in the Community of Andalusia.

Regarding the theoretical lens used in this research, the two guiding concepts that motivated its formulation were empowerment and agency. These concepts are deeply intertwined and linked to the ability to make choices according to one's interests. Following Kabeer (1999), empowerment refers to the process by which those that have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability. This framing of the concept allows to look at the processes of change in the situation of a typically disempowered population, such as FMDWs. Building on Amartya Sen's capability approach (Sen, 1980), this thesis explores empowerment processes by analysing FMDWs' freedom to lead a valuable life and achieve wellbeing. The theoretical framing on empowerment and agency contributes to this approach by emphasising the dynamic nature of capabilities, which are constantly transformed by individuals' actions and changes in their social settings. This way, the capability approach offers the analytical space to present the micro-, meso-, and macro-level factors that shape FMDW's possibilities, while simultaneously paying attention to the agential strategies they enact to improve their situation.

1.1 Objectives and structure

The aim of this research is to generate a more nuanced understanding of how empowerment and disempowerment can simultaneously be experienced by FMDWs in interacting dimensions of their lives. Additionally, it aims at identifying the different conditioning factors, such as individual resources and socio-political structures, that play a determining role in these processes. Beyond the identification of these factors, this research builds on the capability approach by using it to analyse the FMDWs'

empowerment through the things they aspire to, the use of their agency, and their achieved functionings. In this sense, it seeks to contribute to making visible the heterogeneity of this population's experiences and counter the unidimensional vision that portrays them only as victims without any agency or choice. As a secondary objective, this research will attempt to give back the gattered information in a way that is useful to the organisations and FMDWs that have collaborated in it. This, in the hope that the results can be used as evidence for social interventions aimed at promoting the empowerment of FMDWs and improving their labour and living conditions.

The thesis is structured as follows. The next chapter contains the theoretical framework and literature review, where the main academic debates and previous research are presented. The concept of empowerment is developed into a clear definition and analysed in relation to agency and the capability approach. The third chapter describes the methodology used, including a reflection on the limitations of the applied methods and on the researcher's positionality. A brief operationalisation of concepts and the research questions are also included in this section. After this, the fourth chapter focuses on the context of domestic workers in Spain and Andalusia, with a special focus on the institutional regimes that frame their situation. Following this, the fifth chapter presents an analysis of the primary collected data, delving into the life stories of the FMDWs interviewed. In the sixth chapter a discussion of the findings in relation to the existing literature is provided. Finally, the last chapter presents the conclusions, limitations of the study, and implications for further research.

Chapter 2. Theoretical framework and literature review

This chapter lays the theoretical foundations that guide this research. It discusses the main concepts used, situating the research within existing debates on domestic work, its relation with international migration, and empowerment processes.

2.1 The configuration of social reproduction and care

The neoliberal socioeconomic system has been built to cater to a capitalist market that requires the accumulation of capital to sustain itself and keep growing. This system requires the predominance of economic productivity over the whole of activities that guarantee the sustainability of life (Orozco, 2014). In other words, the capitalist socioeconomic system, backed by the mercantilist precepts of traditional economic theory, prioritizes production over all those activities that allow for social reproduction. However, and as clearly pointed out by Nancy Fraser (2016), this very setting is what explains the instability and “crisis tendency” of capitalist societies, and the reason behind the contemporary phenomena referred to as “the care crisis”.

By putting the needs of the market at the epicentre of our social organization (Orozco, 2014), the care needs of those that participate on it and guarantee its functioning are relegated to a secondary place. This can only be sustained by the reproduction of the idea that individuals are independent beings that don't have the need of being cared for, nor the obligation to care for others (Bocco, 2021). Therefore, not only the care needs of those fit for economic productive activities are pushed to a secondary place, but the care of people that fall on the category of *dependents* is systematically neglected by the institutions that comprise capitalist societies.

This unstable configuration has only been made possible by the relegation of the responsibility for social reproduction to women. As proposed by Carole Pateman (1988), parallel to the social contract that justified the government of citizens by a state, an implicit sexual contract justified the government of women by men, which has been sustained by the patriarchal structure of the modern state. This sexual contract established a dichotomous arrangement in which men are seen as independent, free, and equal human beings, while women take the role of dependencies managers (Ruiz, 2010). Thus, the subjugation of women has not only been the key condition for the emergence of a male-dominated public sphere, but it is also undeniably related to the fact that the access to care is still not prioritized on the public agenda (Bocco, 2021).

Since the decade of 1960's, feminists have argued for the distinction of productive and reproductive labour, and the recognition and valorisation of the latter within capitalist economies (Marchetti, 2022). Around the world, academics and activists have claimed for the recognition of domestic and care work, not only for its social value but also for its economic contribution to society. This has led to important advancements such as the recognition of domestic and care work within the labour legislation of many countries, as well as for the progressive improvement of the domestic workers' labour conditions. Despite these achievements, much remains to be done. Reproductive activities, such as cleaning, cooking, providing medication, and keeping company, are still seen as second-order activities that should be performed on the private sphere by women. Consequently, these are still far from being recognized as essential activities for the sustainability of our socioeconomic system and of life itself.

Moreover, the expansive nature of the capitalist system has meant that the limits initially set by the sexual division of labour have been exceeded. The patriarchal power relations are no longer the only ones playing a determinant role in the organisation of domestic and care work. The financialized capitalist system, predominant since the 1980's, has recruited women into the labour force at the same time that has decreased spending on social welfare. Care work has been externalized to families, while reducing their ability to perform it (Fraser, 2016). Thus, it has become commodified by those families who can afford it, and privatized by those who can't. On a global scale, this has resulted on the increasing import of migrant workers from poorer countries who take on the care work that the families on the *Global North* can no longer perform.

2.2 Contemporary characteristics of domestic work

Efforts to address the challenges faced by domestic workers globally have increased in the last couple of decades, and so have the academic debates that study this sector from a diverse range of disciplines. Thus, it's pertinent to start with the question *Who are domestic workers?* The ILO Convention No. 189, adopted in 2011, defines them as "any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship", and domestic work is defined as "work performed in or for a household or households" (ILO, 2011). This broad definition serves to fit in the different forms that domestic work can take around the world. Activities that are generally regarded as domestic work include both those aimed at maintaining the household -cleaning, doing the laundry, gardening-, and those aimed at the care of its inhabitants—

cooking, bathing, feeding, providing medication². The temporal modalities include part-time work, full-time work as an external worker, and full-time as a *live-in* worker. Thus, domestic work can take a number of forms depending not only on the country or city where it's performed, but also on the personal characteristics of the worker, and the arrangement established with their employer³.

However, and as argued by Marchetti (2022), beyond the differences that it can present around the world, the defining characteristic of this occupation is its exclusion from the labour rights seen in other settings, which leads to the majority of domestic workers being subject to precarious conditions. This finds its cause on the private nature of the occupation as well as in the general undervaluing of reproductive labour. The fact that is performed in a household, and that families are usually the employers, are key aspects that make domestic workers more vulnerable to discrimination, abuses, and scarce legal protection.

2.2.1 Domestic work at the global dimension

Due to the sexual division of labour based on the essentialisation of reproductive labour as *women's* work, domestic and care labour is a highly feminised sector. However, gender is not the only factor that defines the configuration of this workforce, as it has historically been an occupation with a strong presence of migrants and racialized people (Marchetti, 2022). Moreover, this sector has captured successive flows of international female migration since the decade of the 1990s (Moré, 2013). Thus, numerous authors have established an inherent relation between domestic work and migration and developed concepts to study this subject at its global dimension.

The term feminisation of migration refers to the increasing participation of women in internal and international migration, which has been a prominent migration trend since the turn of the 21st century. For this reason, recent literature has highlighted the unprecedented migration of women involved in care and domestic work across different countries (Gottfried & Chun, 2018). Moreover, the feminisation of migration explores how various aspects of migration are experienced differently by women and men, and

² In this regard, it is important to note the claims that domestic workers associations, such as the ADWS, make about the differentiation of the tasks performed by a domestic worker, as essential and non-essential tasks. The differentiated importance of these tasks over the life of the dependent person they care for, should be considered by DWs and their employers when making their work agreement or contract, and is an important factor of their professionalization.

³ In the Spanish normative, the Royal Decree 1620/2011 defines domestic work as a special employment relationship whose activities are carried out in a private household and is established between the employee and a natural person (ILO, 2013). This excludes employment as *Au pairs*, by private companies, or in connection with the Dependency Law. However, in this research women employed by private companies were included as FMDWS.

thus how gender is a “crucial factor in our understanding of the causes and consequences of international migration” (Piper, 2008, p. 1287).

To further explain the relation between domestic work and contemporary migration flows, one essential concept is that of “the international division of reproductive labour”, proposed by Rhacel Parreñas (2000). By studying the case of the migrant Filipina domestic workers in the context of globalisation, Parreñas proposed that a three-tier transfer of reproductive labour occurred between middle-class women in receiving countries, migrant domestic workers, and Third World women without the resources to migrate (Parreñas, 2000). This term is used to explain the hierarchical relation that links women from different countries in a process of transference of caregiving, highlighting social and economic inequalities at the local, transnational, and global level (Parreñas, 2015). Therefore, in addition to patriarchal power relations that cause the feminization of reproductive labour, global capitalism and racial inequalities are pointed out as structural forces that determine that racialized, migrant women occupy such an important part of this sector.

In 2002, Arlie Russel Hochschild coined the term “global care chains” to refer to this same matter of transnational transference of care. However, Hochschild’s contribution focuses largely on the emotional aspect of this transference of care. For her, love is the essential resource that is being extracted from Third World children and given to the First world children that nannies and domestic workers take care of (Hochschild, 2002). While acknowledging the usefulness of this term, Nicola Yeates argues that Hochschild’s analysis of care chains suffers from a narrow focus on one type of migrant care workers - namely nannies- and would benefit of examining the complex and interlocking structures involved in different services and institutions within the care industry (Yeates, 2004).

The point raised by Yeates is of particular importance in the analysis of migrant domestic workers in industrialised countries, in the sense that their work is inextricably related to the configuration of care services provided by the State. In this regard, Helma Lutz analyses the European case by pointing out how the emergence of the neoliberal system has led to a severe contraction of the state-provided social care services in most countries (Lutz, 2008). This has led to an “individualisation of care obligations and arrangements” in which the economic market logic has leaked (Ibid: p.5), causing an increase in the privatisation and commodification of care. Adding to this is the fact that within the European Union, the inclusion of women to the labour force has been a priority since the decade of 1980’s. In this scenario of more women participating in the labour force with reduced state support to care for their dependents, migrant domestic workers have played a key role filling what has been defined as the *care deficit*.

The concepts and ideas outlined at this section provide the theoretical background on the topic of domestic work, seen at the global dimension in its relation to international migration. They are highly useful to understand how gender and race inequality, as well as state's policy regimes, are structural forces that operate on the migration and labour trajectories of domestic workers. However, they've already been thoroughly developed by a number of authors, demonstrating a tendency to study this subject from a macro-structural perspective. Moreover, applying this focus to individual cases of FMDWs reflects only a part of their story and leaves little space for the particular motivations, emotional journeys, and personal development processes. In this research, the capabilities approach is used to explore these aspects and their relation to the (dis)empowerment processes of FMDWs.

2.3 The Capability Approach

The capability approach was first proposed by Amartya Sen in 1979 in his seminal conference in Stanford University entitled "Equality of what?" (1980). This approach is mostly concerned with what people can be or do, which he discusses in terms of functionings, human capability, freedom, and agency. In this model, functionings are a set of "doing and beings" that people value, which can be both elementary, such as escaping morbidity, being well nourished, or having mobility, and more complex ones, like being part of a community or achieving self-respect (Sen, 1990). The concept of capability derives from this and refers to "the various combinations of functionings (doings and beings) he or she can achieve" (Ibid, p. 44). Thus, simply put, functionings are what people have reason to value to be or do, and capability is the ability to achieve these functionings.

The concept of freedom refers to the various combinations of functionings that a person can achieve. This concept is relevant to the capability approach both for its intrinsic value, understood as the possibility to choose between several alternatives, and for its instrumental value, as the opportunity or mean to achieve the most valued alternative (Sen, 1990). Related to this is the distinction between potential and achieved functionings. Potential functionings reflect freedoms as they are the valuable options from which a person can chose one or the other, while achieved functionings are those effectively chosen (Robeyns, 2005). Lastly, the concept of agency is proposed by Sen as a person's ability to pursue and realize goals they value or regards as important. Agency can be directed to advancing the person's own well-being, but moral considerations can also influence a person's "commitment" (Sen, 1985, p. 188) towards the good of other people, their community, or a particular social matter.

Furthermore, Sen developed the capability approach with a clear evaluative purpose. In his view, social change can be evaluated "in terms of the richness of human life resulting from it", and this richness or

quality of life is related to the assessment of people's capability to function (Sen, 1990). Thus, the evaluation of policies must be people's centred, putting a special emphasis on what people value, aspire, and need, and their ability to achieve this⁴. For this purpose, an important point that this approach makes is the distinction between the means and the ends of wellbeing and development. Expanding people's freedom and capabilities is the ultimate end of human wellbeing and development, while means such as material and immaterial resources should be valued for their contribution to this purpose. Regarding his understanding of wellbeing, Sen argues for a pluralist approach that considers the various beings and doings that different individuals value. This way, what defines a person's wellbeing is the functioning vector that he or she achieves (Sen, 1985).

Probably the most prominent author that has contributed to the development of the capability approach is Martha Nussbaum. One of her main contributions to the approach is the argument that is possible, and even desirable, to arrive to an enumeration of "central elements of truly human functionings that can command a broad cross-cultural consensus", which can be captured on a list of basic or central capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000, p. 74). As a political philosopher, her approach is more normative than Sen's, and she proposes this list as a formulation of political principles that should be translated as constitutional guarantees. Nussbaum's list has been criticized for making universalistic claims regarding its scope, thus not being sufficiently sensitive to culture and context (Robeyns, 2003).

Moreover, some authors have criticised Sen's approach for being too individualistic and looking at the "structures of living together", such as social norms and institutions, as purely instrumental to individual wellbeing (Stewart & Deneulin, 2002). However, the capabilities approach does concern itself with how social circumstances and public policy influence a person's opportunities, as these are dependent to a great extent by other people, the state, and social institutions (Drèze & Sen, 2002). Thus, even when structures are categorized as means to the end of achieving people's wellbeing, its identification and evaluation as constraining or enabling factors for human capabilities is an important aspect of the approach. Moreover, this approach has been used by a number of authors to analyse a group's capabilities in comparison to others, as well as how social norms and other group-based processes influence an individual's choices and wellbeing (Robeyns, 2005).

⁴ To this point, Sen makes a critique of other approaches to value human wellbeing, such as the utility and welfare approaches.

2.2.1 The Capability Approach to domestic work

The capability approach has been used previously to analyse the development perspectives of domestic workers. In her study of the deficiencies of the labour laws protecting domestic workers in China, Luo argues that Nussbaum's list of central capabilities improves the normative power of the capabilities approach, and thus is a suitable tool for strengthening the legislation, as well as its enforcement, regarding this work in China (Luo, 2023). Additionally, Briones (2008) uses the capability approach in her study of the situation of Filipina Domestic Workers in Paris and Hong Kong, to question the current anti-trafficking discourse promoted by both researchers and NGOs. Briones uses Nussbaum's capabilities approach to prioritize the protection of ODWs' livelihoods as a way to further secure their labour and human rights. In both these studies, Nussbaum's capabilities approach is used to frame the claim for stronger rights for the protection of domestic workers conditions. Following a different direction, Hobson et al. (2015) use Sen's capabilities approach in its more evaluative nature, as a conceptual guide to compare the institutional contexts surrounding domestic work in Spain and Sweden. This study proposes a multidimensional model for analysing the Capabilities set for MDWs, which sets institutional factors at its centre, but also includes others at the trans-national, individual, and societal/cultural level.

These studies show that the capability approach is usually applied to the analysis of domestic workers at the collective level. Moreover, the focus is more on the external factors that determine their situation and the structural changes that could lead to an increase in their capabilities. While this is certainly relevant, it can overlook their diverse subjectivities and multiplicity of life-projects. Thus, this research analyses the empowerment and agency experiences of FMDWs at the individual level to have a more profound understanding of how their capabilities are enhanced or constrained.

2.2.2 Empowerment and Agency

The concept of empowerment is a highly contested one, so it's important to provide a clear definition and state its relevance within the capability approach. In this research, empowerment is seen in relation to the ability to make choices. Thus, the definition put forward by Naila Kabeer is followed:

“My understanding of the notion of empowerment is that it is inescapably bound up with the condition of ‘disempowerment’ and refers to the processes by which those who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such an ability. In other words, empowerment entails a *process of change*” (Kabeer, 1999, pp. 436-7).

This perspective fits well within the capability approach as the focus on choices involves the alternatives available to a person (freedoms), their preferred alternatives, as interests, goals, and aspirations (functionings), and their ability to achieve these (capabilities). The concept of agency is deeply intertwined with empowerment as it is enacted throughout the process of making choices and acting upon them. Moreover, Kabeer relates the ability to exercise meaningful choice to three interrelated dimensions from the capability approach: resources and agency, which she encapsulates within Sen's conception of capabilities, and the outcome of achieving one's valued "doing and beings" as achieved functionings (Kabeer, 1999).

While this definition builds on the capability approach by taking the idea of choice as its starting point, it purposely makes the interaction between agency and power structures more explicit (Kabeer, 2020). This is because empowerment focuses on the processes in which certain individuals see their power transformed, as their ability to make choices denied or enabled by various factors. This is an appropriate focus for studying processes that entail a change of circumstances, such as migration journeys and labour trajectories. Furthermore, it directs the analysis of power to the multiple forms in which agency is exercised by oppressed groups and individuals, which takes power in the positive sense of bringing about change (Kabeer, 2020). According to Rowlands (1997), power can be manifested as *power over*, *power to*, *power with*, and the *power within*. Each of these manifestations is related to a certain use of the term empowerment: *power to* is related to the ability to achieve goals, *power within* to a more personal transformation process, and *power with*, to the possibilities that come from acting collectively with others.

Thus, these differentiated expressions of power give way to empowerment operating in three interrelated dimensions: the personal, the relational and the collective (Rowlands, 1997). Empowerment processes can be experienced at any of these dimensions separately, although often empowerment in one dimension will have an effect on the others. For example, the development of values involved in the personal dimension of empowerment, such as self-confidence and self-efficacy, is often the pre-condition to actions indicating empowerment at the social or political levels (Narayan, 2005).

This research follows feminist approaches towards social inequality and social justice, in which agency is conceptualized as inextricably bound up with structure (Kabeer, 2020). Agency is a central concept for feminist analysis of livelihoods because it draws attention to the structural constraints shaping the distribution of livelihood opportunities to differently positioned population groups, while it is the human capacity for agency what drives processes of structural transformation (Kabeer, 2020). In this sense, the

capacity of certain individuals or groups to enact purposive agency can be put in terms of capabilities by looking at how the choices they make are limited by structures and institutional arrangements.

The agency that is entailed in empowerment processes can be enacted in multiple dimensions and forms. In the case of migrant domestic workers, they are situated within power hierarchies of class, gender, race, and nationality (Moré, 2018), which intertwine with the institutional arrangements constituting the care, labour and migration regimes of a society. However, “they also develop different types of agency vis-à-vis these hierarchies from their different social locations within structural conditions that are both constraining and enabling” (Morokvasic, 2007, as cited in Moré, 2018). In the study of empowerment of this population group, as well as with most labour groups, there is a tendency in existing literature to focus on processes of collective agency (see Kabeer, 2020; Leal, 2017; Rojas García & Contreras López, 2018), which usually takes the form of workers unions and organised activism. This is likely because the impact of these actions is more visible, and it is the most effective way to transform structural inequalities and gendered injustices.

However, as Amrith and Sahraoui argue (2018), agency goes beyond collective acts of resistance against exploitative power structures, as it can also be intertwined with wider projects of individual and collective forms of gender and labour empowerment. Moreover, it’s important to note that for many individuals joining demonstrations of collective agency can be inaccessible for a number of reasons, as it will be analysed further in this research. Thus, agency can be seen from the particular meanings FMDWs attribute to the work they do, to their struggles for decent work conditions, and the everyday negotiations of family, religious and community norms and practices (Amrith and Sahraoui, 2018). This coincides with Kabeer’s affirmation that “agency is about more than observable action” since it also encompasses the meanings, motivations, and purposes that individuals give to the activities they perform, reflecting their power within (Kabeer, 1999, p. 438).

In a study on the experiences of garment workers in South India, Carswell and De Neve demonstrated how labour agency is not only fashioned by vertically linked production networks, but as much by social relations and livelihood strategies (2013). Thus, agency is also enacted through the everyday, low-key, and subtle practices through which marginalised groups, such as FMDWs, “turns things to their advantage and make the best of the options available to them” (Carswell & De Neve, 2013, p. 67). These forms of individual or “micro-agency” encompass the multiple acts through which workers pursue their different goals and create a dignified livelihood for themselves. Emphasizing the relation between agency and structure implies acknowledging that many of these agential practices’ transformative capacity is limited

by the constraining structures shaping them. Thus, they can be seen more as an expression of resilience than an act that is conducive to empowerment. To this regard, authors such as Katz (2004) and Näre (2014) make an important critique to perceiving every autonomous act in a context of uneven capitalist development as an instance of resistance or denial. Moreover, Katz proposes a categorisation of different kinds of responses and its effects to capitalism and other sources of oppression and exploitation. She argues for a further differentiation of agential social practices as “those whose primary effect is autonomous initiative, recuperation or *resilience*; those that are attempts to *rework* oppressive and unequal circumstances; and those that are intended to *resist*, subvert, or disrupt these conditions of exploitation and oppression” (Katz, 2004). In this sense, and as argued by Carswell and De Neve (2013), it is only some individual practices implemented by marginalised workers that involve more far-reaching transformations for their workplaces, social and family relations, and communities of origin.

This research brings attention to the multiple and everyday forms of agency that are embedded in the (dis)empowerment processes of FMDWs throughout their labour migration journeys. It addresses structure by examining the institutional, social, and personal assets that shape their capabilities and thus their opportunities to achieve their desired functionings. Furthermore, it goes beyond this by looking at the ways in which FMDWs enhance their *power to* and *power within* at the individual and relational dimensions, as well as their possibilities and implications of manifesting their *power with*.

Chapter 3. Methodology

This chapter contains the research design and limitations. It briefly describes the operationalisation of the concepts and presents them visually in a conceptual model. It also includes a description of methods used during the 3 months of the fieldwork in Andalusia and in the subsequent data analysis.

3.1 Operationalisation of concepts

This section presents how the main concepts used in the research are operationalised into concrete definitions, which are constructed according to the reviewed literature. First, labour migration refers to the process in which people relocate with the main purpose of finding employment. This movement can be within or across borders, and temporary or permanent, although in this research it refers to international migration for an indefinite period of time. ILO's definition of domestic work is used, being thus understood broadly as "work performed in or for a household or households" in a labour relationship (2011). FMDWs refers to migrant women who currently or in the past performed domestic work in Spain, regardless of the time they've spent in the country, or their migration and citizenship status.

Regarding the (dis)empowerment of FMDWs, this is seen as a three-step iterative process, based on the model proposed by Naila Kabeer (1999). Following this author's definition, empowerment refers to the process through which those that have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability. Disempowerment refers to an opposite process and can also refer to the precondition in which individuals or groups are denied such an ability. Following Rowlands (1997), the (dis)empowerment process is seen as occurring in three interrelated dimensions: personal, relational, and collective. The context and resources represent the preconditions that shape a (dis)empowerment processes of an individual or group. They include micro-, meso-, and macro level factors, division that was based on the model proposed by Hobson et al., (2015). The (dis)empowerment processes are a result from a change in these preconditions, or from the enactment of agency. Agency refers to the ability to pursue goals according to one's interests and values, and is seen in the actions and strategies aimed at advancing a person's wellbeing, as well as other-regarding commitments. Lastly, capabilities refer to people's ability to achieve the diverse "being and doings" which they have reason to value. This research studies capabilities by focusing not only on FMDWs' achieved wellbeing and functioning, but also their freedom -encompassed in their capability set- to make their own choices.

The following model is a proposal for visualizing the dynamic relation between the abovementioned concepts:

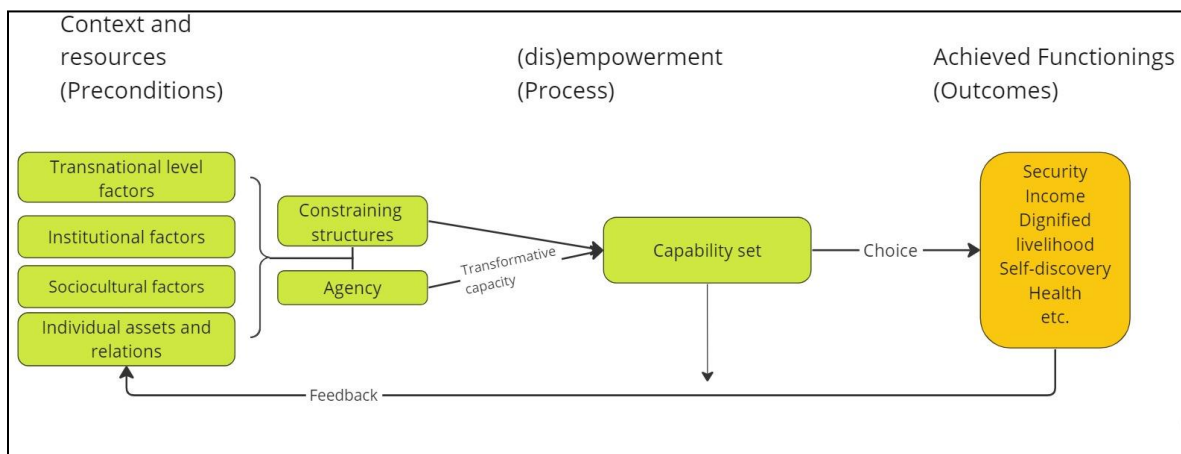


Figure 1. Conceptual model

3.2 Research design and questions

The research followed a qualitative research design, in accordance with its objective of knowing in detail the experiences of FMDWs. Qualitative research allows a better understanding of the participants' perspective, including the meanings and interpretations they give to their own experiences and behaviours (Hennink et al., 2020). Given that aspirations, motivations, and needs of FMDWs are a central interest for this research, several qualitative methods were used to explore the subject of this thesis.

This, in order to answer the main research question and the research sub questions:

How do the (dis)empowerment processes experienced by Latin American FMDWs in Andalusia shape their capabilities?

- What is the role of the migration, labour, and care regimes in these (dis)empowerment processes?
- In what ways can labour migration be (dis)empowering for Latin American FMDWs?
- What sociocultural factors and individual assets play a determinant role in these (dis)empowerment processes?
- What strategies do Latin American FMDWs use to enact their agency and increase their capabilities in Andalusia?

3.3 Host organization and support on the field

During the three months of my fieldwork in Andalusia, the Association of Domestic Workers of Seville (ADWS) acted as a host organization. The ADWS emerged in 2012 from the shared interest between FMDWs and local organisations of advocating for the dignification of domestic work and the advancement of their labour rights. It was formally established as a self-managed association in 2015 and is currently formed by approximately 100 migrant domestic workers from diverse nationalities, and a board of directors. I presented the research to the board and, after their approval to collaborate, I was able to attend several meetings and events organised by the association. This helped me to meet some women that participated in the interviews and, most importantly, allowed me to gain understanding about the research subject and the social and political ecosystem of Andalusia.

It was at an event in which the ADWS was participating that I met Flavia, who had recently set up an Association for Caregivers without Documents in Malaga. She became my gatekeeper in that province and helped me gain understanding of the social context, recruit participants for the interviews, and organise the focus group.

3.4 Methods

The regional context and institutional analysis of this research rely mainly on secondary data collected from previous research, local and national governmental institutions, and documents from local NGOs. For the primary data collection three types of qualitative methods were used: in-depth interviews, which were conducted with FMDWs and with experts, one focus group with FMDWs, and participant observation⁵. This section presents at detail the strategies used for participants recruitment and the strengths and limitations of each method.

3.4.1 In-depth interviews: FMDWs and experts

In-depth interviews are the most appropriate method for the objectives of this research, since they provide detailed information about a person's experience, thoughts, and behaviours (Boyce & Neale, 2006). In-depth interviews were conducted in parallel with two groups of interest: FMDWs, and experts. Conducting the interviews this way was useful to complement and contrast the perceptions of the experts

⁵ All the interviews and the focus group were conducted in Spanish. Relevant quotes included in this document were translated to English by the author.

with the experiences of the FMDWs, and to consult them on issues that had not initially been considered but arose during these women's interviews.

A total of 25 interviews with FMDWs were conducted. Although the study was planned to be conducted exclusively in the city of Seville, Spain, the difficulty to find women willing to participate in the interviews motivated a widening of the geographical area of the study. Consequently, interviews were conducted in the city of Seville, nearby towns that belong to the province of Malaga, and with participants that, although contacted in Seville, reside and work in the provinces of Granada, Cadiz, and Huelva. Although the characteristics of each town within Andalusia can indeed impact the situation of each FMDWs, this change was validated by the high work mobility that made their stories take place in different locations over the region.

The criteria for interviewing FMDWs consisted in three points: being a woman, originally from Latin America, and being or having been a domestic worker in Andalusia. Women who were currently in other sectors but had significant experience in domestic work, or that had transited to working for private agencies as domestic workers, were also included as they provided valuable information about labour mobility. Regarding the sampling strategy, participants were recruited by different methods. Attending the Care and Citizenship Andalusian Forum was an effective way to make contacts from different provinces. From there, two FMDWs were interviewed, and then a snowball sampling method was used with the contacts they provided. In that same event I met Flavia. The connections she had with women in different towns in Malaga, as well as the fact that she is a domestic and care worker herself, were key to find participants both for the interviews and the focus group discussion. The fact that she already knew these women and that they trusted her, contributed to them being much more willing to take the time to participate in the research. Lastly, some other participants were contacted through the ADWS, whether by reference or directly in their meetings. This last method influenced their profile as they generally had higher levels of socio-political participation. Appendix A shows some basic information from the FMDWs interviewed.

Regarding the experts' interviews, 5 were with leaders from local organisations in Seville, and 1 was conducted with a researcher from the University Pablo de Olavide. Although some local government authorities were repeatedly approached, no interviews were achieved with them. One limitation in this regard is the lack of interviews with organisations from other Andalusian provinces. Appendix B lists the consulted experts.

In depth-interviews will work best when they combine structure with flexibility (Legard et al., 2003). Thus, both the interviews with FMDWs and with experts were conducted as semi-structured and open-ended. The FMDWs' interviews had some characteristics of a life-story interview, since the participants were encouraged to recall different aspects and stages of their life, and relied on how they made sense of past events and its impact on their concepts of self (Tagg, 1985). This implied using the interview guide to effectively touch upon the points of interest of the research, while letting the conversation flow in a responsive manner to the information, tone, and issues raised by the interviewees. Similarly, the experts' interview guide was slightly modified for each interview for better adequacy. This was done previously, adapting the questions according to the character of each expert's work, and during the interview itself. The FMDWs and experts' interview guide are shown in Appendices D and E, respectively.

3.4.2 Focus Group

To complement the interviews, a focus group was conducted on the 21st of April in the town of Igualeja, Malaga. The call for participants and the logistics were organised with the help of Flavia and the Association for Caregivers without Documents. Even though there was a good response and interest towards the focus group, only four FMDWs were able to assist. The fact that many of the interested women couldn't participate because they couldn't leave their work, was itself indicative of the reduced control these women have over their time. As for the women that did participate, they all had less than two years living in Andalusia and still had an irregular status, which limited the diversity of experiences. Despite these limitations, it was possible to have a good and fluent discussion with the participants. Focus groups are an effective method for generating a different type of data than in-depth interviews, since the format of group discussion can reveal detail, nuances, and contrasting views on certain issues (Hennink et al., 2020). Thus, conducting the focus group close to the end of the data collection was effective to contextualise and discuss certain issues raised during interviews and observation, and listen to different perspectives. The discussion guide used in the focus group is shown in Appendix F.

3.4.3 Observation

Establishing a good relationship with the local organisations was essential for getting involved in the local ecosystem. It allowed me to attend various events and meetings relevant to this research and travel to different towns in Andalusia for data collection (Appendix C). This way, the fieldwork was effectively an immersive experience for gaining understanding about the subject of the research. In some of these activities I conducted observation with what could be considered passive or moderate participation

(Hennink et al., 2020). This was done mostly in activities from the ADWS and traveling with Flavia around Malaga, where I was able to listen to stories, opinions, and discussions from FMDWs in more informal settings. I took a notebook to all the events, trips, and activities to keep a record of my observations and impressions in the field. The major limitation of this method is that it was not done in a systematic way. However, it helped to build a relation of bigger trust with the women from the ADWS, Claver, and other interviewees. It was also effective for learning more on issues not covered in the interviews, thus having a more comprehensive understanding on the subject.

3.5 Data processing and analysis

Through the sum of the abovementioned methods, it was possible to gather a vast amount of primary data. The FMDWs and experts' interviews, as well as the focus group discussions were transcribed manually shortly after they were conducted. The names of all the FMDWs have been changed to protect their confidentiality, except for that of Flavia because of her role as a gatekeeper and representative of an organisation. Moreover, the data has been anonymised by not showing each FMDWs' migration status during the time of the interview and the location of their workplace. As for the data analysis, the collected data was coded manually with differentiated codebooks for the FMDWs and the experts' interviews (Appendices H and I). The main concepts and deductive codes were extracted from the research questions and the interview guides, and they also correspond to the structure of the findings chapter of this thesis. During the data analysis the interview transcripts were read several times to limit misrepresentations caused by the memory bias from the researcher, which also led to adding codes developed inductively.

3.6 Limitations and positionality

Overall, the methods used during the fieldwork were effective for the purpose of understanding the experiences and capabilities of FMDWs in Andalusia. However, it's important to note some limitations in their implementation as this will have an impact on the gathered data. Moreover, the fact that only qualitative methods were used, and the participants' sample size was not extensive, limits the possibility of making generalisations from its results.

One of the main challenges encountered during the fieldwork was the restricted availability of FMDWs to participate in the research. Domestic workers, and especially those who are live-in workers, have scarce free time due to their demanding work schedules. This, in addition to the fact that there was no financial compensation for their participation, caused that they had a low incentive to attend to an interview or focus group discussion. Although in the end the number of interviews was satisfactory, and the focus

group could be carried out, the difficulties to recruit participants had logistic and methodological implications.

The methods for recruiting participants implied a limited control over the selection of the participants, in both the interviews and the focus group. How this affected the diversity of sample can be seen in the general tendency of participants to have only a few years, or even months, in Andalusia. In this sense, a limitation identified at the end of the fieldwork was a low representation of women with longer migration trajectories -more than 10 years-, which could reflect greater diversity in labour mobility and empowerment processes. Logistically, even with women interested in participating, their highly irregular and restrictive working schedules were a constant obstacle to arrange and carry out the meetings for the interviews. This meant that timeline originally designed for the fieldwork was not possible to follow, and more FMDWs and experts' interviews could not be achieved. Regarding experts' interviews, local organisations and researchers were highly accessible and willing to participating in the requested interviews. However, not having interviews from other kinds of actors, namely government officials and private employment agencies, implies having a bias on how the migrants and domestic workers situation in Andalusia is perceived by external actors. Moreover, contacting experts outside Seville would have provided a more comprehensive understanding of the relevant actors in the region.

In terms of positionality, throughout the fieldwork it became evident how the researcher's identity and subjectivity influenced every stage of the research, from how the methods were conducted, to how the results are interpreted. Being Latin-American and speaking the same language as the participants was relevant as it helped building a rapport more quickly in many interviews. This was also a practical advantage, since not having to hire a translator implied reducing costs and having overall simpler logistics. Moreover, it reduced the risk of valuable information and cultural expressions getting lost in translation. However, this didn't mean that some FMDWs weren't reluctant to participate in the research or hesitant to discuss some sensitive issues. In these cases, being clear with the data protection strategies and respecting the limits and privacy of each participant were key to conduct the interviews, although it is possible that this lack of trust limited the veracity and comprehensiveness of the information provided.

Furthermore, the accuracy of the information gathered could be affected by the participants memory errors, or by the social desirability effect (Bernard, 2006). In some interviews, participants seemed to contradict themselves as to how they interpreted some aspect or episode of their lives between different questions, and often weren't precise regarding dates, time periods, and sequences of events. One more important bias can be presumed in the interviews that were conducted closely to the houses of the

women's employers. This happened especially with live-in workers that were only able to go outside their employer's houses for a limited time. In these cases, it is suspected that they may have minimised bad experiences and problems regarding their working conditions.

Chapter 4: Geographical contextual framework

4.1 National and regional context

Spain is located in southwestern Europe and has a population of 48,196,693 inhabitants (INE, 2023). Recent history of Spain is marked by the almost 40 years long dictatorship of Francisco Franco, between 1939 and 1978, which was followed by a peaceful transition to democracy and a rapid economic modernization (CIA, 2023). In more recent years, Spain has been severely hit by the 2008 economic recession and the 2020 Covid-19 crisis. It has emerged from these crises with GDP growth rates above the EU average, being currently the fourth- largest economy in the euro-zone (CIA, 2023).

Spain is formed by 17 Autonomous Communities and 2 autonomous cities, which have political and financial autonomy. Andalusia is the most populated Autonomous Community of the country, with a total of 8,472,407 inhabitants in 2021 (INE, 2022), and the second largest in territory. Despite this, this Autonomous Community has a relatively low socioeconomic development compared to the rest of the country, given that it holds the lowest PIB per capita and the fourth highest unemployment rate, amounting to 19.4% in 2022 (INE, 2022).

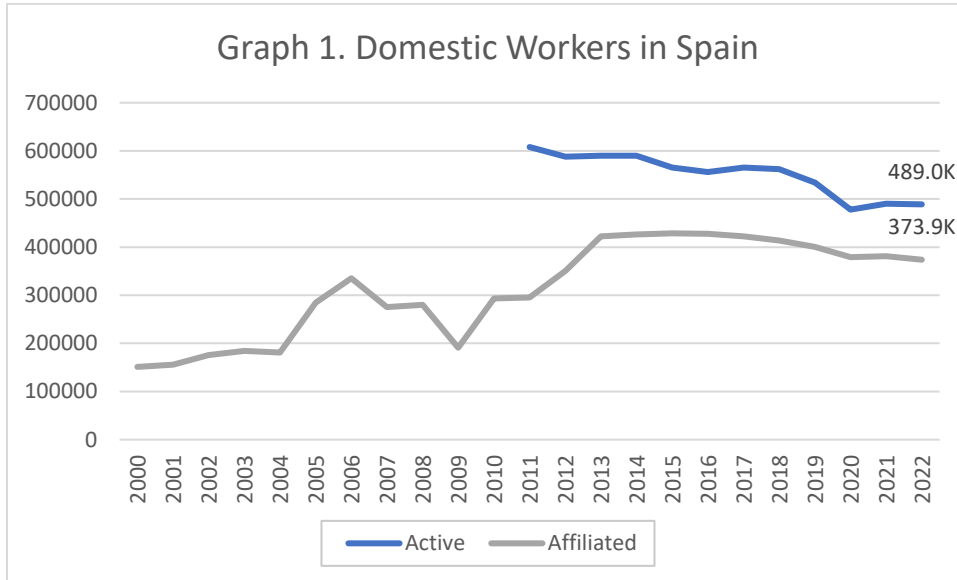


Figure 2. Map of Andalusia, Spain. (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2023)

4.2 Spain and Andalusia – Some numbers on domestic work

As reported by the Active Population Survey from the INE, in 2022 there were over 489,000 people working in the domestic work sector in Spain (Funcas, 2023). However, the number of affiliated people to the Domestic Workers Special System of the Social Security General Regime in 2022 was only over 373,990, of which 95% were women (Spanish Government, 2023). Thus, almost one fourth of them remains excluded from all social security protection and perceives a salary below the national minimum wage. However, it's important to note that these sources are likely underestimating the real numbers of domestic workers in Spain, because of the sector's high level of informality. Another important

characteristic of this sector is its ethnic and nationality configuration. Over 43% of its population is from abroad (Cruz, 2022), out of which an estimated 25% have an irregular status (Oxfam, 2021a). This ethnic element can also be noted in the fact, that while only 40,000 women are live-in workers, 90% of them are migrants (Trujillo, 2023).



Graph 1. Domestic Workers in Spain. Active people in the sector and affiliations to the Domestic Workers Special Regime, 2000-2022 (Funcas, 2023)

Domestic work in Andalusia follows national trends in the composition of its workforce, as well as the social and legal valuation determining the conditions of its workers. In 2022, a total of 41,592 people were affiliated to the Domestic Workers Special System (Junta de Andalucía, 2022). This Social Security Special System has a female representation of 95.6%, followed by the Special Agricultural System with a distant 51.36% (Junta de Andalucía, 2023). Thus, domestic work is by far the most feminised sector in this Autonomous Community. Additionally, 32% of these women are migrants, and 44% of the sector is under informality (Junta de Andalucía, 2022). As in the rest of the country, this sector in Andalusia is characterised by offering salaries below the minimum wage, having excessive working hours, work instability, unclear conditions and performed activities, and a high vulnerability to physical, mental, and sexual abuse. Moreover, the lower economic development of Andalusia leads to underemployment and less recruitment of domestic workers, as well as less coverage of public services for dependency assistance (Oxfam, 2021b). This affects the wellbeing of both households with dependant people, and FMDWs.

4.3 The institutional framework of domestic and care work in Spain

The situation of FMDWs in Spain is a complex subject of analysis since the domestic and care sector implies the intersection of three distinct, but deeply intertwined, institutional frameworks. These are analysed in the following subsections:

4.3.1 The care regime

The care regime refers to the way in which the care needs of individuals are met, organized, and financed in societies (Hobson et al, 2015). This includes the distribution of private and public care services, as well as the social values and preferences around care. Distinct care regimes can be identified in different regions or countries, which also influences the amount and type of migrant domestic work that is attracted. Spain is representative of the Mediterranean familialist model, in which the care for the children and elderly is assumed by the family, and there is little provisioning of public care services (Hobson et al, 2015; Oso, 2018). In this configuration, that Farris and Marchetti (2017) name *the familial imagery of care*, care is seen as an intimate and highly personalised arrangement made between the caregiver and the care-receiver within a private household.

The familialist model traditionally assigned the responsibility of all reproductive tasks in the household, including taking care of the children and the elderly, to a female member of the family. In Spain, this model was transformed during the 1980s and 1990s because of the rapid integration of the Spanish women to the education system and qualified workforce (Oso, 2018). However, this female labour integration was not accompanied by a more equal distribution of reproductive tasks in the new *two-earner households* (Fraser, 2016). Furthermore, it happened in a context of lack of public resources and state support in response to the social reproduction crisis (Oso, 2018). In this scenario, Spanish women's role as the family caregivers was transferred to paid domestic workers, which were increasingly represented by female migrants as the Spanish women were less willing to take on these low-paying, unskilled jobs. Thus, although transformed, the familialist model continued to cause a low professionalisation of the domestic sector in Spain, which has been identified as a reason for the disempowerment of its workers (Moré, 2018).

The incorporation of migrant women to the domestic sector in Spain has run parallel to a process of increasing marketisation of the care services for children and elderly/dependant persons. Care services for children aren't currently a major problem given that public schools are free for children from age 3, although the provision of accessible day-care centres for children under that age remains an unsolved

issue. However, the care deficit is severe in the case of the elderly (Hobson et al, 2015). Both public and private nursing homes are limited and have costs that make them highly inaccessible for the bulk of the population. Since 2006, the Dependency Law (*Ley de Dependencia*) was established to regulate the subsidies for care services both at residences and private households. However, it can be difficult to obtain the subsidy in practice, and when the support consists of care services provided by state-funded caregivers, they only attend to each household for a limited number of hours a week. Adding to this elderly care deficit is the fact that Spain is one of the countries where the ageing of the population is projected to be more prominent in the following decades (Conde-Ruiz & González, 2021) ⁶.

The combination of these factors has caused the growth of the private market in the domestic and care sector. This demand has been met by female migrant workers, whose experiences integrating to the Spanish labour is shaped by the labour regime, examined next.

4.3.2 The labour regime

Paid domestic work in Spain, as well as in most countries in the world, is still characterized by a lack of legal and social recognition. However, over the last 4 decades the fight led by feminists, migrants and domestic workers has resulted in important improvements for the sector. Domestic work was first recognized as such by the Spanish legislation in 1985, with the Royal Decree 1424/1985, from August 1st (Bocco, 2021). This normative remained unmodified until the Royal Decree 1620/2011, from November 14th, which was approved by Spain in response to the ILO's adoption of the Convention 189 in June that same year. Although the 2011 Royal Decree implied an improvement for the domestic workers' situation, the Convention 189 was not ratified and there were still important challenges for the recognition of domestic work as equal to any other kind of job. Both the Royal Decree 1620/2011 and its accompanying Law 27/2011, for the adapting and modernisation of the Social Security system, failed to achieve this as they remained placing domestic work in a special order, disadvantaged compared to other activities (Pino, 2022).

In October 2022, the Convention 198 was finally ratified by the Spanish senate, being this a direct result of the unrelenting struggle that domestic workers' associations and collectives, many of them migrants, fought for years (Rengifo, 2022). The ratification of the Convention had been the main claim by these

⁶ In 2019, the fertility rate in Spain was of 1.23, which is one the lowest among industrialized countries. Additionally, women are increasingly having children at an older age. Furthermore, Spain stands out for having the highest life expectancy rate at birth of all the EU countries, with an average of 83.2 years, and of 86.1 for women. According to projections by the INE and Eurostat, these trends will produce a continued ageing of the population until the 2050, which will be accompanied by an accelerated increase of the dependency rate (Conde-Ruiz & González, 2021).

groups during the last decade, given that this document establishes the international standards for the dignification and legal recognition of domestic work. As established by Jacqueline Amaya Rengifo, representative of the ADWS, this was a historic accomplishment since “its ratification is a matter of social justice and dignity and emphasises the social and economic value of domestic work” (Rengifo, 2022). With this, the Spanish government committed itself to comply with the obligations set in the Convention. Moreover, it approved the Royal Decree-Law 16/2022, from September 6th, for the improvement of the domestic workers’ labour conditions and social security. Among other modifications, this normative gave the domestic workers the right to the unemployment benefit, and established regulations regarding justification and severance payment in cases of dismissal (Rodríguez, 2023).

As crucial as these legal improvements are, it’s important to note that the enforcement of domestic workers rights still faces many challenges. The Labour Inspectorate argues that it is impossible for it to intervene in most cases due to the prevalence of the right to intimacy of private households, although a lack of political willingness is implicit in this, as well as in its lack of regulation of private employment agencies (Rengifo, 2022). In a similar sense, the Law 31/1995 on Occupational Risks does not establish sufficient enforcing measures that oblige domestic workers’ employers to guarantee adequate safety and hygiene conditions (Bocco, 2021). Moreover, this improvements’ impact is relative in face of the high levels of informality prevailing in the sector. The conditions of the sector, as well as the vulnerable personal situation of most Latin American FMDWs, determine their extremely low negotiation power against employers (Oxfam, 2021a). Thus, beyond affecting their wellbeing, this limits their capability to demand better working conditions.

4.3.3 The migration regime

Through its normative, policies and enforcement mechanisms, migration regimes determine who can enter and stay in the country. These dispositions are largely determined by the workforce needs of each country. In Spain, the high demand for labour in the care and domestic work, as well as the informality that has historically characterised this labour market, have been important pull factors for migrant domestic workers. The requirements regarding entry, stay, and exit of the country for foreigners are contained in the *Organic Law 4/2000, from January 11th, regarding the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain and their social integration*, and in its corresponding regulation, established in the *Royal Decree 557/2011, from April 20th*.

In the case of Latin and Central Americans, most countries⁷ have an agreement with the Schengen States that allows them to enter this zone without a visa for up to 90 days. However, citizens from Bolivia and Ecuador are required a Schengen visa for entering the country. Already in Spain, the Organic Law 4/2000 establishes that a foreigner has a regular migration status through two possible situations: in a short-term stay, that allows them to stay in the country for 90 days over a period of 6 months (article 30), or in a situation of temporal residence that can go from 90 days to 5 years (article 31). If a person stays in the country after the initially authorized 90 days without acquiring a residence authorization, their migration status becomes irregular.

Regarding labour immigration, there are two main ways that the immigration policies contemplates: *quotas*, which allow for regular labour immigration for certain sectors, and *regularisations*, through which irregular migrants acquire residence and work permits (Hobson et al, 2015). If a person has the intention to work in Spain regularly, the State demands them to have a residence and work visa, as stipulated by the article 25 bis of the Organic Law 4/2000. However, the requisites to obtain this type for visa are highly inaccessible for most migrant women coming from Latin America (Bocco, 2021), since they require having either substantial financial means -in the case of self-employed applicants-, or being employed in a job included in the catalogue of hard-to-fill occupations. In face of these strict regulations, women who migrate to Spain with scarce resources and the objective to work, do so by entering the country for an initially authorized period of 90 days, and then stay in a situation of irregularity.

This regime, that effectively enforces a period of irregularity, places them in a disempowered position and limits their agency. Thus, regularisation policies also play a determinant role in FMDWs (dis)empowerment processes. Title V of the Royal Decree 557/2011 establishes the exceptional circumstances in which foreigners in Spain can apply for an authorization of a temporal residence and work permit. The most common way for Latin American migrants to access a temporal residence and work permit is through the figure of integration. There are currently four ways for obtaining the permit on the grounds of exceptional circumstances through this figure: family, labour, social, and integration for training⁸. Out of these, the social integration is the most viable figure for domestic workers, although its authorisation is only granted to those that prove to have been living uninterruptedly in Spain for a

⁷ These include the countries of origin of almost all the women interviewed in this research: Argentina, Colombia, Honduras, Nicaragua, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela. The only exception is Ecuador.

⁸ As established by the Royal Decree 557/2011, and the Royal Decree 629/2022.

minimum of three years, among other hard-to-meet requisites⁹. Lastly, it's important to note that the even when the residence permit is granted, this is only valid for one year, and thus it usually has to be renewed several times before the person is able to apply to the Spanish citizenship. The consequences of living in the margins of society for such a prolonged period of time will be further explored in the following chapters.

⁹ Besides being in a situation of irregularity for at least three years, the authorisation of this permit implies two major challenges. First, proving to have lived in Spain for the stipulated period must be done through the municipality registration (*padrón*), which is often a challenge for migrants and even more for those with an irregular status. Moreover, not having this registration implies that they do not have access to many public services, including social benefits and healthcare. The second challenge is imposed by the requisite to present a formal work contract of at least one year and 30 hours a week.

5. Findings

5.1 Institutional Factors: the care, migration, and labour regimes

5.1.1 The creation of a labour niche

As noted in the previous chapter, the particularities of the care, labour, and migration regimes create an institutional context that directly influences the experiences of FMDWs in Spain and in Andalusia. By looking at the interactions among these policy domains, it's possible to appreciate an interlocking relationship in which the policies and sociocultural values of each are reinforced and enabled by the others. The care regime creates a high demand for a certain kind of domestic and care workers, and the migration and labour regime shape the way in which Latin American women enter the country and integrate to that specific labour market. Furthermore, at the transnational level, the global inequalities and historical ties are a major force driving this form of labour migration from Latin America to countries from the Global North, such as Spain.

Thus, the social and economic integration of Latin American women in Spain is explained to a large extent by the existence of a labour niche created by the socio-economic conditions that the country has experienced since the 1990s. As clearly explained by Dr. Pilar Cruz Zúñiga, this socio-economic integration occurs on the context of *"a segmented market that leaves labour niches open, in this case for "migrant" people, because these are the jobs that Spanish people don't want, so, what kind of jobs are they? They are the worst paid jobs, in bad conditions, with little social valuation..."* (personal interview, 2023). In the case of female migration, the main labour niche in which Latin American women find demand is domestic and care work, while for their male counterparts the most common sector is construction, and seasonal agriculture jobs attract both female and male migrants. Moreover, factors such as the language and ethnic stereotypes create a strong demand for Latin American women within the Spanish households.

5.1.2 Forms and trajectories of labour migration

For the participants of this research, the existence of this labour niche was a facilitator of labour incorporation in Spain. Most women I interviewed had travelled to Spain with the explicit purpose of finding a job, which determined the way they entered and stayed in the country. Table 1 shows the distribution of their administrative migration trajectories:

Status entering the country	Period of irregular migration status	Way of regularisation	Status during the interview	Number of cases
Regular for a short-term stay (with or without tourist visa)	Yes	Not applicable	Irregular	13
	Yes	Social Integration	Residence and work permit	2
	Yes	Social Integration	Citizenship	4
	No (but temporarily without a work permit)	Political asylum	Residence and work permit	1
	Yes	Marriage with a Spanish citizen	Residence and work permit	2
	Yes	Family Integration	Residence and work permit	1
Regular with a student visa	No (but temporarily without a work permit)	Not applicable	Citizenship	1
			Residence and work permit	1

Table 1. Administrative migration trajectories of FMDWs

As table 1 shows, 22 of the 25 women I interviewed had gone -or still were going- through a period of having an irregular migration status after exceeding the permitted time for their stay, in which they remained working in the informal economy. For those that had already gone through the regularisation process, the most common route in which they did that was through the figure of social integration. That was also the way in which the 13 women with an irregular situation were planning to get their residence and work permit. The other three women that had regularised their status had done it through less common alternatives. Two of them had married a Spanish man, and one had applied to the figure of family integration.

Regarding the women that didn't go through a period of having an irregular status, two had entered the country for the continuation of their studies with a student visa, and later entered domestic work to sustain themselves. Lastly, one woman had been granted political asylum shortly after arriving to Spain. These administrative trajectories have an important impact on the capabilities of these women. They influence strategic life choices, such as the temporalities and directions of their migration journeys, as well as the livelihood and accommodation alternatives available to them in their host country.

5.1.3. Work in the domestic sector

Women that had migrated to Spain with the purpose of working made this decision aware that their livelihood opportunities would be narrowed by their migration status. However, their motivation to find a job and have better incomes outweighed these limitations, as Nancy, a FMDW from Nicaragua, expressed:

“I think that when you leave your country, you risk everything and you do whatever presents itself to you, and the idea is to get ahead... that is to say that you don't have a plan, here you don't come with the idea that you can choose what you want, because in the end you don't do what you want, but what you need to do”.

Moreover, most women I interviewed were aware that domestic work would be their main livelihood option, while several of them had travelled because they knew beforehand of a specific job opportunity within the sector. The path dependency created by the care, labour and migration regimes was clear for them as they embarked on their journeys: *“I was told that the only opportunity we migrant women had to work was as a domestic worker, so I came with that information”* (Janeth, from Ecuador).

As these women integrate to a segmented work sector, the jobs available to them tend to have certain adverse characteristics. They are necessarily in the informal economy for those without a residence and work permit, are usually in the *live-in* modality, have elderly people as the care-receivers, and pay wages well under the minimum wage. In this regard, Asmaa Hallaga highlighted how the migration normative plays a determinant role in these labour paths and limits migrants' capabilities: *“we are allowing slavery, because you have to be working until you get three years in Spain (...) the law is allowing the vulnerability of these women, it's allowing the informal economy”* (personal interview, 2023).

Furthermore, the persistence of the traditional familial care regime in Andalusia can be seen in the preference of most employers for a live-in employee, who integrates as intensely as possible in the performance of the social reproduction activities within the household. Likewise, the informality and low social and legal recognition are persistent in this labour sector, which translates into the often-harsh conditions of the jobs they get offered. Thus, migrant women without a residence and/or work permit have little negotiation power and choice not only in their integration to the Spanish labour market in general, but also within the domestic work sector.

There is one point that should be noted to nuance the power of these structural factors on the migration and labour paths of these women. Even when their employment opportunities are highly limited, these

women enact their agency by choosing domestic work over other activities they deem unacceptable. Namely, performing sex work. Among the interviewees, several women recounted being in the search for a job as a domestic worker upon arrival in Spain, and encountering propositions from potential employers that involved the performance of sexual activities. In the case of Debany, she recounts how she migrated to the country to stay with some relatives that had offered her help to find a job as a domestic worker. Soon after her arrival, she found out that they were putting Latin American women into prostitution and offered her the same, to which she refused. In these cases, a sense of dignity drives these women to look for jobs with conditions they are willing to accept, even in the face of urgent financial needs.

An important element that is often overlooked in analyses about the experiences of FMDWs is that of their housing alternatives when arriving to a new host society. The only available option for live-in workers is to live in the same house as their employers. And for those working as externals, housing options are likewise limited in a way that can be an impediment to their wellbeing. Migrant women -and especially those without a residence and work permit- face many difficulties to find appropriate rooms or appartements because of high rent prices or reluctance by homeowners to rent to immigrants. Thus, the option they often find is to rent or sublet from other Latin American migrants, in appartements where up to 12 other people are living. In addition to cohabitation problems such as lack of privacy and unjust house rules, one important implication of these housing arrangements is the difficulty for registering in the municipality. For migrants, this is a recurring challenge that can further their social exclusion and be an obstacle for regularising their situation. As explained by Guillermo Bellouard, from the ODS, *“the truth is that at least here in Seville or in a large part of Andalusia, access to social and public services is saturated for everyone, for locals and foreigners alike (...) but this compulsory registration requirement for access to social services mainly excludes people who are in an irregular administrative situation”* (personal interview, 2023). Thus, the migration and labour regimes play a role in constraining the housing options for FMDWs, which in turn puts them in a position of high social vulnerability.

5.2 (Dis)empowering effects of labour migration

Working in the domestic sector is typically associated with a disempowered situation. However, to analyse the situation of the Latin American female domestic workers in Spain in a comprehensive manner, it's necessary to observe their personal stories in relation to their situation in their countries of origin. Labour migration is a strategy in itself through which Latin American women enact their agency with the intention of improving their personal situation. However, the outcomes of this strategy on FMDWs' empowerment

and capabilities are highly ambivalent. This is reflected on their accounts of simultaneous gain and loss of freedom to lead a life they value, as will be explored in this section.

5.2.1 Personal dimension

Some of the core values identified by Rowlands (1997) at the personal dimension are self-confidence, self-esteem, a sense of agency, and a sense of “self” in a wider context. Especially among the women that had recently arrived in Spain, a change in their self-perception was mentioned as a result of their migration. Being in a new country allowed them to experience a process of self-discovery, and gain awareness of their resilience and abilities as well as the things they would like to improve about themselves. Seeing themselves as capable of living abroad, working towards the fulfilment of their objectives, and overcoming many difficulties in their workplace drove them through a process of assertion of their inner-strength and self-efficacy. They expressed how moving had made them realize all they are capable of:

“Necessity makes you learn many things and realize that you are capable of doing many things that you thought you couldn't do” (Luz, from Nicaragua)

“So, I don't think I would have ever imagined that I was such a warrior, like if I had to do it, I don't know, but I think that the same circumstance kind of puts you in situations in which you bring out all your power... (...) in the face of adversity, sometimes that's when people bring out all they have” (Carmen, from Colombia)

In this regard, some of the participants that identified a positive impact of their migration project on their self-perception, used the term empowerment as a process on the intra-personal level, or as development of their *power within* (Rowlands, 1997; Kabeer, 1999).

“Yes, I definitely feel this way, I feel strong, I feel empowered in the sense that I don't depend on anyone, I don't expect anything from anyone, you know? Today I don't expect anything from anyone.” (Brenda, Colombia)

“I feel empowered (...) More confidence in myself, yes, I feel like a woman of impact (...) a more “warrior” woman” (Sylvia, from Colombia)

However, in many cases this sense of inner strength arose from adverse situations that women faced in their workplaces or as a consequence of having an irregular migration status. As abovementioned, upon arrival in Spain, Latin American women are faced with very limited employment and housing options. For most women, and especially for those that had worked as a live-in worker, entering domestic work

represented an experience filled with abuse, discrimination, and precarious conditions. Even those who had found decent conditions and a good relationship with their employers, referred to being a live-in worker as an extremely constraining situation due to excessively long working hours and little free time, isolation, lack of privacy, and a low wage in relation to the workload.

These working conditions have an important psychological impact on FMDWs. Many recounted how the first months or years of being in this sector had affected their mental and physical health. Live-in workers mentioned frequently having difficulties for sleeping because of caring for elderly people with high levels of dependency, which caused exhaustion and a deteriorated state of mind. Regarding mental health conditions, 10 out of the 25 interviewed women mentioned they'd developed some level of work-induced stress, and 4 referred falling into depression. Although other personal circumstances could be involved, the harsh working conditions they experienced were the main catalyst for this. Accordingly, one claim made by domestic workers' collectives during the Care and Citizenship Andalusian Forum, held on February 17th and 18th, was a stronger regularization of the Labour Risks of domestic workers and a recognition of the diseases to which women are prone in this sector.

Along with the potential development of these mental health conditions, entering domestic work and having an irregular status can have a wider psychological disempowerment effect. For women with university degrees and diverse work experience, entering domestic work implies a process of occupational downgrading that often affects their self-perception and confidence. As mentioned by Debany, who in Ecuador worked as a teacher: *"In the beginning, when I came here, it affected me a lot, because I came with a background and seeing myself here as a maid, it affected me psychologically a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot... I was working... And the change was brutal, brutal."*

Furthermore, the fear attached to having an irregular status is a crucial element of the psychological disempowering experience of recently arrived migrants. Fear freezes action (Narayan, 2005), and can prevent women from defending themselves from the abuse they experience in their workplaces or households. Moreover, it can even limit their presence in public spaces. Susana, a FMDW from Colombia, told of her experience after getting an expulsion order *"I didn't go anywhere because I didn't have papers and I was already illegal. I couldn't go out anywhere, I was scared to death that they were going to deport us..."*. This way, fear acts as a deterrent for them to claim their rights as workers and migrants, denounce any kind of abuse, and even reach out to an association to receive legal orientation.

Thus, there is a latent ambivalence in the psychological effect of integrating to a new society and to the domestic and care work sector. The conditions in which these women arrive to Andalusia are constraining

and, in most cases, impose a detriment on their psychosocial wellbeing. However, over time, the individual resources and relations that each woman has become key aspects for them to gradually go through a process of personal empowerment. In this process, their resilience and inner strength are evident, as Asmaa Hallaga points out:

“They are women with a lot of strength, despite everything they may bring, all the baggage of suffering, of migratory grief, of the loneliness they suffer here, of all the emotional burden they have, they are women who try to get ahead, you know, that, let's say, they face life as it comes, it's true, it often costs them their health and their well-being, whatever you want, but they don't give up, they are women who don't give up” (personal interview, 2023)

5.2.2 Relational dimension

Analysing the sense of relational (dis)empowerment that FMDWs experience is important to understand both their motivations for migrating, and how social relationships encourage or hinder their capabilities. To discuss the former, it's necessary to acknowledge the diversity of motivations behind their migration projects. But while this can be seen on an individual-to-individual level, women from different regions present certain common motivations and forms in which they migrate. For Latin American women, two major factors that are found in most cases as drivers of their migration, are the adverse economic situation and the multi-level violence they experience in their home countries.

Among the interviewees, two women migrated to Spain to continue their education, three mentioned wanting to discover themselves and have new experiences, and three others to leave behind abusive relationships, although these motivations were usually complemented with an economic one. Thus, the reason for migrating that was most referred-to by the participants of this research was to have better opportunities for them and their families, with a predominant economic reasoning behind it. Accordingly, a higher income and the possibility to send remittances were the aspects that FMWDs most repeatedly alluded as a positive result of their labour migration. An increased income is thus the main resource for them to achieve the personal goals, or functionings, they'd set for their migration project. These were usually contributing to a better quality of life for their children, paying off debts, having savings, or fulfilling personal aspirations such as travelling and gaining new experiences. Additionally, this increased economic capacity in turn contributed in some cases to increased self-confidence and self-esteem, which evidences how the different dimensions of empowerment are inter-related.

In this sense, a higher income was the most evident individual asset that FMDWs gained from their labour migration. But, as important as this is for the achievement of their personal goals, it does not necessarily correlate to an empowerment at the inter-personal level. In most cases, having a higher income was not a sign of greater autonomy or control over their income vis-à-vis their partners, as many were single mothers or financially independent women in their countries of origin. For them, labour migration was rather a strategy to have more economic resources to achieve their goals or cover their basic needs. Moreover, this economic improvement came at the expense of working in a sector in which a highly unbalanced power relation with their employers makes them especially vulnerable to abuses and harsh work conditions.

This is not to imply that some FMDWs don't experience the gain of control over certain inter-personal circumstances as a result of their migration. For some of the participants in this research, migrating to Spain was an effective way to put an end to an abusive relationship or overburdening family obligations. This didn't happen as a result of their economic empowerment or increased financial independence, but rather as a result of physically moving away from these relationships. In this sense, geographical distance and the new socio-institutional context were the main factors enabling this change. Thus, for women leaving abusive relationships, being in Spain meant not only being far from their former partners, but also benefiting from a society in which they found more referents of gender equality and a more efficient judicial system. This aspect was particularly important in the case of Debany, who escaped an abusive marriage by migrating, but later reunited with her husband in Spain. She recounted how her relationship had changed to a great extent because of the new environment they were in:

"my husband changed because there, the men there, they have a macho mind, so, and that's why it's not easy to change them there, being there, because they feel on their own turf. So, when he comes here, he realises, and I tell him that life is different, that it is not the life, that we are no longer in Ecuador. I make him understand that here I have the same rights as he has"

Perceiving the Spanish society as far less permissive towards domestic violence, and with a lower culture of *machismo* than their hometown, she had the opportunity to renegotiate the dynamics of her marriage. In a similar sense, Montserrat noted how working as a domestic worker in Seville had led to a change in her attitudes towards equality in romantic relationships:

"Well, here, the places I've been, in the houses, I've met some couples who are both there for one thing, for another thing... in the case of the daughter of the woman in the first job, they were both

there, one preparing breakfast, the other showering the children, and so on, they shared the tasks, and I say, Why do I have to be doing all the work by myself?"

In this case, being so integrated to a family's dynamics, within the private space of their household, made her question her own experiences and eventually put an end to the abuse that had always been present in her relationships.

With regard to the structural violence prevalent in many Latin American societies, a positive effect that FMDWs described gaining from their migration was greater security for themselves and their children. Higher levels of security contribute to empowerment because crime and violence affect especially vulnerable populations through their impact on individual, household and community capabilities, assets, and institutions (Moser, 2005). This way, they benefited from their new societies by gaining mobility freedom and access to a more efficient justice system. This was especially the case of women that weren't limited by the fear of having an irregular migration status.

Lastly, migrating was also seen for some women as a way for self-discovery and autonomy outside of their role as mothers or daughters. Women that described their migration projects mainly as an opportunity to travel, have new experiences, and embark on self-discovery journeys, were those whose children were already grown up and financially independent from them. In the case of Petra, she also referred to how distancing from her parents, brothers, children, and grandchildren, had been an opportunity to free herself from the high dependency they had on her. For some of the younger women without children, being apart from their family was a way to be independent and explore their identities outside their parents' home.

5.2.3 Collective dimension

This research didn't aim to look at the empowerment process of a given group or association, so it's not possible to study the impact of labour migration at the collective dimension. However, it is important to note that it was precisely the abovementioned disempowering experiences which led some FMDWs to engage in activism and organised forms of collective action for the first time in their lives, while being in Andalusia. The actions and strategies through which they enact their agency, as well as the possibilities for engaging in collective agency, will be further analysed in section 5.4.

5.3 Factors that encourage and inhibit empowerment

Following the model proposed by Rowlands (1997), this next section explores some of the main factors that can encourage or inhibit empowerment processes of FMDWs. These are the factors that play a role

in FMDWs' (dis)empowerment following the integration process to domestic work in Andalusia, described in the previous sections. While there are numerous factors that could be considered, this section focuses on the main ones at the sociocultural and individual levels.

5.3.1 Migration status

As mentioned by Kabeer, "choice necessarily implies the possibility of alternatives" (Kabeer, 1999, p. 437). For Latin American women in Andalusia, their migration status is the most important factor that determines their alternatives and, thus, constrains or enables their ability to exercise meaningful choice. Female migrants with an irregular status in Andalusia typically undergo a disempowering process in which their ability to make strategic life choices is diminished. This was a shared opinion among the interviewed FMDW:

"I tell you, here they see you as nothing, you are nobody, here an undocumented person is nobody, for them we are trash" (Katia, from Nicaragua)

"a decent job, let's say, a beautician, a hairdresser, you don't have a job, because if they have to show your face to the public, they won't give it to you without papers... without papers there is no paradise...." (Flavia, from Argentina, during the focus group discussion)

As already discussed, the main choice that's limited is their livelihood, since an irregular migration status forces them to get a job in determined labour niches, in informal arrangements. Related to this is the limitation of their housing alternatives, which makes them vulnerable to being excluded from social services. Moreover, a third strategic life choice that can be limited by an irregular migration status is that of whether and whom to marry. During a visit to Malaga, it was mentioned to me that some Spanish men were asking for a fixed amount of money in exchange for marriage to migrant women. For some women marrying this way can be an effective strategy to increase their alternatives in other dimensions of their life. However, when situations such as a latent risk of deportation, or encountering a lack of livelihood options, factor into the decision-making process, having an irregular migration status acts as a constraining factor limiting their alternatives. In the case of Susana, getting an expulsion order pushed her to expedite her marriage with a Spanish man she was seeing, showing how a migration status can directly influence strategic life choices.

5.3.2 Employment modality

In the case of live-in FMDWs, the negative aspects of their labour arrangement are numerous, with some of the most frequently mentioned being low wages, excessive workloads and working schedules, and isolation. Even though some FMDWs recounted some positive experiences and advantages of being a live-in worker, these were exceptional cases, and even then expressed a desire to leave this work modality as soon as they were able. The overall consensus was that this employment modality is highly constraining and demanding. As expressed by the women I interviewed:

“I’ll tell you something, it’s like a prison, it’s like being in jail” (Susana, from Colombia)

“The employer exploits the employee a lot, it’s 24 hours, I don’t have hours off, I have one hour off because I take it, I don’t have days off, no nothing” (Paulina, from Venezuela)

Being a live-in worker implies a limited control of one’s time. This directly affects other areas of FMDWs’ lives, such as their ability to have a social life, join an organisation, or attend to self-improvement activities. Consequently, being able to work as an external -part or full time- domestic worker is indeed a significant improvement in terms of time availability and autonomy. It increases FMDW’s capabilities as it gives them back the possibility to engage in activities for their self-improvement, personal interests, and overall wellbeing. However, it was found that issues such as low wages, high work instability, and abuses from the employers are still common occurrences in this work modality, and the risk of underemployment is higher. Experiences of psychological and physical abuse, as well as sexual harassment, were told by both live-in and external workers, although the most serious cases of sexual harassment had been experienced by the former.

Being an external domestic worker can be done directly for a family, or through a private agency, which are commonly subcontracted by the municipality for the realisation of care services encompassed in the Dependency Law. The professionalisation that comes with working for the Household Care Service (SAD, for the Spanish *Servicio de Ayuda a Domicilio*) has been pointed out as an effective way for the empowerment for domestic workers (Moré, 2018). Coincidentally with Moré’s study, the women I interviewed that had worked for the SAD recounted important advantages of this employment type, such as having a written contract, time schedules, a predetermined list of tasks, and an intermediary in case of conflict with the family. However, they pointed out to the abusive practices that some agencies implement regarding the distribution of the money they charge, which results in low wages for them.

5.3.3 Employers and societal values towards domestic work

As a sector characterised by informality, the labour conditions encountered by FMDWs are greatly dependent on their employers' will and needs. Again, coincidentally with Moré's analysis of the configuration of domestic work in Madrid, domestic work in Andalusia is characterised by conditions that are "the result of a personal and informal deal, which implies the need for permanent renegotiation and power relations between fragile parties" (Moré, 2018, p. 35). Employers depend greatly on domestic workers for the conciliation of their productive work and the care needs of their families, while them as employees need a job. This informal bargaining puts employees at a bigger disadvantage, although ultimately the factor defining a domestic worker's experience at a household is the employers' attitudes. Thus, some women recounted positive experiences working for families that valued domestic work and were sensitive towards their personal needs and interests. However, for most of them it had implied a situation of excessively demanding work, with no separation of work and life, and the expectation for them to be always available and flexible towards the employers' needs.

Besides the impact of this personal arrangement on the FMDWs labour conditions, timetables, and tasks, the employers' dispositions play a crucial role on their possibility to get the formal contract that is required for the residence permit application. This usually plays against the employees as it means they're somewhat tied to a family under the promise that they'll eventually give them a contract and help with the regularisation process. It can also represent a disadvantage for them because of the high instability at this sector. Catalina, from Nicaragua, told how she had lived in Seville for 5 years, but had not been able to obtain the residence permit because the last two elderly people for whom she'd worked had passed away while she was doing her regularisation process with them. Moreover, in her search for a new job, potential employers didn't accept her because they didn't want to employ her formally and pay for her social security. This way, the problem it's not only the dependence on the employer's attitudes, but that the possibility of regularisation itself is tied to having a labour contract.

Regarding how societal values towards domestic work had changed over time, the experts were rather cautious to express any optimism. According to Jacqueline Amaya, a sector of Andalusian society has become more aware of the claims and struggles of this sector, while migrants themselves have gradually gained awareness of the rights they're entitled to as workers. This has helped many domestic workers to access better conditions or at least be aware of the injustices they can be subjected to. However, she, as

well as the rest of the experts, recognized much work needs to be done to sensitize both the employers and the authorities to enforce the corresponding regulations.

5.3.4 Individual assets: skills, education, and financial resources

Each individual brings to the process of empowerment their previous experience and history (Rowlands, 1997). This process doesn't suddenly start at the moment of migration or when entering domestic work but is a part and consequence of their life experiences. In this sense, the individual assets and resources play a key role in FMDWs' capabilities and in the ways their experience after migration is (dis)empowering for them.

Education is widely recognized as a key driver of empowerment and of socio-economic progress for individuals and societies (Bhattacharjee & Goswami, 2020a). For migrants, however, the effectiveness of a higher education level as a catalyst for individual empowerment is conditioned by the institutions of their host country. FMDWs with university or professional training degrees obtained in their countries of origin often go through a process of occupational downgrading. This is due to the difficulties for the validation of their educational qualifications, which is regulated by the Spanish Education Ministry. Although this process can vary according to bilateral agreements, it's usually a long and costly process for Latin American migrants, and especially difficult for FMDWs: *"Yes, it's very complicated, you have to go back to school, it's always the lack of time, as a domestic worker it's impossible"* (Janeth, from Ecuador). Due to the urgency of obtaining an income, FMDWs tend to postpone it until they're well settled in the country, and in the meantime prioritise other kind of trainings. Of the women I interviewed, none had done the validation process, although some were planning to eventually do it.

Thus, having this kind of asset doesn't necessarily imply an increase in the alternatives for migrant women in Andalusia, and can even have a psychological disempowering effect. Rather, other kind of formative assets can increase the capabilities of recently arrived FMDWs. As noted by Dr. Pilar Cruz Zúñiga, previous work experiences, abilities, and their own personality can influence the labour trajectories of these women: *"and there are also some profiles of people that have a lot of agency, with a lot of initiative, so they are also the ones who then look for other employment options"* (personal interview, 2023). This was the case of Sylvia, who had been a business owner for many years. In Andalusia, she had started to make micro loans to other migrant women with the money she was making as a domestic worker, and had already started researching how to set up a business like the one she had in Colombia. It was also the case of Carpintera, who had abundant experience in artistic projects and had been able to maintain a small income from them while being a domestic worker in Seville. This way, although the livelihood alternatives

for migrant women remain limited to domestic work during their first years in Spain, the knowledge that each of them has can open up other possibilities for them while they work in this sector.

Regarding financial resources, although most FMDWs mentioned an economic motivation as part of their decision to move to Spain, there was diversity within this motivation. Women without urgent financial obligations seemed to have a greater sense of agency over their migration projects. Not having the obligation to work to cover the needs of their dependent family members, along with being free of debts, gave them an increased feeling of control over their finances, as well as flexibility towards the duration of their stay abroad.

5.3.5 Social relations and networks

The importance of establishing social networks is clearly identified by FMDWs for the increase of the alternatives available to them. For the first phase of their migration journey, social networks are key as women get settled in a new country. Having supportive social connections in the country where they're arriving to is essential for providing information and reducing the uncertainties of the displacement, finding accommodation and employment opportunities, and even providing financial and emotional support (del Rey, 2019). This was clearly seen in the case of Petra, who described how her cousin had been a major factor for having a somewhat positive experience in Seville: *"she was going to be my support here, the one who was going to teach me, who was going to give me the guidelines to follow, to orient me, and she did, until I was able to take the lead and take flight"*. Importantly, her cousin had been an active member of the ADWS for many years. She guided her to a job as an external worker shortly after her arrival, an opportunity rarely available as a first job for migrant women in Spain (del Rey, 2019). However, this is not always the case, as can be seen in the case of Debany (section 5.1.3). Thus, the kind of support networks they have in the country is also a defining aspect influencing their opportunities and experiences upon arrival.

As they get established in their host society, FMDWs expand their networks at varying degrees. While the lack of free time can prevent them to fully engage in social life, the belonging to informal networks of migrants was mentioned in most of the interviews. However, the experience of migrant domestic workers in small Andalusian villages can be especially isolating. In this regard, access to technology and social media acted as an important mean to maintain and increase their social networks. Belonging to these migrants' networks enables them to find out about labour opportunities and housing options. Moreover, it gives them access to valuable information about their labour and immigration rights, increasing their critical consciousness. Additionally, it plays an important role on the psychological wellbeing of FMDWs

as they frequently mentioned hanging out and talking to friends as their main way to cope with the harsh situations they were going through.

5.3.6 Non-government local stakeholders

Non-government organisations proved to be highly important encouraging personal and inter-personal empowerment processes through a variety of services. The ADWS is the only grassroots collective of domestic workers in the city, although several other organisations working for migrants offer diverse services for them. The situation is similar in the capital cities of other Andalusian provinces, such as Huelva and Granada, where although there are several organisations supporting migrants, only a few collectives work specifically for the advancement domestic workers' rights. With the notable exception of the Association of Caregivers without documents, both grassroots and migrants' organisations are usually in the capital cities of each province. This furthers the isolation and vulnerability of FMDWs working in small villages.

The work of these organisations is a key contribution for FMDWs' wellbeing and empowerment. From psychological assistance, legal orientation, job placement services, and programs for professional development, FMDWs recounted how assisting to these associations benefited them in numerous ways. These organisations' programs are mostly focused on giving resources for female migrants' wellbeing as domestic workers, by providing services such as legal orientation and employment mediation. These services help FMDWs to develop their understanding of the injustices they can encounter and the alternatives available to them. Furthermore, they all recognize the importance of giving migrant women the tools and encouragement so they can develop the multiple skills and interests they already have.

Additionally, they can play an important role in detonating processes of collective empowerment for FMDWs. This, by promoting a sense of community and mutual support at the same time they advocate for domestic workers' legal and social recognition. As Debany, who is a member of the ADWS, expressed: *"All of this helped me, to give me the strength to... I felt more supported by this group of this association, because they gave us the courage to say that we have to fight and we must not allow ourselves to be mistreated, and that we have to seek our rights"*. However, it is important to note that access to associations and collectives is highly limited to FMDWs, mainly because of their lack of free time.

5.3.7 Time spent in the country

The Immigration Law in Spain contemplates a three-year period of irregularity before being able to apply for a residence permit. This, added to the fact that its renewal is conditioned to having a formal labour

contract, causes that FMDWs undergo years of psychological constraint, fear, and a feeling of uncertainty towards their stay in Spain. As time passes and women obtain a residence permit or the Spanish citizenship, these feelings of constraint and fear may gradually subside, as they see themselves having the same rights as any other Spaniard. Different job options can become available to them, both within the domestic labour and in other sectors. They also obtain the possibility to travel to their country of origin to visit their family, as well as bringing their family members to live with them under better conditions.

Although it would be impossible to assume a linear relation between the passage of time and empowerment processes for FMDWs, this temporal aspect of the Spanish Immigration Law typically acts as an inhibiting factor for women during their first years in Spain. But time spent in the country allows for changes beyond the migration status. As women get settled in their host societies, they are able to form support networks, learn about their rights, and gain their employers' trust. What's more, it allows them to overcome the initial emotional shock that becoming a domestic worker often entails, and to realise they deserve a dignified treatment in and outside the workplace. As mentioned in section 5.2.1, a psychological empowerment can be seen in these women after months or even years of enduring difficulties. Thus, although it can be a slow process, migrant women gain a greater sense of agency and confidence in the environment in which they live:

“At the beginning, my first job didn't go so well, but yes, God has given me strength and I have found a part of myself, that I am strong, because you see, being far from my country, that's something very difficult, because you say, “what am I doing so far away if this isn't my country?” And things like that, but even so I say, I consider myself very strong, very determined, and nothing like, as I said, like when I arrived here compared to who I am now” (Catalina, from Nicaragua)

Hence, time spent in the country can be a factor that encourages psychological and inter-personal empowerment, especially if combined with the appearance of enabling factors such as supportive social relations or an association. However, it can also be the mere awareness of FMDWs of having spent too much time in an unjust situation, which can motivate them to change their circumstances:

“I realized (...) I was kind of conformist, the truth is that I had been satisfied with what I had, with so much stress and that I didn't look beyond my expectations, so I was kind of conformist, in my comfort zone and I didn't want to move from there, but circumstances sometimes force you to react and well, that was it” (Luz, from Nicaragua)

5.4 Actions and Strategies

This final section of findings analyses some of the strategies that Latin American FMDWs use to exercise their agency and further their empowerment processes in Andalusia. These are conditioned by the abovementioned factors, as they determine the possibilities and priorities that each woman has. These actions emerge from the subjectivities of FMDWs, pursuing the different doings and beings that each of them value. Therefore, they are not to be generalized to all cases, but taken as a sample of the numerous ways in which FMDWs exercise their agency.

5.4.1 The possibilities and limitations of FMDWs' individual agency

This subsection parts from the acknowledgement that FMDWs' agency is highly restricted by their conditions as migrants and as domestic workers in Andalusia. Thus, it focuses on the ways in which FMDWs enact their agency to achieve a higher standard of living and overall personal wellbeing (Robeyns, 2005).

It's important to note that most FMDWs were aware of being in an unjust situation in their workplace and within the social hierarchies in Andalusia, thus identifying external factors such as the migration and care regime in Spain as the underlying structures limiting their actions. Even so, both consulted experts and FMDWs pointed out the necessity of spreading information and awareness about the rights and conditions that migrants are entitled to. This, especially for the recently arrived migrants without a support network. Juliana, who's been in Seville for over 30 years, mentioned how conditions for domestic workers are yet to improve not only by better regulations and more sensibilisation of the employers, but also by what migrant women themselves accept and demand: *"we domestic workers are still not 100% as we should be (...) because women still don't, they don't assert their rights, women say, "I'm fine with 600 euros", I tell them "are you? Cause fine, fine, you're not"*. For this matter, factors such as sensibilisation from associations, support from networks, and access to information, are essential for changing these women's perspectives.

However, in the recognition of situations of injustice or abuse, most FMDWs engage in a continuous search for a better situation. In the workplace, FMDWs constantly set boundaries with their employers when they're mistreated, assert their rights, and renegotiate their labour conditions. Although some external factors can influence these actions, most of the interviewed women stated that they defended themselves from abuse and harsh conditions based on an inner sense of justice and dignity. This is what led Paulina to put an end to the mistreatment she was receiving from her employer: *"the first 3 months she made me cry a lot, until one day I said no more, I confronted her and "no more, you're not going to*

humiliate me anymore nor trample on me anymore... you may have money and I don't, but that doesn't mean that I don't deserve respect like any other human being". Moreover, and aware of the unequal power relations with their employers and the low probabilities of changing their attitudes, they engage in a continuous search for jobs with better conditions. This is both encouraged by the informality of the sector and inhibited by their need to maintain an income and remain with a family until finishing their regularization process.

In this search for a better employment situation, leaving their jobs as live-in workers is one of the major goals for FMDW. It is perceived by them as an important step to regain control over their time and living situation. Thus, some of the actions taken by the FMDWs in order to stop being live-in workers were exclusively accepting jobs as external domestic workers, getting jobs in other sectors, or stop working altogether in order to pursue other kind of projects. One outstanding case of this was that of Laura. She'd been working in Andalusia as a domestic worker for almost 7 years and had recently decided to leave the sector. At the time of our interview, she was unemployed, but framed leaving the domestic work sector as an act of individual agency: *"for me it's rebellion and resistance, it's a rebellion, because right now I am surviving on my savings, from all these years ago, and I call it rebellion... It's me saying "I am not going to accept what this system is imposing, of always going back to the care sector"*". Nonetheless, being able to do this transition is conditioned by several factors, such as urgent financial needs, having an irregular migration status, or being in a disempowered psychological state due to the same work and living situation. More common cases were those of the two women I interviewed that had been able to shift the sector of hospitality, in low-skilled positions.

Lastly, a strategy that many Latin American FMDWs implemented with the intention of increasing their capabilities was attending to activities for their self-improvement. Within the domestic and care work sector, completing professional training to be a certified geriatric assistant is one of the most pursued ways to validate their competencies and increase their employment opportunities. While some women had taken this certification mainly to gain abilities and provide better care for the older adults they worked with, this was also pointed out as a way to access jobs with a higher level of professionalisation, in private agencies or within the dependency assistance public services. Women also showed interest in continuing their formation outside the care sector and engaged in varied activities such as English lessons and courses for strengthening their professional competencies. Although none of the interviewed FMDWs had been able to validate their university degree, several of them planned to continue their education by

completing graduate and post-graduate degrees in diverse areas, such as psychology, law, and social services.

5.4.2 Collective agency and commitments

This research didn't aim to look at the empowerment process of a given group or association, but looked at how individual women engaged in activities that had an impact beyond themselves. Thus, this subsection explores the ways in which FMDWs act according to their commitments. That is, the actions they implement that are not beneficial to themselves as agents (Robeyns, 2005).

FMDWs implemented a variety of actions with the goal of benefiting other women, which were more or less collectively organised according to their possibilities. In the less organised side of this spectrum, many of the interviewed women mentioned disseminating information about labour and immigration rights, done mainly through social media and informal meetings. In the case of Brenda, she told how since arriving in Andalusia she had set up a WhatsApp business account through which she helped migrant women to find work in decent conditions, as an informal job placement agency. Similarly, in a visit to a small town in Malaga I met Sarahí, who recounted how she managed a group chat in which she shared information about rights, as well as employment and living opportunities, to more than 600 participants. For these women actions such as multiplying information, giving out loans, and even offering temporal accommodation to other migrants, were acts they framed as altruism, and reflected their personal commitments.

Another strategy mentioned in interviews was starting groups where migrant women could share their skills with other women, with the intention of empowering themselves and each other. An example of this was mentioned by Carpintera, who was planning to start a community project in which she could teach other migrant women the painting techniques she knew and eventually help them to make a profit out of it, while they could teach the others the skills they each had.

Most women that had joined associations working for domestic workers or migrants' rights had initially approached them looking for help regarding a personal situation. As mentioned by the experts of several associations, the first contact that FMDWs have with them is usually because of problems regarding labour, such as not finding a job or having a conflict with their employees. A secondary reason is looking for legal orientation regarding the regularisation process. Once the contact with the association is established, they become aware of the multiple benefits that belonging to this kind of networks can imply for themselves and for others. In this process, a strong commitment to help other women that could have similar problems is developed. However, it's only a few women that have the possibility to join an

association regularly, as most are limited by their work schedules and lack of free time. For those in smaller towns without any associative network, this is almost impossible.

For women with the possibility to be more involved with associations, this could eventually lead them to develop a new dimension of their lives as activists. In the abovementioned case of Laura, her newfound freedom had led her to get involved in projects with different associations and was even starting to be a speaker in talks and workshops. Although most women don't have the possibility to leave the domestic work, let alone stop working, women with a strong sense of commitment made a significant effort to balance their work with their activism. This could be seen in the case of Flavia, who'd collaborated in a union in Barcelona and since moving to Andalusia had set up her own association, all while being a domestic worker. On the importance of the different profiles that FMDW present, Dra. Pilar Cruz commented on these women *"what I do see, especially in the case of women who are in associations (...) I see women who make the time, they are super busy, but they take the time, they make the time for it"*. Thus, they assist meetings, events, and public demonstrations. This, even if enacting their agency through activism means a decrease in their achieved wellbeing (Aceros et al., 2021).

Chapter 6. Discussion

6.1 Structures of constraint: global forces and interlocking regimes

Empowerment processes are, by definition, experienced by individuals or groups who have been in a disempowered position. As defined by Nancy Folbre (1994), the “structures of constraint” are the sets of unequally distributed assets, rules, norms, and preferences that empower -or disempower- given social groups based on intersecting identity factors such as race, nationality, gender, or class. The institutional arrangements of a society embody these structures and determine the position that different groups of people hold in its social hierarchies (Kabeer, 2020). Thus, structures of constraint play a determinant role on the disempowerment of groups such as FMDWs, as they “locate certain boundaries of choice” and limit their capacity to engage in purposive action (Folbre, 1994, p. 51). This way, their (dis)empowerment processes and agential capacity must be analysed in relation to the structures that shape them, which can be seen both at the transnational and the national level.

FMDWs’ migration project occurs in a context of global inequalities that are present in the motivations for them to leave their countries of origin. For Spanish women, literature has stressed their incorporation to the paid workforce since the 1980’s as the underlying reason behind the increasing demand of migrant domestic workers (Miret-Gamundi & Vidal-Coso, 2014). Accordingly, the domestic labour niche created by these socio-economic changes is identified as the main *pull* factor for Latin American female migration of the last three decades, which is accompanied by *push* factors such as poverty and systemic violence in their country of origin. As pointed out by Yeates (2005), these global structures of power and inequality shape the processes of socio-institutional organisation at the national level. This, in turn, gives way to a transnational political economy of care.

The experiences of FMDWs in their host societies are therefore framed by the national and local socio-institutional organisation of care, which interacts directly with the migration and labour regime. The temporal configuration of the migration regime facilitates that Latin American women enter the country and work in the informality for a period of at least three years. Thus, insertion of these women to the Spanish labour market is restricted to precarious and socially undervalued labour sectors. Women in this research found at their arrival in Spain that the only option they had -other than sexual work- was domestic and care work. More specifically, within the segmentation of this sector, they mostly found work as live-in workers caring for elderly people. This is consistent with the literature pointing at the existence of a labour niche with a composition largely determined by ethnicity and gender (ILO, 2013; Miret-

Gamundi & Vidal-Coso, 2014). Moreover, the conditions and different kinds of abuse they experienced in this sector reflect the low valuation this sector, and its workers, have in the Spanish social hierarchies, as has been extensively documented (ILO, 2013; Junta de Andalucía, 2022; Oxfam, 2021a).

Thus, it's not only the existence of a labour niche that influences the South-North female migration studied in this research. But it's the availability of the cheap labour provided by Latin American women that in turn impacts the way care is organised, financed, and regulated in Spain. This way, the institutional regimes reinforce each other as the fear and constraints associated with FMDWs' irregularity act as a barrier to women employed in this sector for fighting for better conditions. Moreover, care services remain insufficiently financed as its deficit is covered by migrant women who accept precarious jobs in exchange for the promise of eventual regularisation and a better quality of life.

6.2 Labour migration as a way towards empowerment?

Despite its relevance for explaining FMDWs' experiences, the abovementioned macro-structures tend to lack a deeper analysis of the agency and autonomy of Latin American women who engage in labour migration. Migration literature typically identifies mothers as being constrained in their mobility. However, all but three of the participants of this research were mothers at the time of their migration. Thus, these findings coincide with Bastia's (2011) observation that women's role as primary caregivers is rarely a constraint for their migration. Rather, it's precisely the desire to give their children a better quality of life the justification for their migration. Moreover, the migration of Latin American women, especially those with children, has been pointed out as a potential source of conflict with their partners or husbands (Oso, 2018), as it implies challenging their roles as mothers and wives. However, most of the participants were single mothers or had been the main providers for their children since before their migration. For those that were not mothers, they were single, financially independent, and didn't face any resistance from their parents to migrate.

As in Bastia's study of Bolivian women who had migrated to Spain (2011), autonomy is mostly a mean to an end, which is concerned with material achievements and upward social mobility. Moreover, this strategy of individual agency was enacted as an act of resistance towards their partners only by women who had been abused by them, which in this research was the case of 3 participants. In a similar sense, migrant women's economic empowerment is not associated to a higher decision-making power in their households, as portrayed by authors such as that of Bhattacharjee and Goswami (Bhattacharjee &

Goswami, 2020b) . Thus, their migration is not seen as a challenge to gender roles and social relationships, but as an independently made decision to seek for an improvement of their own -and their children's- wellbeing.

Labour migration is therefore an act of individual agency and demonstration of autonomy. However, its effects towards FMDW's empowerment are highly ambivalent. The most commonly studied aspect of empowerment is the economic dimension, including indicators such as income, ownership of assets and control over decision making (Narayan, 2005). In this matter, FMDWs effectively gained partial control over their lives as they acquired higher incomes and achieved the goals they'd set for their migration projects. Nonetheless, transferring Sen's argument about the economic prosperity of a society to an individual level (Sen, 1990), having higher incomes should not be automatically assumed to enrich the life of a person. Economic empowerment is only a mean to an end. And while it may allow FMDWs to cover certain needs and significant life projects, it should also be analysed in relation to their broader human capabilities and wellbeing. As seen in this research, these economic gains came at the expense of significant constraints in their host societies.

6.3 Labour trajectories and attainment of freedoms

As Latin American women enter domestic work in Spain, there are two major implications on their empowerment and capabilities. First, their achieved wellbeing is typically diminished by the conditions of the sector, especially for those in the live-in modality. Most migrant women are aware that their livelihood options in Spain will be restricted to domestic work. And while this implies a decrease in their ability to make choices regarding their livelihood, they take on jobs in that sector because of the wider opportunities this decision implies. Moreover, the major constraint on their wellbeing is in many cases not the nature and activities of domestic work itself, but the precarity and harsh conditions they experience in it because of their irregular migration status. A study by Kabeer et al. (Kabeer, et al., 2013) found that the characteristics of economic activity performed determines the extent of empowerment, as formal waged employment had the biggest impact enabling this process. Thus, the underlying factor constraining FMDWs empowerment is found in the intersection of this labour sector with the implications of the migration regime, which forces them into jobs in the informality.

A second implication of entering this sector is that, later on, their livelihood options remain limited. The trajectories of this research participants showed how, as FMDWs specialise and professionalise in this sector, the possibilities of leaving it reduce over time. The results were thus in line with the study of Miret-

Gamundi & Vidal-Coso (2014), in which the upward mobility for migrant women in Spain was identified as a weak trend and occurring mainly from domestic work to other elementary occupations within the secondary segment. This way, the kind of jobs they can access will likely continue to present harsh conditions. That's not to say this labour mobility doesn't imply some improvements regarding time availability, perceived income, and labour and social protection. Rather, the intention is to emphasise the precarity in low-skilled jobs in Andalusia, and how the migrant condition and having been a domestic worker affects Latin American women even beyond this sector.

Regarding the factors affecting their labour trajectories, it was found that these evolved over time. As found by del Rey et al. (2019), a typical trajectory in domestic service begins with live-in work, then becoming external, and only for some, eventually leaving to other sectors of activity. These authors, as well as Miret-Gamundi & Vidal-Coso (2014), identified several factors that can enable a migrant woman to leave domestic work, being the main ones their familial situation, time spent in the country, and human capital. While the former two factors were indeed decisive in the trajectories of this research participants, the importance of human capital - understood as previously obtained education degrees- was found to be relative. While education can be an enabling factor for women to diversify their labour trajectories, factors such as past working experience, informal business skills, and personality profile can be just as decisive factors. This is because the Spanish labour market, and the educational system, act in tandem with the migration regime constraining the possibility of migrants to shift to other labour sectors and have upward mobility processes.

Furthermore, some women in this research that were well established in Spain referred having their freedom increased only partially as a result of their migration. The underlying reason limiting their freedom was the economic and political situation in their home countries, which denied them the possibility of returning or even staying there in the first place, as they desired. Thus, the gains from their labour migration are in cases traded off for a lower life satisfaction (Mara & Landesmann, 2013). As argued by Bartram (2010), happiness and wellbeing are in many cases not achieved by labour migrants as a result of their increased incomes, which doesn't mean that they shouldn't have the possibility to pursue these goals in their host societies. In this sense, it is not only global inequalities limiting their alternatives, but more importantly, the institutional context in receiving countries that effectively harms immigrants' capabilities.

6.4 Agency and capabilities of FMDWs in Andalusia

This research studied the multiple ways in which FMDWs enact their agency, and how these actions and strategies can impact their empowerment process. The focus was placed in the transformative potential of individual agency, as forms of organised collective action have been extensively studied and there is a consensus in literature about its transformative capacity. As stated by Kabeer, this is because individual agency, as much as it's strategically deployed, rarely destabilizes wider structural inequalities (Kabeer, 2020). Thus, collective strategies are the best studied ways in which FMDWs exercise their agency, with grassroots organisations, unions, and associations as the subject of such research.

Focusing on individual agency, its transformative potential is observed mostly in FMDWs lives at the personal and inter-personal level. Therefore, the impact is over their wellbeing and capabilities at the individual level. Following Carswell and De Neve (2013), it's possible to affirm that is through individual, everyday, and low-key forms of micro-agency that domestic workers can improve aspects of their personal situation. This way, this research found that labour's multiple and everyday of forms of agency can have transformative effects on domestic worker's social relations, livelihoods, and human capabilities. For this, it is essential to part from the consideration that, even though most FMDWs had migrated for economic reasons, the ways in which they did it differed according to their personal circumstances and resources. Additionally, other equally important motivations were found in several cases. As such, migrating is already an act of labour agency by which some Latin American women improve their situation within the limited options available to them. For women that were escaping abusive romantic relationships or overburdening family obligations, this action was a way to put an end to practices of gender-based violence and inequality. And for most women, it was a way to transform the available opportunities for their children in the long term, by allowing them to continue their education or by relocating them to a place with better opportunities for their future. Concerning their livelihoods, the most visible transformative effect of their labour migration was the increased earnings in relation to what they perceived in their home countries. For many of them, this had proven an effective strategy to make money rapidly and cover their most urgent needs, or to have overall higher material attainment. Nonetheless, and in contrast with Carswell and De Neve's findings (2013), the improvement in social and economic independence often implied a diminished sense of dignity and control over their own lives for FMDWs, especially during their first years in Andalusia.

As time passes and FMDWs get settled, they implement diverse actions to improve their working and living situation and pursue their self-improvement. Following Katz (2004), these agency strategies have

varying degrees of consciousness and transformative effects. Labour migration and entering domestic labour can be seen as just an act of *resilience* and a strategy for Latin American women to just get by or, at most, achieve upward mobility. However, the constant negotiations of these women with their employers, their efforts for an upward and diversified labour trajectory, and the self-improvement actions they take, are all strategies to alter, or *rework*, the conditions of their lives. Lastly, *resistance* was found in all those acts that stemmed from a critical consciousness and were aimed to confront injustices and oppression. These include acts of individual agency, such as multiplying information about labour and migrants' rights, and collective agency, such as public demonstrations and advocacy by domestic workers collectives.

This research findings are in line with those of Bastia (2011), who argues that migrant women's agency, and the control they have over their own lives, is strongly limited by the context in which it is exercised. For Latin American FMDWs in Andalusia, the institutional and social context in which they enact their agency represents the main constraint for its impact. Thus, most agency actions implemented by FMDWs are strategies that allow them to get by and cover their basic needs for them and their families. Even though they can eventually improve certain aspects of their lives, these strategies imply temporarily negotiating lower levels of autonomy and wellbeing because of the living and working situation they have in Andalusia. Moreover, these actions don't have an impact beyond their personal situation, thus not having transformative effects in societal matters such as gender equality or the configuration of the domestic labour sector in Andalusia.

According to Carswell and De Neve, micro-agency strategies of workers have the potential to "shape local developments of global capitalism" (2013, p.62), which can be translated into the local developments of the transnational political economy of care. In this research, it was found that it is only through acts of resistance that the local context is transformed. These acts are most often implemented individually and in an unorganized manner, given the limited free time most FMDWs have. However, these demonstrations of individual agency have a transformational effect over the critical consciousness and self-perceptions of FMDWs, as well as over the societal values towards domestic workers in Andalusia. Lastly, and although they're only performed by a minority of FMDWs, collective acts of resistance proved to have an unquestionable transformative effect over the local context. These acts not only empowered them personally, but also other migrant women and FMDWs as a collective. The most visible proof of this was the recent ratification of the 189 ILO Convention, which will increase the rights and capabilities of both migrant and Spanish domestic workers.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

This research has sought to understand how the (dis)empowerment processes experienced by Latin American FMDWs in Andalusia shape their capabilities. For this, the research set out to identify the predominant factors influencing these processes, as well as the multiplicity of ways in which they enacted their agency to increase their capabilities. The ambivalent implications of these women's labour migration were explored in depth through interviews, a focus group and participant observation. These methods allowed to present a nuanced portrayal of their experiences, showing how empowerment is a multifaceted and non-linear process. The capability approach served to look at an individual's wellbeing in relation to what they value and need, as well as the freedoms to achieving these goals according to their personal resources and circumstances. Moreover, this approach allowed to understand their experiences as (dis)empowerment processes and acts of purposive agency. The changes of circumstances due to their labour migration, as well as by their own agential strategies, showed an ambivalent and continuous process of transformation in their ability to make choices and living a life they value. This conceptualisation of empowerment allowed to identify the limited existing alternatives for FMDWs due to their position in socio-institutional structures, as well as the choices and actions they make withing these possibilities. Thus, the analysis emphasised the inevitable interaction of agency and power structures (Kabeer, 1999).

First, the research explored the role of the Spanish migration, labour, and care regimes in the disempowerment processes of FMDWs. These regimes were identified mainly as interlocking structures of constraint that limit FMDWs capabilities. In this regard, one outstanding finding of the research is the primacy of the migration regime as the main constraint for FMDWs to fulfil their projects, even beyond powerful macrostructures such as gender and the sexual division of labour. Although indeed being a women determined their insertion into domestic work, the biggest constraint they identified were the obstacles for migrants in general to find dignified employment and housing. This highlights the pertinency to re-evaluate the migration normative and its current deterrent objective towards "low-skilled" migrants. Nonetheless, this research also confirmed that the conditions in the domestic work sector in Andalusia are still highly precarious, especially for those working in the informality. Thus, it's necessary to continue working not only on the advancement of their labour rights, but also on the effective enforcement of those that are already recognised. Moreover, it was found that although working as a live-in can be an effective strategy for saving money and fulfilling financial needs, the characteristics of this modality are incompatible with a holistic empowerment process. The reliance of the care regime on this kind of

employment is thus an obstacle to the wellbeing of all domestic workers in Spain, but specially for migrants.

Thus, the ways in which labour migration can be (dis)empowering for this population vary from case to case, although some general tendencies can be identified. Labour migration allows most FMDWs to obtain higher incomes, which can eventually lead them to material achievements and upward social mobility. While this financial empowerment increases material wellbeing for them and their families, their social relationships and freedoms are mostly affected negatively. This is seen especially in regard to employers' attitudes, although the distancing from their children and families can also be a bearing over their wellbeing. However, for women escaping abusive relationships in Latin America, the change of social and geographical setting can be highly empowering. As abovementioned, the implications of an irregular migration status and the conditions persistent in domestic work represent predominant disempowering aspects of their experiences, especially at the beginning of their migration journeys.

Regarding the sociocultural factors and individual resources that are relevant to empowerment, it was found that these are not fixed and applicable to all cases, as they evolve with time and can vary greatly for each person. For most women, not having control over their own time represents a crucial disempowering factor. This is especially true for live-in workers, although it can also be the case for external workers with excessive schedules. Thus, the employment modality, as well as the employer's attitudes, were factors that determined the experiences of FMDWs within the workplace. Moreover, as much as there were some positive experiences with respectful and enabling employers, this didn't compensate for the disempowering implications of the live-in modality.

Overall, the time they spend in the country is an underlying enabling factor for broadening their capabilities. This does not mean that women will necessarily fulfil all their projects and desired functionings over time. Aspects that can evolve over time, such as their family situations or their desire to return to their countries of origin, may be impediments to their wellbeing and life satisfaction. However, overall time contributes to their empowerment as it allows them to go through processes such as regularising their migration status, building social networks, and expanding their livelihood opportunities and freedoms. Moreover, it can allow them to emerge from the initial state of psychological disempowerment and fear that many have upon arrival in the country. In this regard, the presence of informal migrant networks and associations is an important factor for FMDWs' empowerment. As identified in the study by Duque et al. (2022), these social relationships prompt the development of a critical consciousness and a collective identity. However, this research results contrast that study's by

highlight that this consciousness is present in many cases since FMDWs enter domestic work. Moreover, it can also be developed through the daily experience of oppression, without necessarily leading to the involvement with an organisation.

Lastly, this research looked at the ways in which FMDWs enacted their individual agency with the aim to analyse the transformative potential of these actions and strategies. It was established that their migration journeys occur in a context of need due to global inequalities and hardship due to constraining socio-institutional regimes in their host country, which strongly determine their labour and life trajectories. However, FMDWs are women with overall high levels of agency, autonomy, and awareness of the constraining structures around them. In their host-societies, the agency of these women comes through in diverse actions and strategies, such as resisting the abuse from their employers, leaving the live-in modality or domestic work altogether, and engaging in self-improvement activities. Moreover, some of them strengthen their commitment to improve the well-being of other migrant women, in both individual and collective strategies. With these actions, they constantly rework their personal circumstances and resist the power structures in which they're immerse.

7.1 Limitations of the study and implications for further research

This research aimed to gain a deep understanding of the empowerment and agency experiences of Latin American FMDWs in the region of Andalusia, Spain. This objective was achieved through the use of complementary qualitative methods and a personal approach towards FMDWs experiences and life projects. However, one limitation of the research is that it proved to be too broad in both its methods for data collection and its operationalisation of concepts.

Regarding the former, narrower criteria for data collection provides two main avenues that future research could further explore. First, the sample aimed to include women with a diversity of profiles and experiences, including aspects such as time spent in the country, age, participation in socio-political actions, and current occupation. Thus, this research allowed to show the diversity and heterogeneity within the group of Latin American FMDWs in this region. Nonetheless, future research could develop a deeper understanding of these experiences by looking into subgroups of this population with more specific characteristics. One avenue for this is specifying the criteria of time spent in the country, since, as it was stated in the findings, this is a major factor that can enable empowerment processes for FMDWs. The sample was composed by a majority of women with less than 10 years in the country, and more than half that still had an irregular status. Therefore, the data lacked information regarding longer labour trajectories. One line for further research would be to focus on the experiences of women well-established

in Andalusia, whether they are still in domestic and care work, or have moved to other sectors. This would allow to identify the key factors for encouraging or inhibit empowerment processes in the long term, as well as how the implications of the migrant condition transform over time.

A second aspect that could be explored further in detail is that of the influence of the local context - and its social actors- in these empowerment processes. Broadening the geographical area of the study limited this analysis. Replicating this research in one city or town of Andalusia would permit to evaluate how that specific social and institutional context shapes these experiences. Additionally, it is recommended to focus on small towns and rural areas in Andalusia, in which migrants' networks and associations are scarcer and FMDWs tend to experience a higher risk of isolation.

Regarding the conceptual framework, future research will benefit from further conceptualising the meaning of empowerment. The understanding of empowerment used in the research fitted well within the capability approach, allowing each woman to enunciate her goals, achieved well-being, and understanding of the lost or acquired freedom that being a domestic worker had implied. Thus, it showed the complexity and ambivalence of (dis)empowerment processes, as well as the implications of their individual agency. However, the multiple dimensions and aspects of empowerment could be studied in bigger detail. In this regard, it is recommended that future research further explores determined aspects of FMDWs lives, such as their labour trajectories or family relationships.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Basic information of FMDW interviewed

Name*	Age	Country of origin	Time in Spain	Marital Status	Children	Educational level	Occupation (at the moment of the interview)
María	41	Colombia	3 months (10 years stay 10 years ago)	Divorced	3	Secondary	Domestic worker
Sylvia	51	Colombia	15 months	Single	1	Secondary (and technician)	Domestic worker
Carla	49	Argentina	18 months	Separated	5	University degree	Domestic worker and waitress
Paulina	51	Venezuela	6 months	Single	3	Tertiary	Domestic worker
Montserrat	52	Ecuador	15 years	Married	3	Elementary	Domestic worker
Petra	55	Paraguay	7 months	Divorced	2	University degree	Domestic worker
Carmen	33	Colombia	18 months	Single	0	Post-graduate	Unemployed
Roberta	56	Nicaragua	15 years	Single	2	High-level technician	Domestic worker
Juliana	49	Peru	33 years	Married	2	University degree	Domestic worker and hospital management
Alejandra	66	Peru	5 years	Married	4	Secondary	Domestic worker
Laura	30	Nicaragua	7 years	Single	0	University degree	Unemployed
Liliana	39	Colombia	11 months	Separated	2	High-level technician	Domestic worker
Brenda	59	Colombia	2 years	Separated	3	University degree	Domestic worker

Patricia	58	Colombia	17 months	Widowed	3	Secondary	Domestic worker
Susana	35	Colombia	5 years	Married	3	Secondary	Hospitality
Judith	53	Colombia	17 months	Married	2	Secondary	Domestic worker
Alma	22	Honduras	18 months	Single	0	Elementary	Domestic worker
Luz	37	Nicaragua	5 years	Single	0	University degree	Domestic worker
Nancy	32	Nicaragua	3 years	Single	1	Secondary	Domestic worker
Debany	50	Ecuador	22 years	Married	3	University degree	Unemployed
Lisseth	45	Nicaragua	8 months	Married	2	Secondary	Domestic worker
Catalina	55	Nicaragua	5 years	Separated	2	Secondary	Domestic worker
Katia	36	Nicaragua	18 months	Single	3	Secondary	Domestic worker
Carpintera	46	Nicaragua	3.5 years	Widowed	1	University degree	Domestic worker
Janeth	58	Ecuador	23 years	Single	1	University degree	Hospitality

* The names of all the FMDWs have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

Appendix B. List of experts interviewed

Experts	Position on the organisation	Organisation
Guillermo Bellouard	Legal advisor	ODS- Oficina de Derechos Sociales (Social Rights Office)
Jacqueline Amaya	Secretary and Spokesperson	Asociación de Trabajadoras del Hogar de Sevilla (ADWS)
Asmaa Hallaga	Women, Gender, and Equality Coordinator	Sevilla Acoge (Seville Welcomes)
Pilar Cruz Zúñiga	Researcher and lecturer	University of Pablo Olavide
María Bastante	Civic Participation Coordinator	Alianza por la Solidaridad (Alliance for Solidarity)
Sylvia Villalba	Migrant Women and Employment Coordinator	Claver Association

Appendix C. Events, workshops, and activities

Activity	Date	Organised by
Forum on citizenship and care	February 17 th and 18 th	Alianza por la Solidaridad
Debate and testimonies by FMDWs	February 26 th	ADWS
Preparation for the Women's March	March 5 th	ADWS
Women's March	March 8 th	ADWS
Current situation and challenges in home and care employment	March 14 th	Vitoria Gasteiz municipality (online)
Workshop on community building	March 15 th	Claver Association
Preparation for the International Domestic Workers Day	March 19 th	ADWS
Demonstration and get-together for the International Domestic Workers Day	March 26 th	ADWS
Workshop on Spanish Immigration Law	March 29 th	Claver Association
Members meeting	April 16 th	ADWS

Appendix E. FMDWs interview guide

*Appendices E, F and G were translated to English

Date:

Place:

Interview ID:

Thank you very much for agreeing to meet with me. My name is Massiel García Alonso, I am a student of the Master's Degree in International Development Studies at Utrecht University. This interview is part of the research work for my Master's thesis. In my research I want to know the experiences of empowerment of Latin American Migrant Women who are, or have been, domestic workers in Andalusia, Spain. The objective of this research is to know, through their life stories, what actions and factors have allowed their empowerment and well-being in different dimensions of their lives, as well as which factors are an obstacle to this. The benefit of participating in this study is to contribute to the generation of knowledge about the needs and development prospects of the population of migrant women in Spain.

The interview will last approximately between 1:00 and 1:30. The information will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified with any of the data provided. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, in case of discomfort with any of the questions, you can let me know and not answer that question, or withdraw from the study completely, without this implying any negative consequences for you.

I would like to record this interview so that I can transcribe and analyse it correctly. Do I have your permission to record the interview?

Thank you. Do you have any additional questions before we start?

Personal information

- Pseudonym:
- Age:
- Birthplace:
- Civil status:
- Children:
- Education level:
- Occupation:
- Residence status in Spain:

Migration journey

1. When did you migrate to Spain?
2. What were your main reasons for deciding to emigrate?
 - a. How old were you?
 - b. Why did you decide to do it at that moment of your life?
3. Why Spain and why Seville?
 - a. Did you have any reason to come here specifically?

Probes: family or someone known here, you already knew the city, knew of a job opportunity, etc.

4. Do you plan to move back to your city, stay here or emigrate to another country?
5. Has any member of your family met or will join you here in Spain?

Employment situation

6. What job did you have before coming to Spain?
7. Why did you decide to go into domestic work? Was it in your plans?
8. Could you tell me a little about your experience in domestic work?
 - a. Probes: Number of years, families, if you worked with or without contract
9. Have you ever worked as a “live-in” worker?
 - a. If yes, what was that experience like?
 - b. Do you consider it had any effect on your physical or mental health?
10. How did you manage your time as an “live-in” worker?
11. What are some of the major problems you have experienced in your workplace here in Spain?
Probes: Mistreatment by employers, very low pay, excessive hours
12. How have you dealt with these problems in your workplace?
13. Has your residence permit ever affected your job opportunities? How?
 - a. Has this changed over time?
14. Have you ever requested support from an association or institution with a problem you have had at work?
 - a. Where did you attend to? Did their support improve your situation? How?
15. Have you taken or are you taking any job training course?
 - a. Where? What kind of courses? Have they helped you improve your employment situation?
16. What does the domestic, care and cleaning work you do means to you?
Probes: importance of care for other people’s well-being, it's just a job, you don't like the tasks you do...

Non-work life

17. What kinds of things do you do in your free time?
18. What kind of activities do you do to feel good outside of your job?
Probes: Self-care actions (rest, talking with friends, therapy, exercise), belonging to a group or collective
19. Have you ever been afraid of being deported or detained? Did this limit your activities here in any way?

Financial situation

20. How has your financial situation changed since you migrated and entered domestic work?
Probes: earned more money than in your home country, earned more than in your first jobs here
21. Do you send money to your family?
 - a. How is this experience of sending money for you?
Probes: positive, satisfaction from helping your family, negative, because you don't have enough money for yourself, because it causes you stress, etc.
22. Do you consider you have control of your finances?
Probes: You decide what to do with the money you earn, you have money for yourself and your children
 - a. Has this changed since you migrated and entered domestic work?

- b. Has this allowed you to acquire any property?
- 23. Has your income from this job allowed you or will it allow you to fulfil any plan you had? How?
Probes: better opportunities for your children, start a business, support your family, continue your education

Family and partner situation

In case of any doubt, ask them to clarify their family situation. For example, ask if she lives here with her children, with her partner, what family does she have in her country of origin, if she has brought someone from her family to live with her, etc.

- 30. Have you had any problems with your family in your home country since you've been here?
Probe: with your children, your partner, your parents, communication, expectations
 - a. Do they expect anything from you being here?
 - b. How have you dealt with these problems?
- 31. On the contrary, has moving here had any positive effect on your familiar relations?
Probe: better communication, less pressure to meet expectations, appreciation for your financial contributions
- 32. Do you consider that you have an equitable relationship with your partner?
Probes: make decisions together, both work the same to take care of the house
 - a. How are household chores distributed?
 - b. Do you and your partner make decisions about the home and your children together?
 - c. In case of being in an unfair situation, have you taken any action to change it?
- 33. Do you think you've gained some freedom by being here? If yes, in what way?
Probes: What to do with your time, what to do with your money, how to express yourself, etc.

Social situation

- 34. Who would you say are your biggest support network here in the city?
Probe: family, group of friends, people from an association...
- 35. In what way have you felt supported by them?
Probe: sharing information, talking about personal situations, company
- 36. How did you get into the ADWS? How has collaborating with the association affected you?*
- Probe: access to information, networking, change in self-perception
 - a. Do you think it has empowered you in any way?
 - b. Has the way you see yourself changed?
 - c. Has it allowed you to improve your employment situation?
- 37. Has the way you see yourself changed in any way since you came here?
Probe: more confidence, more freedom, more capable, greater self-awareness

*For women from the ADWS or, if applicable, another similar association.

Closing questions

- 38. What are your future plans?
Probes: Bring your family to Spain, start a business, save, and retire in your country, stay here...
- 39. Currently, what are you doing to fulfil the plans you have told me about?
Probe: take a course, save, attend school
- 40. Do you consider that having migrated here and your current job is helping you fulfil these plans?

Closing

Ask: Do you have any questions about this research? Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you very much again for taking the time for this conversation. In case of any doubt about the results, how the information will be treated, etc. I leave you my phone (+528112520703), and my email (m.garciaalonso@students.uu.nl)

Appendix F. Experts interview guide

Date:

Place:

Interview ID:

Thank you very much for agreeing to meet with me. My name is Massiel García Alonso, I am a student of the Master's Degree in International Development Studies at Utrecht University. This interview is part of the research work for my Master's thesis. In my research I want to know the empowerment experiences of Latin American Migrant Women who are, or have been, domestic workers in Andalusia, Spain. The questions will deal with the challenges that Latin American women face in Andalusia, perspectives on domestic and care work in Andalusia, and the role that these women have in Andalusian society. Questions will also be asked about the organization, and the role you have in the organization.

The information will be used only for my thesis and will be shared with Utrecht University and with the associations that are participating in this study. The information will be anonymized so that you cannot be identified with any of the data provided, unless you agree to your name being used. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, in case of discomfort with any of the questions, you can let me know and not answer that question, or withdraw from the study completely, without this implying any negative consequences for you.

I would like to record this interview so that I can transcribe and analyse it correctly. Do I have your permission to record the interview?

Thank you. Do you have any additional questions before we start?

Questions about the expert and the organization

- What are the main objectives of the organization? Have these evolved over time?
- What is your position here in the organization? What are your main responsibilities?
- Could you tell me a little about the programs you offer to migrant women? Do you offer services specifically aimed at FMDWs?

Questions about the FMDWs in Andalusia

- For what reasons do the migrant women you work with come to your organization? How do you support them?
- What kind of challenges does the migrant population that arrives to Andalusia face to integrate socially and economically?
- Are FMDWs socially valued and recognized in Andalusia?
- Do you think that domestic work offers an opportunity for empowerment for migrant women in Andalusia?

Rights and access to services

- How does Spain's immigration regime affect the opportunities for well-being and development of migrant women in Andalusia?
- How have you observed that migrant women are affected by having an irregular migration status? What kind of problems does this entail?

- What is the importance of professionalization and differentiation of activities performed at work for the development of FMDWs?
- In general, do you consider that the welfare of the migrant population in Seville/Andalusia is a priority for the local government? What are they doing to meet their needs?
- What kind of services are needed so that FMDWs can access better work and life opportunities?
- Do you think that there is a current trend in the market to offer private services that take advantage of the training and employment needs of FMDWs?

Closing questions

- Do you think that the situation for FMDWs in Andalusia has changed over time? Has it gotten better or worse?
- What good results have been observed from the coordinated work of civil society organizations in Seville and Andalusia? Is there a good chance that this will represent an improvement in the situation of this population?

Closing

Ask: Do you have any questions about this research? Is there anything you would like to add?

Thank you very much again for taking the time for this conversation. In case of any doubt about the results, how the information will be treated, etc. I leave you my phone (+528112520703), and my email (m.garciaalonso@students.uu.nl)

Appendix G. Focus group discussion guide

Date:

Place:

Focus group discussion

Introduction

First of all, I would like to thank all of you for being here. My name is Massiel García Alonso, I am a student of the Master's Degree in International Development Studies at Utrecht University. This focus group is part of the research work for my Master's thesis. Also organizing this discussion is Flavia Anahy, who runs the Association of Caregivers without Documents.

In my research I want to know the experiences of agency and empowerment of Latin American migrant women who are, or have been, domestic workers in Andalusia, Spain. The objective of this research is to know, through their life stories, what actions and factors have allowed their empowerment and well-being in different dimensions of their lives, as well as what factors are an obstacle to this. The benefit of participating in this study is to contribute to the generation of knowledge about the needs and development prospects of the population of migrant women in Spain.

As part of this research, I have already conducted interviews with FMDWs, as well as with staff from civil society organizations and academics. While I have already gathered a lot of valuable information, I thought it would be helpful to have a discussion to explore in greater depth and with a diversity of perspectives certain topics raised in the interviews. All of you have very diverse experiences and trajectories, and this is exactly what will contribute to enrich this discussion. There are no right or wrong answers, this is about your experiences and opinions, so you are the experts on this. For this reason, I encourage you to discuss among yourselves and express your opinions whether you agree with the opinion of other participants or not. All your contributions are valid and welcomed, as long as they are expressed with respect towards all the participants.

The discussion will last approximately between 1:00 and 1:30hrs. The information will be treated confidentially and anonymized, so that you cannot be identified with any of the data provided. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, in case of discomfort with any of the questions, you can simply not answer that question, or withdraw from the study completely, without this implying any negative consequences for you.

I am going to guide the discussion through different topics, and Flavia will support me by taking notes. Although we will try to take note of the most important points, I would like to ask your permission to record. Only I will have access to this recording later, and in the report of the results for my university your data will be anonymized. This, with the purpose of having a complete record of this discussion, and to be able to transcribe and analyse it correctly. Do I have your permission for this?

Thank you. Do you have any additional questions before we start?

Presentation of the participants

1. To start the discussion, can you introduce yourself by saying your name -or how you like to be called-, and your country of origin?
2. Activity:
 - a. Write a list of some characteristics of female domestic and care workers in Andalusia.
 - b. Write a list of some characteristics of an empowered woman.
 - c. Discussion about the ideas associated with these women.

Opening questions

- What is your current occupation? Do you work or have you ever worked as a live-in worker?
- Do you consider domestic and care work important and valuable work? For what reasons?
 - Probes: Well-being of older adults, family needs, sustaining life
- Do you think that domestic and care workers in Andalusia are valued and recognized by the society? What are some of the most common problems that a migrant woman may face in domestic and care work?
 - Probes: prejudices, working conditions, treatment by employers...

Gender and migration

- What factors are usually decisive for Latin American women to emigrate? How is the decision to migrate to Spain different for women than for men?
 - Probes: financial reasons, children, family, or romantic relationships
- What are some of the main problems for migrant women to be able to integrate socially and economically upon their arrival in Andalusia?
 - Probes: work permit, employers, discrimination...
- Do you consider migrant women face a different kind of discrimination or problems than those experienced by migrant men?
 - Probes: Stereotypes, sexual harassment, job opportunities
- Do you consider that migrating can influence the way in which Latin American women have romantic relationships? Do women tend to look for partners here or keep the ones they have in Latin America? Is there a change in how gender equality is seen in these relationships?
 - Probes: ideas don't change, greater equality, women remain single...

Employment

- What job opportunities do Latin American women have when they arrive in Andalusia?
 - Probes: waitresses, domestic work, agriculture...
- What professional path do Latin American FMDWs in Andalusia usually follow? Is it common for them to move to other sectors?
 - Probes: Start their businesses, enter the hotel industry, work as caretakers for the municipality or a private company...
- What factors do you think are necessary for them to transition from domestic and care work to other sectors?
 - Probes: time, training, validation of qualifications and degrees, desire for personal improvement...

Empowerment

- Do you think that migrating to Andalusia to work as caregivers can be an empowering experience for Latin American women? In what ways?
 - Probes: meet goals, get to know themselves, travel, leave abusive relationships...
- What kind of programs and services do you think are essential for FMDWs to develop personally and professionally?
 - Probes: information about their rights, legal advice, courses, training, awareness campaigns...

Closing

- Thank you all again for your participation. To close this discussion, How do you feel after having participated in it? Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix H. Codebook for FMDWs interviews

Concepts	Code family	Code name	
Labour Migration	Reasons	Political situation in CO	
		Economic needs	
		Education	
		Self-discovery	
		Leave abusive relationship	
		Family reunification	
	Empowering effects	Economic improvement	
		Achievement of goals	
		Psychological empowerment	
		Free time	
	Disempowering effects	Work conditions	
		Social downgrading	
Career path			
Institutional factors	Migration regime	Irregular migration	
		Migration control policies	
		Regularisation	
	Labour regime	Labour niche	
		Occupational downgrading	
		Ethnic stereotypes	
		Informality	
	Care regime	Familial care model	
		Private agencies	
		SAD	
Sociocultural factors	Societal values	Societal values towards DWs	
		Societal values towards migrants	
		Gender equality	
	Local stakeholders	NGOs	
		Municipality	
		Migrant networks	
	Labour market	Accessibility to other sectors	
		Validation of education titles	
		Preference for nationals	
Individual assets and relations	Employers	Abusive treatment	
		Supportive relation	
	Work conditions and form	Live in	
		External	
		Underemployment	
			Fear

	Irregular migration status	Employment opportunities
	Regularization	Feelings of safety
		Formal employment
		Mobility freedom
	Family and social relations	Migrant networks
		Family support
		Family needs
	Personal resources	Education
		Work experience and skills
		Economic resources
		Personality profile
		Dignity
	Identity factors	Gender
		Age
		Ethnicity
Strategies and actions	Collective agency	Activism in associations
		Unions
	Individual agency	Leaving live-in work
		Self-improvement
		Rejecting abusive relations
		Multiplying information
		Creating networks
		Activist identity
		Starting groups
Remittances		

Appendix I. Codebook for Experts interviews

Concepts	Code family	Code name
Organisation	Objectives	Dignification of domestic work
		Social integration of migrants
		Public advocacy
		Community empowerment
	Programs and actions	Direct legal orientation
		Professionalisation for domestic workers
		Material support to migrants
		Self-care
		Public advocacy
		Guidance to grassroots collectives
		Research
FMDWs in Andalusia	Needs	Legal orientation
		Job placement
		Psychosocial attention
		Urgent material needs: Food and money
	Challenges for FMDWs' integration	Social discrimination
		Migration normative
		Societal values towards DWs
		Lack of knowledge of rights
		Limited housing options
		Limited employment options
		Validation of education titles
		Working conditions and schedules
		Inaccessibility to public services
	Social recognition of DWs	Ethnic stereotyping
		Persistent low recognition
		Partial improvement over time
	Experts' perceptions on DWs	Essential workers
		High levels of agency
		Resilient women
	Empowerment opportunities in DW	Be self-employed
		Limited professionalisation trainings
		Leave live-in modality
		Move to other sectors
		Self-improvement courses
	Effects of migration regime	Social exclusion
		Labour niche
		Occupational downgrading
Central government	Changes to migration normative	

Improvement of their situation		Higher efficiency of the Labour Inspectorate
	Needed services and programs for FMDWs	Professional trainings adequate to their needs
		Legal and psychosocial services
		Public employment agency
		Promotion of self-employment
	Towards society	Awareness campaigns about migrants' rights
		Awareness campaigns about DWs rights