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WOMEN IN PAID DOMESTIC WORK AND THE GEOGRAPHIES OF HOME: VOICES FROM NAIROBI, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The concept of paid domestic work mostly centers on women domestic workers, both in the global North and South. Paid domestic work is predominantly undertaken by migrant women or women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds; this way, it is different from other forms of labor in the microspaces of the home. Current feminist scholarship suggests that paid domestic work is conceptualized as social reproductive labor. This study was informed by the theory of social reproduction and its relation to the labor category of women domestic workers, which is neglected. The analysis of the empirical data was conceptualized through the concept of intersectionality, highlighting how race, class, and sex contribute to social and economic marginalization. Scholarship from academic debates in the Global North has progressed in understanding intersectionality with regard to the experiences of migrant women domestic workers, but this has not been theorized in the Global South. The aim of this study is therefore to explore and understand intersectionality and the experiences of paid domestic work by women and its contribution to the geographies of home, adapting it to the local context in Kenya. Eight women participated in a focus group discussion and photo elicitation for the study in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. The research contributes to ongoing feminist debates towards social justice for women domestic workers, providing novel knowledge advancements moving from the African context.

Keywords: *Paid domestic work, feminist thinking, home, intersectionality, focus group discussions, Africa*

EXTENDED SUMMARY IN ITALIAN

Il concetto di lavoro domestico retribuito assume un significato particolare per quanto riguarda le donne, tanto nel Nord quanto nel Sud globale. Di fatto, è svolto prevalentemente da donne migranti o donne di background socioeconomico inferiore, delineando specifiche geografie della casa. Il pensiero femminista contemporaneo suggerisce che il lavoro domestico retribuito possa essere concettualizzato come lavoro sociale riproduttivo. Questo studio è stato informato dalla teoria della riproduzione sociale nella sua relazione con la dimensione del lavoro retribuito, e del lavoro domestico retribuito in particolare, il quale è un ambito relativamente poco studiato. L'analisi dei dati è stata guidata dal concetto di intersezionealità, evidenziando come razza, classe e sesso contribuiscono alla marginalizzazione sociale ed economica delle donne. Vi sono diversi studi provenienti o aventi per oggetto il Nord Globale che si sono focalizzati su questo tipo di analisi, ma le esperienze delle lavoratrici domestiche migranti non è stato ancora oggetto di una solida focalizzazione nel Sud globale. Lo scopo di questo studio è quindi quello di esplorare e comprendere, attraverso la lente dell'intersezionalità, alcuni aspetti del lavoro domestico retribuito femmnilie e il contributo di questi alle geografie della casa, avendo come riferimento il Kenya. Nello specifico, questo studio si basa sui risultati di un focus group approfondito svolto con otto donne che lavorano a Nairobi.

Dallo studio svolto è emerso che il lavoro domestico retribuito è un'importante occupazione produttiva contemporanea per le donne di estrazione socioeconomica inferiore che migrano dalle periferie rurali del Kenya alla città di Nairobi. Le lavoratrici domestiche retribuite si percepiscono talvolta come aiutanti del datore di lavoro, quando questo è a sua volta una donna che le lavoratrici affiancano principalmente per alleviare le sfide della cura dei figli. Le lavoratrici domestiche sono spesso anche le capofamiglia del proprio nucleo famigliare, combinando le responsabilità della produzione e della riproduzione sociale per contribuire al benessere generale delle loro famiglie. Inoltre, il lavoro domestico retribuito è emerso come simbolico e materiale, poiché è svolto alle dipendenze di famiglie percepite come appartenenti a una classe sociale più elevata rispetto a quella a cui appartengono le lavoratrici che hanno partecipato allo studio. È emerso dunque il significato multidimensionale e complesso delle geografie della casa che è allo stesso tempo uno spazio di lavoro e di emancipazione attraverso il lavoro, ma anche uno spazio di esclusione sociale. La casa è dunque uno spazio di interazioni sociali intricate, che ospita i ricordi delle esperienze vissute dalle lavoratrici domestiche presso le famiglie in cui hanno lavorato.

Il concetto di intersezionalità all'interno del lavoro domestico retribuito delle donne nella città di Nairobi si erge su differenze sociali di genere, classe, sesso, età, etnia, ma anche della relazione tra città e aree rurali. Queste dimensioni non sono indipendenti né autosufficienti: sono state prodotte, modellate e rimodellate nel tempo. La persistenza della femminilizzazione e della precarietà, la legislazione coloniale e quella esistente in materia di lavoro domestico, le dinamiche e le pratiche di lavoro all'interno delle geografie domestiche, le ideologie occidentali adottate nel periodo contemporaneo, sono tutte dinamiche che contribuiscono a rinforzare i percorsi di vita delle lavoratrici domestiche retribuite in Kenya. Nel complesso, il concetto di lavoro domestico retribuito delle donne è un fenomeno complesso che combina diverse ideologie all'interno dei retaggi del patriarcato, del colonialismo e del capitalismo contemporaneo. Questi sistemi si rafforzano a vicenda.

Il concetto di lavoro domestico retribuito rafforza di conseguenza la discriminazione socio-economica intersezionale contro le lavoratrici domestiche retribuite all'interno delle geografie domestiche della città di Nairobi. È quindi fondamentale immaginare la possibilità di un attivismo femminista rivoluzionario avviato dalle lavoratrici domestiche retribuite in solidarietà con altri attori per ottenere un lavoro più dignitoso per le lavoratrici domestiche e realizzare forme di giustizia sociale concreta.

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ABBREVIATIONS

IISD: International Institute for Sustainable Development

ILC:International Labour Conference

ILO:The International Labour Organization

KSH:Kenyan Shillings

KUDHEIHA:Kenya Union of Domestic, Hotels, Educational Institutions, Hospitals and Allied Workers.

OECD:The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

WIEGO:Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Contextualizing the study

The concept of paid domestic work (PDW)[1] mostly centers on the category of women domestic workers, both in the Global North and the Global South. PDW is predominantly undertaken by migrant women in the Global North and/or women from lower socioeconomic backgrounds in the Global South (Fernandes, 2021; Mcwatts, 2018). As a form of contemporary women's employment,it can be undertaken as the primary or alternative source of waged work or other forms of remuneration (Marchetti et al., 2021).

Paid domestic work originated as paid domestic service linked to historical legacies of slavery,colonialism, apartheid, and other forms of servitude (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, 2014). In the last decades,neo-liberal capitalism, through global restructuring, has shifted the focus of paid domestic work to the global division of labor (Fernandes, 2021; Parrenas, 2000). This division is taking place within the ideologies of `migration and urbanization' that are expanding in different geographical spaces,impacting also the local contexts (Marchetti et al., 2021). A growing trend is the transnational migration of women domestic workers from the Global South to the Global North,trans-regional migration from the Global North to the Global South, and internal migration between rural and urban contexts (Fernandes, 2021). Currently,the phenomenon of women-paid domestic work (WPDW) calls for solidarity among domestic worker movements and organizations around the world towards social justice and domestic worker rights (Marchetti et al., 2021).

[1] In this thesis,the terms"paid domestic work ","waged domestic work"and"paid social reproductive work" are synonymous.They will be used throughout this thesis to differentiate paid work undertaken by women domestic workers from unpaid labor undertaken by a universal category of women.

Current feminist scholarship suggests that paid domestic work could further be conceptualized as social reproductive labor (Fernandes, 2021). Fraser (2016) highlights the so-called “crisis of social reproduction arising from the neglect of neoliberal capitalist societies globally that necessitates paid labor for social reproduction. Within social reproduction, the unpaid reproductive labor burden is overwhelmingly shouldered by a universal category of women in families and societies (Fraser, 2016). When transferred to migrant women in the Global North and women from lower social classes in the Global South, it differentiates women's paid domestic work from other forms of women's labor within the micro-spaces of home (Marchetti, 2022). Therefore,the study applies the theory of social reproduction to understand its relation to the employment of the labor category of women-paid domestic workers (WPDWs) (Federici, 2019; Bhattacharya, 2017). Geographies of home denote the micro spaces in demand of women-paid domestic workers in relation to paid domestic or social reproductive work. The everyday domestic ideologies,practices,social relations, and experiences of women domestic workers are produced and shaped within the microspaces of the home (Blunt & Varley, 2004).

Feminist scholarship from academic debates in the Global North has progressed in understanding migrant women's domestic working experiences and intersectionality within axes of race, class, gender, and other individual characteristics (Marchetti, 2022). The framework has been less theorized in the Global South in regards to the experiences of women internal migrants from rural peripheries employed as domestic workers in emerging cities. In the African context,negligible empirical research has been documented by scholars from the Global North (Wilson, 2010). Therefore,the aim of this thesis is to explore and understand the experiences of women domestic workers in paid domestic work within geographies of home through the feminist concept of intersectionality,privileging African Kenyan women’s world views that are missing in academic debates. The final objective is to explore and understand the socio-economic marginalization of women domestic workers.

The empirical case study is the capital city of Kenya,Nairobi. Nairobi City is the most populous urban region in Kenya, with 4.3 million residents and 1.4 million households (KNBS, 2019). In 2006, 1.15 million households in the city employed a domestic worker (Agler et al., 2006). Country statistics not in accord and unsegregated for Nairobi and other urban centers indicate that there are collectively 43,100 women domestic workers in Kenya (ILO, 2013). Women migrate from the rural Kenyan peripheries and neighboring countries within the East African Community (EAC)[2] to engage in waged work as domestic workers in Nairobi. The study was conducted through a focus group discussion complemented by photo elicitation with eight women currently employed as domestic workers in the city.

The study focuses on a critical analysis of the social phenomenon of paid domestic work and its implications for the social category of women domestic workers. The findings could support inclusive cities and decent work[3] in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, Kenya Vision 2030[4], and Nairobi City Vision, "the city of order and dignity; hope and opportunities for all"[5], strategies aligned with the current local development masters course program. The research contributes to ongoing feminist debates towards social justice for women domestic workers,providing novel knowledge advancements moving from the African context.

[2] The East African Community (EAC) is a regional intergovernmental organization of 7 Partner States: The Republic of Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Kenya, the Republic of Rwanda, the Republic of South Sudan, the Republic of Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania (https://www.eac.int/overview-of-eac).

[3] https://www.globalgoals.org/goals/8-decent-work-and-economic-growth/

[4] https://vision2030.go.ke/about-vision-2030/

[5] https://nairobi.go.ke/about-nairobi/

1.2 Research goals

The general purpose of the thesis is to explore and understand the social concept of women in paid domestic work within geographies of home and the feminist intersectionality concept, drawing from the worldviews of women domestic workers in Nairobi. The thesis commences by investigating the motivations and restrictions within labor employment that constrain women to paid domestic work. Secondly, introduce and explore the concepts of geographies of home and intersectionality and their relation to women's paid domestic working experiences. Thirdly,underline women domestic workers' experiences of socio-economic marginalization within an intersectional approach. Lastly,identify emerging themes highlighted from the empirical study that can be advanced for further research on the evolving social phenomenon of women in paid domestic work, adapting it to the local context.

1.3. Research questions

The study seeks to answer the following main questions:

1.) What are the motivations and restrictions for women to engage in paid domestic work within their home geographies?

a) What are the main contributions of women domestic workers with reference to paid domestic work within geographies of home?

2.) What are the dominant axes of intersectionality of women domestic workers in relation to paid domestic working within geographies of home?

3.) What are the dominant factors within paid domestic working and intersectionality that highlight women domestic workers socio-economic marginalization?

1.4. Methodology and research design

This study employed qualitative-focused group discussions, often known as FGDs, as a suitable methodological technique rooted in feminist principles to actively engage with marginalized groups, specifically women domestic workers (Kook et al., 2019). The FGDs were enhanced by the inclusion of photo elicitation, specifically by the utilization of researcher-driven photo elicitation, which is a visual method (Glaw et al., 2017). Furthermore, the utilization of participant observation was integrated in order to reveal the fundamental and innate human behavior inside the study focused on the human population (Baker, 2006).

The study included a total of eight (8) women paid domestic workers, aged between 20 and 50, who were actively employed as domestic workers in Nairobi city. The FGDs were held and facilitated by the researcher in a virtual meeting room using the Zoom conference platform. This approach was chosen due to the physical distance between the researcher and the female participants.

1.5. Scope of the study

Paid domestic work is a contemporary, expanding phenomenon as a form of employment primarily for women migrants and women from lower socio-economic backgrounds, both in the Global North and the Global South. In the Global South,in African countries such as Kenya, there is an emerging trend focusing on employing women from lower social classes and from rural peripheries to emerging cities as domestic workers. Therefore,the thesis will mainly focus on women currently employed as domestic workers in the Kenyan capital city of Nairobi, presenting women domestic workers perspectives on their daily lived experiences in urban households.

1.6. Structure of the thesis

The thesis is presented in six chapters, as follows:

Chapter 1 contextualizes the concept of paid domestic work that is linked to study objectives,the scope, and the methodology and organization of the study.

Chapter 2 connects the history and evolution of the concept of paid domestic working with ongoing feminist debates on women in paid domestic working. In addition, introduce the social reproduction theory,the concepts of geographies of home, and intersectionality in understanding women's paid domestic working experiences.

Chapter 3 presents the choice of qualitative methods for FGDs and visual methods as the relevant feminist research methods selected for the study. In addition,it highlights the research context,selection criteria of research participants, and compliance with research ethics.

Chapter 4 presents the study context, connecting it to the empirical case study.

Chapter 5 highlights the main themes that emerged from the FGDs to understand women's worldviews of paid domestic working and the transcriptions and interpretations of the findings within the study.

Chapter 6 is devoted to the discussion of the findings connecting theory and practice as mutual approaches to the analysis of the phenomenon of paid domestic work in Urban Nairobi.

Chapter 7 answers the research questions informed by the discussion and data analysis while drawing future recommendations for further research on the dynamics of the social concept of women in paid domestic work in Nairobi.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 History of paid domestic work in Kenya

The scope of this thesis is to understand women in paid domestic work, with a specific focus on Kenya. Therefore,it is important to connect the phenomena from the historical to the contemporary period, as the history of events through time is embedded in social progress (Huebner, 2017).

In Kenya, paid domestic work is rooted in the era of British colonization in the East African Protectorate since 1888, the period between 1901 and 1950 (Anderson, 2000). Before colonization, the domestic work of cooking,cleaning, caring, and associated tasks of home management was free labor, predominantly assigned to women and girls in families and communities within the highly patriarchal society of Kenya. The assigned roles within patriarchy could differ between communities within the different ethnicities, as each followed a distinctive cultural tradition. The first paid domestic workers emerged in colonial Kenya. PDW were male servants forcefully recruited from their rural origins to undertake domestic work roles in British households when the urban Nairobi city was founded in 1899. Domestic workers were the lowest in the labor hierarchy, mainly Africans, while noting that there were other laborers for the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway and workers in settler farms from different racial groups (Indians, Arabs). Employment of male domestic servants reversed patriarchal domestic roles from women to men. This subversion was a subjectification of male status, producing them as subordinate to the white colonial male. Additionally,it was a strategy to disempower the men, removing resistance to the colonization project of capital accumulation (Anderson, 2000). Male domestic workers were referred to by the stereotype of ‘house boys’ or simply ‘boys’ while they were adult males. The name had a linguistic connotation, referring to a young, abled male servant. However,it was a strategy of “de-virilization and inferiorization” of the adult male while highlighting his low status within the racial hierarchies (Sarti, 2014).

Colonial labor was mediated by a master-servant relationship within controls, rules, and regulations,with the main legislation highlighted as the master and servants (M&S) legislation of 1906, with its origins in English British law (Anderson, 2000). Within M&S, the Domestic Servants Ordinance of 1926 specifically targeted domestic workers (Anderson, 2000). The laws governing the production of labor were a result of conflicts between two groups of colonists ; the dominant labor employer (as administrators) and the small settler employer (Anderson, 2000). The legislation dictated low wages and poor working conditions that favored colonial labor extraction and white master privileges through derogatory contractual terms (Anderson, 2000). The breaking of the laws resulted in penal sanctions for workers and civil sanctions for employers (Anderson, 2000). Penal sanctions were introduced for desertion of duty,improper work,intoxication, absenteeism during working hours, and insults to the master (Anderson, 2000). Workers could be imprisoned, their wages deducted, or recruited for hard labor for the breach of laws. It has been noted that civil sanctions for employers were less applied and of a lesser weight, while noting that the employers caused many injustices to their employers.

2.2. Evolution of paid domestic work in Kenya

Western theorists, including Lewis Corser (1973), predicted a complete disappearance of domestic workers after World War II in Northern European countries,while this shift was not similar for other geographies (Jokela, 2018). The shift in Northern European countries was informed by positive economic growth associated with advanced home technology, the social progress of societies, the elimination of the traditional derogatory nature of domestic occupation, and improved state welfare support (Jokela, 2018; Sarti, 2014). However,domestic work transitioned in a non-linear process from high to low demand and supply and vice versa, with countries following divergent economic,social,cultural, ecological, and political transformations. In post-independence Kenya (1963), new capitalist economic and political reforms followed the waves of the Second World War, shaped by the commercialization of agriculture, the growth of manufacturing, and the commercial and service sectors (Anderson, 2001).

The colonial legacy of paid domestic work shifted with industrial agrarian reforms and the adopted ideology of the bourgeois lifestyle of the middle- and upper-class as new domestic employers in cities. Neoliberal policies in Africa and Kenya through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) were introduced in the 1970s (Rono, 2002, quoted in Gatwiri, 2020). Following neoliberalism,the Kenyan state retreated in public welfare, resulting in the massive privatization of public services including child care, disability care, and old age care. Neoliberal restructuring coincided with structural unemployment and uncontrolled inflation that further marginalized the poor (Rono, 2002, quoted in Gatwiri, 2020). Following liberalization, rapid urbanization was witnessed in the country 'between 1989 and 1999',' as a response to globalization (Mireri, n.d.). This resulted in the mass movement of people from rural peripheries to the capital city to engage in different forms of productive work as part of the emerging culture of modernity. Nairobi was emerging as the core within inherited geographies of urbanization and globalization (Nederveen Meerkerk et al., 2015). As a result,traditional local rural territories,their livelihoods, and local cultures were challenged and slowly abandoned, losing their value within the project of globalization.

The demand for paid domestic work in the capital city of Nairobi can be informed by the increased number of women in formal productive work,often the most educated, while the less privileged became paid servants (Sarti, 2014). This was also due to separation from kinship ties and social networks in rural peripheries, where people could provide the housework for free (Muasya, 2016). To fill in the domestic housework deficit experienced by modern working women in urban households, women opted to live with kin in exchange for immaterial compensation. Alternatively,hire kins or pseudo-family (non-kins) as help. With limited or no education due to systemic poverty for families in rural peripheries, a lack of affordable education, and the cultural perception of women as future wives,girls from poor backgrounds often dropped out of school to undertake paid domestic work in the city,supporting their families. The colonial figure of the WPDW as a young male disappeared and was replaced by young women,often with lower or no education,from rural areas, and with limited labor, legal, and social protections.

Currently,domestic workers rights in Kenya are protected under the Employment Act (2007), the Labor Act (2007), and the Amended Constitution of Kenya (2010, Article 41) (Nzamba Kitonga Advocates, 2023). The national social security scheme (NSSF) should cover workers' monthly healthcare and pensions, which should be remitted by the employer on behalf of the workers. KUDHEIHA is the recognized trade union for domestic workers. Domestic workers were included in national minimum wage legislation as real wage earners in a 2012 court ruling. This coincided with the ILO convention for "decent work for domestic workers" in 2010. However, the minimum wage for domestic workers is segregated based on the locality. The minimum wage in Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, and Kisumu,the 4 top cities in order of hierarchy, is Kshs. 13,572.90 per month, and in other areas, wages are set at Kshs. 7,240.95 per month. Employers are obliged to grant workers two weekly off-days,maternity and annual leave days,food provisions,adequate housing, and notice of termination (Nzamba Kitonga Advocates, 2023). Many of these provisions remain an implementation challenge for the labor organizations charged with domestic worker rights and in employers households. Employers have subverted the provisions to their advantage, citing the oversupply of domestic workers,inadequate employer wages, and the socio-cultural meaning of domestic work as help. The norm in the city is a one-off day, a lack of annual and maternity leave days, and a lack of contribution to medical and retirement benefits,while salaries range from USD 45 to 150, depending on the city's neighborhood and the employer's social class. The wage rates are also segregated for women and men,while they are lower in rural areas.

Since the 2000's,Kenya has joined the trans-national migration chain with bi-lateral labor agreements targeting ‘only women live-in maids’ from Kenya to the Middle East countries to create an avenue for women's employment. Domestic workers narratives of WPDW from Kenya have been to Saudi Arabia,Qatar,Kuwait, Lebanon, the UAE, Jordan, and Hong Kong,the new colonial entrants of Kenya. However,WPDWs in these countries have become images of modern slaves within racial victimization of labor, reproducing the dominant historical image of the figure of the slave black female domestic worker originally from the US. This resulted in a ban on transnational migration for PDW in 2012 (Gikuru, 2013). Therefore,in current periods, women's domestic employment remains mainly a local phenomenon. Kenya is yet to ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189) on decent work. The future of PDW in Kenya is endangered,with massive COVID-19 and post-COVID pandemics and the ongoing economic recession in the country resulting in domestic work job losses (Ogeto et al., 2021). With these shifts,employers are deliberately turning to private market-regulated models of daycare centers, or the labor is shifting back to other women in the family as unpaid labor, reducing their formal labor participation (Muasya, 2016). WPDWs are therefore forced to find alternative employment opportunities for PDW, mainly in the informal sector, or combine PDW with small trading businesses.

2.3 What is paid domestic work?

The thesis explores the world views of women domestic workers experiences within the context of paid domestic working at the microscale of geographies of home. Accordingly,it is important to understand the complexity of the definition of paid domestic work and what constitutes paid domestic work.

Within labor geography,the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), defines domestic work in three interlinked terms (ILO, 1996 - 2023).

(a) The term “domestic work” means work performed in or for a household or households;

(b) The term “domestic worker” means any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship;

(c) A person who performs domestic work only occasionally or sporadically and not on an occupational basis is not a domestic worker.

The ILO's definition is universal and western-centric without taking into consideration place-based heterogeneous factors and what could be a context-specific definition of domestic labor or paid domestic work. The first phrase specifies the 'work' that could have different meanings in different spaces while highlighting that the work is performed in or within private household spaces. This introduces the perception of the private home as a work space and reinforces the connotation 'domestic' as relating to the home. In traditional Kenyan society and within the fading extended family model,domestic work was carried out in open and communal spaces as shared cultural work. The second phrase introduces the relational aspect of an economic relationship,mediated by market forces, excluding social relationships omitted as central to waged work relations. The third phrase identifies domestic work as an occupation with the presumption that it is regulated within the formal labor market in a country,while in many countries, including Kenya, domestic work predominantly falls into the informal labor sector.

The ILO labor definition does not take into account the contextual heterogeneity of work within households, cultures, employers, and employees. The qualitative social aspects of the work are not reflected and could be read outside of the economic relationship. The labor definition has not shifted with time to capture dynamic social changes in world contexts,moving from the universal,homogeneous definition to capture heterogeneity of tasks,home spaces,places,workers, and employer shifting demands and needs. While the definition segregates the work space from the public and the contractual terms between occasional and occupational,it does not segregate the workers in terms of sexuality,region of work, or the nature of the employer(s). To understand the aforementioned segregations in the contemporary period, one must take a historical and comparative look at the shifting dynamics of paid domestic labor in spatial contexts and times. Furthermore, the production of modern spaces for domestic labor and the changing social meaning within cultures, places, and spaces help to understand changing definitions of domestic work. Therefore,each local context could have a different definition. In this study,therefore,it is important to recognize different perceptions of the definition and meaning of domestic work among women domestic workers.

2.3.1 Domestic work as symbolic and material

Paid domestic work has been justified as symbolic and material (Anderson, 2001). Anderson argues that domestic work represents and maintains the social status and lifestyles of households,as well as culture and society (pp. 25). Anderson illustrates the production of social class through symbolic material culture, connecting it to the power to contract paid human labor, as illustrated below.

> "Nobody has to have polished floors or ornaments that gather dust, but such things affirm the status of the household, its economic class, and its access to money and human resources". (pp.25). It is not only polished floors and ornaments but many other items,while noting that what is material and immaterial may vary from one household to another and for individuals within the household.

Domestic human labor is produced by consumption lifestyles.Cox (2013) argues that "paid domestic labor is a form of work that facilitates the consumption of others while producing stratified modern families, societies, and occupations(Cox, 2013). Cox locates consumption through an empirical study conducted by Anderson (2001);

> "Every day I am cleaning for my madam, one riding shoe, two walking shoes, and house shoes. That is every day, just for one person. plus the children, that is one rubber and one shoe for everyday school; that is another two. I wear fourteen shoes every day. My time is already finished... You will be wondering why she has so many bathrobes—one silk and two cotton. I say, 'Why, madam, has so many bathrobes?' Every day, you have to hang up. Every day you have to press the back because it is crumpled" (Filipina domestic worker in Paris, quoted in Anderson 2001, p. 21).

This excerpt locates the symbolic and material power of the employer in connection to consumption lifestyles, which consequently lead to the need for employing a woman domestic worker. This observation fails to consider the relationship between the presence of domestic workers and the quantity of chores they undertake, as well as the remuneration they receive for their labor and time. It also questions the unnecessary tasks,such as ironing, associated with status. Unsustainable consumption, fueled by modern-day capitalism, contrasts with the forces of nature and current efforts to minimize mass production and consumption. It jeopardizes efforts towards sustainable production and consumption,a call to circular economy within SDG 12[6] in minimizing ecological footprints,achieving quality life, equality, and generational justice (Doran, IISD, 2002).

Sarti (2014) notes that there are diverse reasons for employing a paid domestic worker, and this may be produced by economic,social,cultural, ecological, and political shifts in a given context (Sarti, 2014). While this reflection is valid,it could be argued that the main reason for employing a PDW comes not merely from the need for a domestic worker but also from the construction and maintenance of a certain class, position, and identity of individuals, households, and geographies (Sarti, 2005). While Sarti had observed that in past periods,employers were from the lower class, the majority of employers in the 21st century could be placed in the middle- and upper-class social strata (Sarti, 2005; Anderson, 2001). People employed as paid domestic workers also employ domestic workers for various reasons; therefore, it is paramount to clearly identify the class distinctions and the necessity for PDW. The employer's maintenance of class status is always presented in contradiction with the "servants problem", where society constructs some populations,often the lower classes, to always be ready to offer service (Sarti, 2005).

[6] https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal12

Human conditions such as sickness and human life cycles such as infancy,old age, or disability may defy social class, locating the desperate need for contracted PDW where care is not available from family. These dynamics could highlight the contemporary demand and supply for PDWs in the Global North from the Global South,from less developed geographies in the North-North and South-South to the Global North, and from rural contexts to urban contexts in the Global South. The compensation of immigrant labor within PDW has been insufficient and characterized by several injustices, particularly both within the domestic and caregiving sectors. In addition,many care needs cannot be met through some advanced modern technology and require human touch, love, emotion, and affect. But also, social class is not fixed to space, place, or time but is fluid and changes with social dynamics. The caring of the baby boomer generation in the US and other western contexts that warrants immigrant employment hides the fact that the origin countries of the migrants are in effect facing or will soon face the same challenge,as geographies don't keep pace. In addition,care arrangements in locales need to take into consideration other factors such as preservation of culture,social meaning,fertility rate,state funding,donor aid for care, and community initiatives. Care and caring employment hide deeper dimensions beyond caring as an immigrant opportunity for work. Beyond care and caring,current debates call for ‘ethics of care’ for the caregiver,cared for, and those acting on their behalf. England (2005) argues that real care is outside the market while focusing on moral and ethical obligations. This is a move beyond caring as work but a responsibility to do good to one another,producing no harm beyond segregations of race,social class,citizenship, sexuality, and places. Furthermore,care extends to nature, animals, and plants, as we live in an interconnected and mutually interdependent ecosystem.

The aforementioned factors raise concerns regarding the morals and dilemmas of employing a domestic worker. Paradoxically,both the employer and the employee could fail to justify their demand and supply for WPDW to demonstrate the existence of a genuine need. For example,one may question the rationale for hiring immigrant, poor, and marginalized ethnicities as paid domestic workers,as well as the value associated with their wage compensation. This highlights how injustices in poor geographies are extended in developed geographies in the name of creating new opportunities for less privileged other citizens, and how this encourages employers to extend social inequalities at households within the guise of domestic waged work. David Harvey locates the imaginations within the project of neoliberalism that has “succeeded in channeling wealth from subordinate classes to dominant ones and from poorer to richer countries" (Harvey, 2007). While this should be adjusted,little is being done to challenge and change the status quo by countries and domestic employers concerned about losing their dominant status while restricting citizenship and equal privileges to outsiders. Another paradox is that individual workers can, besides,be conceptualized in pursuit of symbolic and material privileges within ideologies of acclimating to a higher social class and modern lifestyle,the western ideology of the middle class for all. This has been noted for Filipina/o domestic workers in Italy through their consumerism lifestyles and sending remittances back to the Philippines, reinforcing their status in both contexts (Sarti, 2005). This dimension has been less explored through the perceptions of WPDWs in global and local contexts,whether PDW has helped transition from a lower class to a middle class or a middle class to an upper class. The opposite has occurred, where working as a PDW translates to a devaluation of social class, mainly associated with immigrants in developed countries (Sarti, 2005). This is exacerbated by migration regime policies through neoliberal ideologies of, for example, unskilled-live-in caregiver programs that fail to take into consideration the occupational qualifications of foreign employees, for example, the narratives of the Filipino nurses registered as nannies in Canada (Pratt, 1999).

2.3.2 Who are domestic workers?

Ambiguities exist interconnected with the definition of a domestic worker and whether workers are “employees or servants” or both (Grant, 2011; Sarti, 2005). Within labor geography,domestic workers are defined by the International Labor Organization (ILO) as “those workers who perform work in or for a private household or households. Subsequently,domestic workers are increasingly care workers, providing direct and indirect care services(ILO, 2023) in formal and informal al spaces' (ILO, 2011). This definition is universal and references domestic workers as homogeneous without consideration of the specificities of geography or the varied nature of domestic roles. Following this definition,domestic work does not segregate the gender of the workers undertaking the roles. Subsequently,the care services provided are diverse and not well articulated but conditioned by the changing nature, needs, and symbolic material and immaterial cultures of local space and time. The connotation of a private household brings out the space of work that segregates the private from the public space.The addition of the provision of care brings out an ambiguity in the meaning and interpretation of direct and indirect care,leaving questions about who is receiving the care,who provides the care, and how the care arrangement is organized.

Every country has followed the ILO’s definition,adopting their own definition of the workers and extending the definitions, roles, and spaces of work. Kenya follows the ILO definition and expands the definition of ‘domestic’ as ‘professionals and subordinates in fields like private homes, clubs, apartments, guest houses, biscuit-making factories, rehabilitation centers, homes for the elderly, hospices, non-governmental organizations, houses, children’s homes, projects associated with providing cleaning, social services, and securities to the community, and others'(KUDHEIHA, 2023). This definition contradicts the ILO’s definition of work provided in private homes and extends to include work performed outside the home. This conceptualization notes that the definition of domestic workers is not fixed and could shift with social,cultural,economic, ecological, and political changes in a given context. The definition of domestic workers is broad, and each country adopts its own definition depending on contextual factors. The ILO and Kenyan definitions do not segregate the work in terms of class,sexuality,age, race, or geographical origin, and therefore anyone can perform the work of a domestic worker.

In Europe,one complexity is the inclusion of Au Pairs as domestic workers, the majority of whom are young women (Sarti, 2005). Sarti highlights the contradiction of the definition of au pairs as domestic workers, their boundaries of tourism and language study, and the assignment to domestic activities for 'help' and 'light work' within the volunteer-host relationship. Subsequently,the notion of individual development within a pairing for domestic work and unequal positions could arise within the perceived socio-cultural relationship. Aupair experiences in the Kenyan context within international volunteering are expanding with au pairs from Kenya to the west and the west to Kenya. While their hosts are a dominantly white minority and upper class in Kenya,their experiences have not been narrated in scholarship to understand their roles connected to domestic work. The practice and adopted ideas from the west are mediated by race,social class, sexuality, and geographical boundaries. The practice highlights colonial continuities,which target the white-young participants specifically from the Global North to the European hosts in Kenya or the wealthier Kenyan families reproducing privileges and disadvantages to excluded others. Countries are divergent on the inclusion of what the definition of domestic workers is, while noting that new categories are further added in the contemporary period within new modern spaces of work and care that are being shaped in diverse trajectories. Many countries, including Kenya, have not included au pairs as 'domestic workers, while it denotes labor, racial, and sexual inequalities emanating from economic exclusion while highlighting the ambiguities of au pair experiences.

2.4 Locating women in paid domestic work in Kenya

The abstract space of modernity has witnessed the dynamic "revival'' of paid domestic work as a "pre-modern occupation" of the 20th century within globalization and urbanization (Sarti, 2014). The comeback of this historical phenomenon is connected to increased trans-national, intra-regional,urban-suburban-rural migration paradigms within the intersections of social labor employment, migration, and mobilities. In addition,it brings into attention differences in geography,social class, sexuality, disability, and identities of those who are migrating,mainly women. This statement locates development inequalities inherent in geographies, including both colonial territories as origin countries and emerging new waves of colonization and emerging colonizers within the ideology of progress and freedom to move.

ILO statistics indicate that there are approximately 75.6 million domestic workers worldwide, and 76.2% of these are women (ILO, 2023). In Kenya,unofficial current statistics identify more than two million domestic workers in the country,a combined figure for the broad definition of domestic workers in Kenya that contradicts the ILO's definition of remunerated work performed in private households (see 2.3.2). Country statistics provided to the ILO, which are not in accord and are unsegregated for Nairobi and other towns, indicate that there are collectively 61,900 male and 43,100 female domestic workers in Kenya (ILO, 2013). Unofficial statistics indicate that Nairobi city employs more than 80% of women domestic workers. The statistics exclude non-citizen women from other EAC countries and beyond (see introduction). The inflow of women from EAC could be tied partially to the strength of the Kenyan currency,the rising middle class in Nairobi,the spatialization of poverty in Africa and Kenya,and the imaginaries of Nairobi as a landscape of opportunities (BBC Africa Eye documentary, 2019). The statistics are challenged due to data poverty in the country and the ambiguity of defining a domestic worker. Moreover, the temporality of the occupation, its combination with other formal and informal activities, and the failure to disclose working as a domestic worker are due to the personal and social stigmatization associated with the occupation (Agaya and Asunza, 2013). In addition,PDW is often contrasted with free women's labor, housework, and unpaid women's work without clear boundaries.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), paid domestic work is primarily occupied by women, which can be attributed to the over-representation of women in this sector. This phenomenon is often referred to as the feminization of the occupation (ILO, 2023). Nonetheless, it is important to note that feminization is a multifaceted phenomenon that extends beyond the mere presence of women as the majority in the PDW sector. In certain contexts, such as Mozambique, Angola, and certain Asian regions, male domestic workers actually constitute the majority (Jokela, 2018). This could apply to the Kenyan context, considering domestic worker employment outside Nairobi city. Feminization is highlighted as associated with social devaluation and low occupational status, constrained by further increments in economic,social, cultural, and strategic political value (Gutierrez-Rodriguez, 2014). These characteristics obscure the real value of PDW within societies,while they are also historically connected. Paid domestic work is degraded as invisible, non-work, and the lowest in labor and social hierarchies, with the assumption that it adds no value to workers.

In many countries, including Kenya, PDW falls within the dichotomies of formal and informal work in service sectors (Yurdakul, 2022; Budlender, 2011). The majority of women are constrained in the informal sector, characterized by low wages,informal contracts,informal work arrangements, a lack of social protections, and violations of conditions and terms of work (Rojas-García et al., 2018; Agaya and Asunza, 2013; Budlender, 2011). Further,it is “poorly regulated and often unprotected by labor law” (D'Souza, 2010). In Kenya,while there are advanced existing protections, the nature and ambiguity of domestic work, which is mainly performed for private households and produced as a gift to families and communities, challenges its regulation within households and at a society level. Verbal contracts often regulate the wages, terms, and conditions of work,the workplace, who is to be employed, and the employer-employee relationship. The majority of PDW takes place in the traditional domestic sphere, naturalized as women’s space.

WPDW is allocated to dualisms and contradictions of sex and gender and accepted binaries of male/female, boy/girl, and masculine/feminine characteristics. While there are distinct differences between sex and gender,they are almost always used interchangeably or consciously thought to be the norm. Sex is defined in reference to ‘different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males, and intersex people, such as chromosomes, hormones, and reproductive organs'(WHO, 2023:Mikkola, 2023).Gender is a social construct defined by ‘characteristics of women, men, girls, and boys’ (WHO, 2023: Mikkola, 2023). Gender and sex are fluid concepts that are dynamic and evolving and cannot be understood as fixed dichotomies. Women perceived nurturing skills and biological behavior, translate to employment as domestic workers and caregivers. In addition,WPDW is assigned according to gender norms, beliefs, and expected attitudes and behaviors for males and females in a society. Gender norms are embedded in formal and informal institutions, nested in the mind, and produced and reproduced through social interaction. These notions translate to performances of gender (Butler 1990, 1993,2004 quoted in Mikkola, 2023). Butler ,following gender performance,offers a framework for undoing gender. The concept of gender performativity is closely connected to the construction of sexuality in different societal contexts and how sexuality is consistently being challenged by alternative ideologies.

They play a role in shaping women and men's (often unequal) access to resources and freedoms, thus affecting their voice, power, and sense of self" (Cislaghi and Heise, 2019). These false perceptions are largely shaped by the patriarchal system of male dominance and female subordination in Kenya. The existing dichotomies shaped by patriarchy segregate the masculine public world of work from the feminine private home, which is relegated to women according to specific gender and social norms (Jokela, 2018). Gender construction is specific to a place (Massey, 1994). Therefore,how women are constructed in Kenya is different from Uganda, even when both are African countries,differentiated by specific particularities of the places. In Kenya, gender construction differences are instituted through the region of origin,family,ethnic structures such as the clan system,cultural institutes,religious institutes, schools,workplaces and the state.

The engagement of women in PDW in Kenya is a result of various interconnected structural factors, including economic, social, cultural, political, and ecological circumstances and marginalization. The country reports systemic poverty and structural unemployment affecting more women and youth than men, which push women to undertake PDW. Out of the total female population of 27.2 million, accounting for 50.4%, 4.1 million women are living below the standard poverty line of $1.90 per day, with only 3.7 million men belonging to the same category(World Bank, 2022; Africa Sustainability Report, 2020). Poverty for women in rural peripheries is more pronounced than for women in urban contexts. Statistics indicate that 95% of multidimensionally poor women live in rural areas (Pep, 2023). Research has demonstrated that women are susceptible to experiencing severe poverty due to a variety of factors. These include the disproportionate responsibility of unpaid work, limited ownership of assets and productive resources compared to men, lower earnings relative to men, higher representation in lower-income sectors, and a tendency to engage in part-time employment as a result of the demands of unpaid work (Wanjala, 2021). In addition,the abstract modernity space allocates both formal and informal labor on gender and sexual hierarchies, highlighted as the sexualization of labor, where men are relegated to more valuable occupations such as law, medicine,information technology, and engineering (Massey, 1994). Other divisions of formal labor allocation include class, ethnicity, and political affiliation. The worldwide impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the ensuing global economic crisis, has exacerbated the absolute poverty faced by rural populations—those already living in poverty. Unemployment is further exacerbated by cultural practices,the vices of corruption and ethnic affiliation, which further diminish women's opportunities (Farah and Ali, 2018). Rural peripheries in Kenya report diminishing

livelihoods,severe food insecurity,climatic change, an increased inactive population,man-nature conflicts and political instability. Kenya depends on agriculture, which has been greatly affected by the ongoing climate crisis that feeds capitalism's lifestyles of consumption from Global South to Global North and from rural to urban contexts. Women are constrained by patriarchal socio-cultural constraints such as early and forced marriages,polygamy,female genital mutilation, gender-based violence,HIV prevalence, and the dependence of women on men in decision-making—aspects that privilege the male figure in the society.

The traditional practice of polygamy in favor of men has been revived under Sections 2, 3, and 6 of Kenya's Marriage Act No. 4 of 2014, which allow a man to have more than one spouse (Kenyalaw, 2014). Other characteristics, including a lower level of education than the average,early pregnancies,widowhood, separation, divorce, and marital status, are additional constraints. Kenya has reported an increasing number of single female-headed families. Current dynamics have seen women with higher levels of education enter the occupation,mainly due to structural unemployment. For the majority of women working as domestic workers,they are motivated to improve their individual and family socio-economic status by creating networks,consuming modern lifestyles if modernity is perceived as experienced in emerging cities, and changing their social status. Empirical studies on motivations and constraints of engaging in WPDW are limited and this study recognizes the omission as an aspect of understanding the construction of women in PDW. The motivation for a woman to take up domestic work to experience modernity freedom while building their upward social status is conflicting and a matter of self-reflection (Sarti, 2005). Kenya scored 109 out of the 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report of 2020 with 0.671 (Global Gender Gap Report 2020, World Economic Forum). The ideology of WPDW is complex and linked to broader issues of gender inequality, the gender pay gap, the feminization of poverty and micro migration. While WPDWs are part of the global and local labor participation populations,there are gaps in statistics of WPDWs GDP contribution on national budgets. Moreover,there are new emerging aspects of imagining the portrayal of the figure of the contemporary ‘global woman’; nannies, maids, and sex workers’ in contemporary economies (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). Besides,imagining the transformation of urban contexts,the rising and shifting care economy and moral dilemmas that mainly accompany these women occupations that hide and exclude the male figure.

Overall,the concept of women in paid domestic work is linked to precarity,a multidimensional concept that can be summarized by Jokela as "encompassing various dimensions, such as non-standard employment, the nature of the employment relationship, informality, and low wages" (Jokela, 2018). However,these aspects are well articulated in the PDW relationship at the macro-labor level but are socially constructed as the opposite or nonexistent at the micro-level, while new levels of precarity can be constructed with time and in contexts (Jokela, 2018; Gutierrez-Rodriguez, 2014). Precarity leads to different forms of inequalities, including socio economic marginalization, which can also be understood by analyzing the different regimes in power from colonial times to present-day Kenya. Some studies have progressed by examining and contrasting men in paid domestic and care work as an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the significant changes occurring in this service sector while problematizing the female as the only dominant PDW (Jokela, 2018). This framework could theorize alternative notions of feminization and precarity,sexism and gender, and the position of male paid domestic workers in comparison to women PDWs. There is a dearth of research conducted on this particular subject matter within the context of Kenya.

2.5 Stereotypes of women paid domestic workers

To explore and understand WDWs in the context of PDW that relates to their experiences,it is important to highlight some dominant WPDW stereotypes in Kenya that shape the personal, social, and work worlds of WPDWs. Stereotypes are reproduced by employers,employment agencies,the media, and individual domestic workers.

The study analyzes stereotypes through the widely viewed Kenyan film “The Real House Helps of Kawangware (RHOK),” a popular TV comedy show that premiered in 2014. The comedy follows the lives of domestic workers and their friends as they navigate WPDWs daily struggles in the capital city. Empirical studies have highlighted the growing number of WPDWs migrating from rural peripheries to informal settlements in Nairobi and engaging in PDW as the only source of livelihood (Agaya and Asunza, 2013). While one characteristic of paid domestic work is live-in accommodation,in the city there are dual modes of WPDW arrangements, both live-in and live out and live -out full time employment or part-time employment. The comedy is set in a satirical low-class urban suburb adjacent to an informal settlement where domestic workers do not seek work but live while they move out to neighboring middle-class neighborhoods to search for PDW (Mbugua, 2014).

Stereotypes and the process of stereotyping in the paid domestic work context are daily assumptions that recreate and reinforce social and occupational identities within spaces and places. While stereotypes could be positive,dominant stereotypes directed at WPDWs are predominantly negative. They often serve as linguistic symbols of exclusion for an individual or a social group as non-conforming from the perceived normative group,a process of 'othering' or 'otherness' and the implication and application of the notion of othering. Othering has been broadly defined as othering as "a process (...) through which identities are set up in an unequal relationship". Othering is the simultaneous construction of the self or in-group and the other or out-group in mutual and unequal opposition through identification of some desirable characteristic that the self/in-group has and the other/out-group lacks and/or some undesirable characteristic that the other/out-group has and the self/in-group lacks'' (Crang 1998 quoted in Brons,2015). Stereotypes can act as forms of othering where they can be descriptive or prescriptive, applied consciously or unconsciously, and are gender, space, and place-specific (MacDonald, 2006). Stereotypes in Kenya are dominant divisions within ethnic, political, religious, and regional divides and are manifested in day-to-day language coding (Naituli and King'oro, 2018).

The comedy reproduces the stereotypes of WPDWs within differences of social class,ethnicity,language,rural origin,urban citizenship, and sexuality. Domestic employers often exclude or include domestic workers based on differences, since stereotyping is a cognitive process. The episodes depict the ideal domestic workers as women from rural peripheries, mainly from the Luhyia,Kamba Meru, and Kikuyu ethnicities, problematizing their employment relationship with their female employers and the harsh realities of city life. The name of the show is a stereotype of real househelps as the perception of who they are within their employment role. The name is often used interchangeably with other names for WPDWs in the scripts. The women actors are known by multiple names: housegirls, maids,nanny,babysitter and aunties, as reproduced in the acting (ILO, 2016; Rombo and Lutomia, 2006). Mboch is a dominant negative connotation in Kenya borrowed from the Sheng language referring to a worker and interpreted as the text code of a worker,with reference to a female domestic worker since men are not often referred to as mboch (Rombo and Lutomia, 2006). The name evokes the portrayal of a female individual occupying a lower-ranking occupation,devalued by society, employers, and individual workers. Furthermore,the plural naming reinforces women workers' inferiority in society and households.

The cast is composed of five main WPDWs in a middle class city neighborhood; Turu,Awiti,Njambi, Nkirote, and Kalekye from different rural origins. Within urban Nairobi, rural women from the Luhya ethnicity are preferred as WPDWs due to stereotypes of good wives, and good mothers and are perceived as ideal child caregivers. Turu, who is of Luhya ethnicity, is employed by an heterosexual couple in an unstable partnership with no children,therefore the stereotype of Luhya rural women as ideal carers cannot be confirmed.. Turu's role is associated with cleaning and cooking, while she is constantly portrayed as exhibiting excessive indulgence in food,a general stereotype of Luhya ethnicity both for women and men (Rombo and Lutomia, 2006). Turu lacks a formal educational background and does not embody the archetype of urban ladies characterized by their modern intellectual pursuits,forcing the employer to send her to school to reduce her ignorance. Njambi, who is of Kikuyu ethnicity, is employed by a single man contrary to the social fact that employers are mainly women who is caring for two children without reference to their mother Njambi conforms to the society stereotype of Kikuyu ethnicity as hardworking and entrepreneurial, while neglecting her caring responsibilities. Kalekye conforms to Kamba ethnicity as loyal and hardworking, which originates from the society depiction of Kamba communities as originating from disadvantaged regions due to climatic conditions and therefore stereotyped as all poor. In this praxis, women domestic workers are heterogeneous and diverse, and collective stereotypes reinforce individual and the WPDWs group social injustices. Nkirote presents a constant objectification of beauty when she constantly engages in informal relationships with male employers, contrary to the norm that WPDWs are often ugly and without reference to their sexuality. Kalekye's beauty is in contrast to Gill's (1990) examination of domestic workers in Bolivia as "ugly" as compared to their female employers. Ugliness is a stereotype to discriminate against and restrict some perceived women's bodies from domestic employment,restricting them to the position of a lower social hierarchy. The concept of ugliness imposes certain societal norms and expectations upon female employees, encompassing aspects such as attire, conduct, cosmetic application, and limitations on mobility (Gill,quoted in Casanova, 2013). Studies indicate that at the scale of home,WPDWs contest stereotypes through language, refusing to dress as suggested by their employer and applying make-up as an agency to maintain their sexual power (Hierofani, 2021).

Awiti is employed by a single woman with no child ,highlighting the symbolic meaning of employment of a domestic worker for reproduction of the Nairobi city middle class . Awiti exhibits agency where she negotiates for her salary increase citing economic downturn. While she is in good relations with her employer,she is constantly threatened to be terminated from work and return to her rural home. WPDWs can conform to social stereotypes or act within their individual and group agency to contest the stereotypes. In the RHOK,the women cast conform to social representations of WPDWs as from rural origin,all women,from lower social class and ethnicity. In addition,to the city expectations of dressing and mannerisms while contesting their limitations of mobility. While the comedy incorporates aspects of agency on targeted WPDWs and the media audience to contest poor wages, indifferent treatment by employers and members of the Nairobi urban society,the media falls short while noting that in practice,the comedy does not reach the target audience of WPDWs in Nairobi. WPDWs have limited time for entertainment,often which is controlled by employers and the airing time ,at 7:30 p.m is a busy time for WPDWs,while the other audience distance themselves from WPDWs challenges.

Moreover, these are daily scenes of the reality of some workers contesting these perceptions to subvert these stereotypes through their agency. In RHOK, WPDW's agency is addressed by demanding better wages,better treatment by employers and society,better working conditions, and leisure time. WPDWs in Kenya often do not contest these aspects at the scale of home.The cast is composed of local city celebrities, and what is depicted in memories from the scenes is what society controls as reality, which could hinder shifting attitudes and behaviors and transforming prejudices. The mobility of shared imaginaries within virtual spaces originates and adopts to perceived normativity,borrowing from dominant other contrasting house-related programs originating from the US—The Real Housewives (Rombo and Lutomia, 2016). The comedy subverts the positions of housewives and helps to blur the conflating differences that need to be highlighted between the two distinct categories of the urban class,the employer and the employee. While it seeks to hide and maintain the invisible boundaries,the status of househelp is not shifted but reified and reinforced.

Stereotypes move within and beyond geographies through texts or representations through digital mediums to legitimize occupational and social discrimination against women (Pratt, 1997). Empirical research is lacking on the agency of women domestic workers to challenge these discursive constructions of stereotypes and the role of media in social justice for women. Shifting the image of women as the ideal maids—the black woman,the ethnic minority woman,the Filipino,the poor woman of color—from the Global South to the Global North changes the narrative to an alternative perception that has been a slow transformation. Modern virtual spaces have been criticized for reinforcing negative stereotypes and hindering women domestic workers emancipation. The role of institutions of home, communities, the academic field, and social and political groups to deconstruct existing stereotypes has been limited. The role of different mediums in subverting the perceptions of the 'other' towards a just world is a concerted effort of actors within the interconnected global and local media production sectors that have a moral role to protect and deconstruct the image of WPDWs. The idea of employment bureaus for WDW has gained popularity within the neoliberal market economy in Kenya. Employment bureaus have proliferated in many neighborhoods, promising to provide ideal house help who are loyal, experienced, and trustworthy,essential characteristics demanded by employers from employees, and they construct domestic workers as servants (Abrantes, 2014). The agencies reproduce stereotypes based on ethnicity, sexuality, and traditional stereotyped female roles, often portraying WPDW as an unskilled job. Domestic workers are often depicted as both subjects and objects of prevailing stereotyping within the context of their socially undervalued labor. Understanding how stereotypes are constructed within the women's domestic employment sector could underline the mechanisms that engender their social discrimination. This could confirm Spivak's (1988) concept that the subaltern can speak (Mcwatts, 2018).

2.6 The concept of geographies of home

The spatial turn in social sciences can be traced to the 1960s (Wrede, 2015). Proponents of the spatial turn, Foucalt,Lefebvre,Soja,Said, Gregory, and Cosgrove, have conducted a critical analysis of space and place within the social sciences and humanities. Scholars Blunt,Varley,Domosh,Cieraad, Thrift, and Mallet have advanced the theorizing of the geography of home within different disciplines. The notion of home is a geographical concept. Geographers have extended the concept of home from its etymology as a physical home and the notion of dwelling to mapping the physical home and representing ideologies of home. Human geography locates geographies of home within broader economic,political,social, cultural, and ecological social relations (Massey, 1994; Urry, 1985).

The notion of home has been widely acknowledged as a multifaceted concept, including a range of various and often even opposing and contested interpretations(Mallet, 2005). The plurality of home highlights the discourse of home and how it is theorized in different disciplines, including history, cultural studies,anthropology,sociology,architecture,visual arts,media studies, and cultural geography. Mallet (2005) locates home as an "idea" ,a social construction. Mallet questions, "Whether or not home is (a) place(s), (a) space(s), feeling(s), practices, and/or an active state of being in the world?" (pp.1). Following Mallet,the home can be this and much more. It can be identified as a place,a meeting point for multiple social relations. It represents the view of space within dichotomies of belonging/alienation, intimacy/violence, and desire/fear (Blunt and Varley, 2004). These dichotomies highlight that space cannot be understood without spatial interactions. Space can be disrupted, producing negative feelings. Space has been theorized as providing stability,security, and comfort that could be coded masculine, while a lack of these is coded as feminine.The notion of home traces every day the configuration of human life that produces ideologies and meanings of home for different home actors,both human and non-human.

Gender is intrinsic in all spaces. Spaces are segregated into socially constructed binaries of male and female, spaces of work and family,public and private. The home is associated with the creation and maintenance of a hierarchical social order. Home is not an abstract space—a neutral space in the backdrop—but a space mediated by power geometries (Massey, 1994). The existence of the home places WPDWs at a subordinate status while reinforcing the dominating status of female employers and placing men at the highest hierarchy than both women at home. The concept of home is often situated within the framework of Western ideology, which upholds a nuclear, independent, and heteronormative family structure. However, this perspective tends to overlook the evolving dynamics of modern family units, such as single-parent families, queer families, and individuals who reject or have different perceptions on the traditional notion of family. Domestic employment narratives examining the employer-employee relationship within PDW represent the figure of both the employer and employee as women within the private home space (Marchetti, 2022; MacDonald, 2006). The paradox of double women—one who needs help and another providing the help can be understood within inequalities of division of house chores. Because the two women occupy different positions and hierarchies within the social order of the home, differences can arise in the allocation of tasks and socialization patterns or tensions in occupying confined space of home. There are controls and rules given to the DW and boundaries that need to be observed between the employer and the employee. These can lead to exclusion and notions of un-belonging. Cox argues that the employer and her cleaner are two different women producing an ideal home through the cult of domesticity (Yurdakul, 2021).

The employer-employee relationship can be understood by analyzing the social interactions between the employer and employee within the symbolic boundaries of home and domesticity (Marchetti, 2022). Romero (1988) has examined the production of 'sisterhood' in both women, which could blur the boundaries of social class between the woman employer and the woman employee. Hierarchies could be produced and reinforced through aspects of naming, such as when the domestic worker refers to the employer as madam, boss, madam boss,or mama (mother) or mom. The name illustrates the subject position of the worker versus their employer. Women domestic workers as aunts is a name for inclusion as one of the respected family members, while these have been noted as problematic (Romero, 1988). Therefore,domestic workers cannot be defined as individuals working in private homes but rather be understood within the position and hierarchies of the symbolic home. Space is produced through power, and tensions can be produced within the social order of the hierarchies of the home that shape workers' experiences. Therefore,the everyday lived experiences of WPDWs are multidimensional and illustrate how space is perceived, lived, and experienced due to asymmetrical power (Lefebvre, 2013, 1974).

The home is symbolic and material,reproducing individual,household, and geographical status (Blunt & Varley, 2005). Geographies of home are better placed to examine the social interrelationships connected to understand the social and spatial within the domestic world (Blunt & Varley, 2005). Home is a space of work where diverse domestic activities take place, associated with increased consumption in contemporary times (Cox, 2013). Consumption patterns in domestic practices of cooking, caring, and cleaning can locate social differences. In addition,these activities in space can be mapped through the analysis of micromobilities to understand dimensions of leisure time,work-life balance, and body movements. The scale of the body at home connects to the increasing debates about the geographies of corporeality and micromobilities. It can include how the body is positioned and controlled and issues of surveillance through modern technologies that can contradict the home as a space of privacy,hidden from the outside world.

2.7 Social Reproduction Theory

According to Marx,the theory of social reproduction was initially conceptualized by the first capitalist economists, among them François Quesnay (1694–1774) (Federici,2019). Marx and Engels advanced the theory to understand the interdependence of the production of commodities versus the production and reproduction of human beings in capitalist ideologies. The social reproduction (SR) definition is contested and could be defined as “the activities and attitudes,behaviors and emotions,and responsibilities and relationships directly involved in maintaining life,on a daily basis and intergenerationally. It involves various kinds of socially necessary work—mental, physical, and emotional—aimed at providing historically and socially,as well as biologically,defined means for maintaining and reproducing populations. Among other things,social reproduction includes how food,clothing,and shelter are made available for immediate consumption,how the maintenance and socialization of children are accomplished,how care of the elderly and infirm is provided,and how sexuality is socially constructed” (Brenner and Lasslett,quoted in Bhattacharya, 2017). This definition is not fixed but evolves in contexts with influences from other geographies due to spatial flows.

Marxist feminists, among them Mary Harris,Alexandra Kollonti,Dalla Costa,Selma James,Wally Secombe, Sylvia Federici, Lisa Vogel,Nancy Fraser,Tithi Bhattacharya,Simone de Beauvoir, and Susan Ferguson, have engaged with the struggles of working-class women within social reproduction. The struggles of unpaid labor were mainly connected to the wife, housewife, and working-class white woman,neglecting non-white women. Working-class women are heterogeneous and should not be exclusively examined through the lens of white women. The theory mainly focuses on the oppression of a homogeneous western white woman without much contribution from women on other geographical continents. It omits the struggles of heterogeneous women in the world to bring to an understanding that women's oppression and struggles are not universal and are shaped by specific social relations in place (Massey, 1994). Moreover,women can be placed in diverse categories, such as girls,wives, housewives,working women,paid domestic workers,LGBTQ+, differently abled women, and other evolving women categories. For the women categories,their burden over social reproduction could be of different degrees. Unemployed women perform a substantial amount of unpaid labor that patriarchy-capitalism does not compensate for, fueling capitalism's profits and accumulation. Furthermore,social reproduction processes exhibit significant diversity across various situations, individuals, cultures, and places, indicating a lack of homogeneity. The definition of social reproduction rides on conscious assumptions about the dichotomies and contradictions of production/reproduction,production/consumption,paid/unpaid domestic labor, and societal/social reproduction produced by capitalism (Weiss,2021;Bhattacharya,2017;Fraser, 2016). The continued neglect of reproduction by different regimes of capitalism in different contexts reproduces the outsourcing of paid domestic work. The vicious cycle of reproduction within capitalism extends beyond women in unpaid domestic work to contemporary issues of crisis of care,sustainable livelihoods,unsustainable consumption, and social inequalities (Weiss, 2021; Fraser, 2016). This, in effect,presents the conflict of social classes,sexualities, geography, cultures and generations. Ferguson (2020) provides an analysis of the applications of social reproduction Theory (SRT), delving into the mechanisms through which capitalism engenders race and gender discrimination.

The end product of social reproduction is stratified social class households,societies, countries, and communities produced by well-structured cycles of capitalist crises (Weiss, 2021). WPDWs become subjects of social stratification while their wages are dwindling. Fraser (2016) argues for an understanding of how different categories of women are positioned within the contradictions and inequalities of social reproduction and the broader implications for women,their families, and communities. This can be done by analyzing women's time poverty,family-life-work balance, and social depletion emanating from neglect of social depletion by capitalist societies (pp. 99). The OECD report in 2014 highlighted that globally, “women contribute more than 60% of the time devoted to housework and care, irrespective of their employment status, income, or education levels” (Rizavi and Sofer, 2010, cited in the OECD report, 2014). According to time studies conducted in Kenya, it has been observed that women dedicate an average of around 5 hours per day to unpaid care as their major occupation, while men report spending about 1 hour per day on the same. When supplementary activities are taken into account, women spend an average of 11.1 hours per day on caregiving, whereas men report spending an average of 2.9 hours per day on caregiving. On the contrary, men spent almost double the time in productive work than women (Stanford University report, 2022). As a result, the gender inequality gap widens for women compared to men. In contrast, if women could be paid for housework and if domestic work is equated in pay with any other occupation, women and domestic workers could be in an equal position with men on resources and social status if feminine time in housework could be properly valued.

It could be suggested that time studies be differentiated for different categories of women to understand the extent of time poverty. For example, time studies,work schedules, and nanny diaries specific to WPDWs are rich sources to understand the time constraints, work-life balance, and physical and psychological well-being of WPDWs. Moreover,how WPDWs negotiate their own care arrangements to inform the concept of care deficit and Hochschild ‘nanny chains’ in rural-urban contexts (Nadasen, 2017) . These aspects have been less explored in Kenya in regards to WPDWs, where it continues to be neglected as our care culture is static and does not take into consideration evolving social changes in places. Different women's labor struggles can be understood within cultural practices that combine with social reproduction (Nederveen Meerkerk et al., 2015). For example,while in many western contexts the care crisis has been highlighted as capitalist neglect of social reproduction,in Kenya care continues to be framed as a traditional culture that should be provided at a family and community level. Therefore,care budgets and policies in Kenya are neglected issues in budget allocation,with the presumption that women should be available for caring. While there are emerging alternative care spaces such as elderly homes,sending an elderly person to a care home is taboo, and it could create conflicts between generations (Kimamo, 2018). Therefore,the socio-cultural meaning of care can resist changes that add to more inequalities while also offering a space for alternative caring arrangements based on solidarity.

Within alternative development,Gibson-Graham and Geographies of Development argue for the recognition of diverse economic activities, including unpaid domestic and social reproduction work excluded from mainstream capitalist economies in many societies(Gibson-Graham, 2008, 2014; Geographies of Development, 2018). Alternatively,unpaid and social reproductive work that has never been considered for monetary compensation,connects to low wages of WPDWs,since it loses it's value and social meaning. In his work, Nadasen (2017) advocates for a reimagining of future care spaces in order to foster and consolidate alternative conceptions of caring labor cultures that are collectively embraced by neighborhoods and communities. This approach aims to enhance social cohesion and contribute to the advancement of alternative forms of local development. This could be achieved through communal care provision for children,the elderly,the sick,disabled as well as communal kitchens and laundry services. Communal spaces for social reproductive work could reduce socio economic discrimination of WPDWs while they could employ shared WPDWs as community workers in contrast to working for private employers. Therefore,it is relevant to recenter social reproduction theory, highlighting its externalization by colonial-patriarchy-capitalism systems,which Massey (1994) highlights are systems of the same ideology of capital accumulation. Current feminist debates call for reimagining social production within class to recenter oppression for diverse women categories including positioning the WPDWs. In addition,emerging issues of sexuality and heteronormativity (Bhattacharya, 2017). Feminist thinkers, as Federici (2019) highlights,are called to rethink social reproduction theory that 'places life at the center' to advance a new agenda for the feminist movement against power systems of oppression. Fraser (2016) argues for imagining the current era of financialized capitalism and dialectics of production—reproduction—towards women's emancipation. The debates of social reproduction aim to redefine the way in which WPDWs are discussed in relation to social reproduction, focusing on their role as a distinct social group.

2.8 The concept of intersectionality

Kimberly Crenshaw (1989), a civil and social activist and scholar, coined the term intersectionality, highlighting how the discursive intersections of race, class, and sex experiences of black women in American society contributed to their marginalization. Crenshaw (1989) presents the juridical framing of black women's sex discrimination cases in white women's households to underline the discursive race and sex axes in denial of justice to black women in the American patriarchal system that operate on hierarchies of race and sexuality. Crenshaw proposes the preservation of the figure of the "black woman," which in itself serves as a subject of investigation for prejudice that can be further exacerbated by both racial and gender factors. Black American women may encounter discrimination that shares similarities with the experiences of both white women and black men. However, black American women are deprived of social justice due to the prevailing societal norm that favors white male superiority (pp. 149). The implication of this discrimination against the specific category of black women is that it denies them the privileges accorded to black society in America through laws made by the same institutions that deny the justice.The aim of what Crenshaw cites is to disempower black women within racial and sexual hierarchies, reinforcing their subjectification and subordination. Rodriguez et al. (2016) argue that the purpose of examining intersections is to draw attention to the various dimensions of inequality that individuals and groups suffer as a result of their social membership.

There is a gap in the application of a feminist intersectional framework in Kenya as a critical analysis to understand WPDWs subjectification and therefore diverse forms of oppression. Intersectionality could be a useful lens to bring out multiple, intersecting, and overlapping forms of discrimination for WPDWs in Kenya as a unique social category, starting with African Kenyan women and women domestic workers and disassociating them from a universal category of African Kenyan women and women or male employers. This approach involves re-centering the subject "from margin to center" while placing the subject in different positions (Hooks, 1984). Elimination of the subject could also inform new narratives on theorizing the subject. It is important to recognize existing and emerging forms of oppression in specific geographies to inform intersectionality. To interpret intersectionality in the context of women in paid domestic work,domestic workers can experience discrimination as women domestic workers, whether they are white, black, or of color. For example,Kenyan WPDWs can share similar experiences with male domestic workers in the country. While this is noted,this discrimination could be analyzed differently depending on the urban-rural geography or trans-national context. For example, transnationally immigrant Kenyan domestic workers working in Lebanon can face similar or different discriminatory experiences compared to local migrants in rural and urban contexts. Similarly, their experiences can be compounded based on axes of race,social class,ethnic identities,age,marital status, religion, and other social categories that are place-specific, such as caste. For example,while in Kenya,race is consciously conflated with ethnicity, there are diverse racial groups, including Asians, Europeans, and Arabs, that are the main employers of women domestic workers. This omission could mask the racial discriminatory experiences of women. Race is not a standalone category and needs to be understood within the contours of ethnic identity, language, citizenship, and rural origin that are evolving with time. These categories in the country are further segregated based on political,legal,social, religious, and regional orientation. Critical feminist analyses need to destabilize the normalized,single, standardized, and dominant version of locating discrimination within privileges accorded to dominant social groups while excluding the minority.

Global North Scholars Marchetti, Lutz, Romero, and Wilson have applied feminist intersectionality in relation to transnational migrant domestic workers experiences in Europe (Marchetti, 2022). However, Marchetti (2022) criticizes Lutz and Romero's work in that their empirical studies were homogeneous, citing that real elements of commonality or difference between' domestic workers' experiences were not properly theorized (pp. 53). Furthermore,Marchetti recognizes that the application of intersectionality is diverse and conditioned by the subject of debate. Marchetti (2022) highlights how the vectors of differences of age,nationalities,gender,ethnicity, religion, and legal status intersect with migration policy within the European context and their implications for the socio-economic disparities experienced by migrant care workers. Additional axes of differences—gender and ethnicity—are reproduced and reinforced by employment agencies,employers,the employment relationship, and the type of care arrangement (pp. 53–54).In addition, the informal or formal spaces of care provision (the home,care homes, hospitals, and schools) can add to other vectors, such as education and professionalism. For Marchetti,while noting colonialism and COVID-19 reproduced migrant workers' social differences,the scholarship does not highlight migratory experiences segregated for women, men, and other gender-identifying individuals. Furthermore,the axes of differences may not represent themselves simultaneously within the dimensions presented and may be shaped by deeper issues of the culture of the local place and spaces of care, such as an individual home. Therefore,the application of intersectionality by Marchetti is one approach among other methodologies that can be used for theorizing intersectionality within different disciplines.

The study conducted by Yurdakul (2022) examines the visual depictions of intersectionality in two current films, namely 'Black Girl,' and 'Roma.' These films are analyzed within the context of intersecting inequalities related to race/ethnicity, class, and sexuality. The research highlights how these films transcend boundaries and generations, hence amplifying their impact and influence on the figure of a maid. In Black Girl, the depiction of the geographical factors that determine the selection of individuals for the position of maid, including considerations of social class and racial background, reflects the enduring influence of colonial power dynamics and the historical legacy of black slavery. For Roma,Cleo's ethnicity is an additional difference. While both films are about the maid,it's possible that in Black Girl, inequalities are greater than for Roma due to racial positions in the world. Black women have universally been overrepresented in WPDW, an image that has remained static without significant change even in modern times. Throughout history, blackness has consistently been positioned as the subordinate racial category, juxtaposed with whiteness as the dominant hierarchy, while other racial groups have occupied intermediate positions. Blackness and poverty are correlates of poverty and income, where black people are placed at lower economic levels,a practice that transcends generations. Jokela (2018) argues for an understanding of socio-economic discrimination against PDW within three layers of inequalities in the contemporary period: the structural layer (social,cultural, and economic), the individual layer, and the policy layer (pp. 28–33). This approach could likewise inform theorizing intersectionality.

Lastly,intersectionality is a tool to highlight the silences, erasures, and omissions where real women's experiences in relation to their work are highlighted. This is towards destabilizing the social norm of “culture of silence” and culture of omission in our societies (Freire 1970). WPDWs suffer socioeconomic discrimination,physical abuse,mental abuse, psychological abuse,sexual violence, torture, and murder in employer households in global and local contexts. While this is noted,they are denied justice simply because they are women and a social category less privileged. The existence of a dual legal structure in Kenya—the parallel operation of informal traditional customary law and the adoption of formal conventional colonial English law—is a source of social injustice for women. It is encouraged that in the country,issues be deliberated at a family and communal level before being advanced to the conventional courts. In many instances, the informal customary justice system is the final decision maker.Both systems are male-dominated, and therefore, the patterns of women are judged from male perspectives. The injustices of WPDWs, as a result, tend to attract diminished attention and are at risk of being overlooked or disregarded. The theorizing of feminist intersectionality for WPDWs in Kenya would inform the starting point for WPDWs organizing in Kenya that is missing while highlighting and confronting intersecting systems of oppression (Bernardino-Costa, 2014; Marchetti et al., 2012). This is towards social justice for individual women workers, their families, and the social category of WPDWs. While this is noted, it would depend on support and collaboration from women employers,other women performing unpaid domestic labor,men,activists, politicians, and the communities that share in the struggles of WPDWs (Rojas Scheffer, 2021). The state is compelled to oversee the coordination and implementation of WPDW feminist activism.

2.9 Feminism framework in Kenya

The historical origins of feminism may be traced back to the 3rd century BCE in ancient Rome, when a women's assembly compelled consul Marcus Cato to repeal legislation that imposed restrictions on women's access to luxury items, arguing that such measures have the potential to facilitate women's achievement of equality with men. Cato presented his argument:"As soon as they begin to be your equals, they will have become your superiors!". This statement indicates that equality was and is not freely given. It could be read as a continuous fight composed of tensions, silences, and means of subordination. During the 14th and 15th centuries in France, Christine de Pisan emerged as a prominent figure who is recognized as the first feminist French philosopher. Pisan actively promoted the cause of women's education, as well as their social and moral rights. In medieval Europe, women were devoid of certain fundamental rights, including property ownership, access to education, voting privileges, professional opportunities, autonomy in conducting business affairs, decision-making authority over their offspring, and ownership of their own womanhood.

The term "feminism" was initially used by the French philosopher Charles Fourier in 1837, when it was referred to as "féminisme." Fourier employed this phrase to denote a social movement or political ideology centered around women. The concept disseminated throughout Europe during the 1890s and then spread to both North and South America during the 1900s, attracting the attention of several prominent advocates. The feminism label has remained controversial in different contexts, cultures, and periods, and likewise within race,sexuality,gender,class, and other evolving divisions. Feminism has centered on segregations based on sexuality and race, with white women seen as the frontiers laying the standard for its mandate. Feminism and patriarchy are produced in diverse ways in different geographies and for different categories, extending beyond women and white women to encompass males and queer groups.

Black feminist philosophy refers to the theoretical understanding and interpretation of the lived experiences of black women by individuals who directly encounter and navigate these realities (Collins, 2002, quoted in Gatwiri et al., 2016).African feminism can be traced to the UN decade for women (1975–1985), corresponding to the second wave of feminism (Kinyanjui, 2019). The concerns under the second wave included cultural inequalities,gender roles, and women's position in societies. African and Kenyan feminism is contested and interpreted as a white western-inspired label and as a struggle for sexual equality. Ijeabuonwu-Ida (2018) locates this problem in her work, "Feminism is an Alien Concept in Kenya" (pp.1).

In Kenya,in pre-colonial periods,women started organizing themselves into groups for support of different social tasks, including reproduction. A new turn on feminism occurred when Kenyan women, led by Kenya's first woman Cabinet Minister,Nyiva Mwendwa, attended the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995.There were misconceptions about the interpretation of the meaning of the phrase feminism and the objectives of the conference within society, mainly by men. The attendance of the conference was marked by conflicts between women and men, as women were perceived as contesting their biological natural roles of pregnancy,birthing,raising children, marriage, and domestic chores. The interpretation also encompassed the notion of Kenyan women actively seeking parity with white women within false portrayals of ideals of white women as independent and free against the burdensome African woman. This brought about conflicts between women and men and hindered the implementation of post-affirmative actions. Since then, women members of parliament have been fighting for the equality of representative seats and the struggles of Kenyan women.

The new constitution of Kenya advocates for two-thirds gender rule. The constitution laid the foundation for strengthening gender equality and women's empowerment. In the current 13th parliament,out of 290 members, only 47 are women (Kenyan parliament, 2023). Women in Kenya continue to face many inequalities, including systemic poverty,lower representation in formal employment, women's leadership representation,sexual health,maternal mortality,female genital mutilation,domestic violence,denial of abortion rights,rape,legal rights, the right to divorce, and exclusion from inheritance and property rights, among other issues. The late Prof.Wangari Maathai,an ecofeminist, advanced the fight for women's struggles in the 2000s. Women feminist thinkers and supporters in Kenya are regarded as radicals who go against African norms and customs and often face social exclusion. This has been noted by political activists, scholars, and community activists. Women feminists face violence,murder threats, and separation from marriage, among other inequalities (Kinyanjui, 2019). The current agenda has turned to fighting for queer community inclusion in bisexual Kenyan society,further submerging the many issues of women, which in effect further submerges the issues of WPDWs.

Connecting feminist activism with WPDW activism has proved to be paradoxical (Marchetti, 2021). Women feminists have been accused of being the main consumers of women-paid domestic labor, transferring their defeated sexism within the household to other women without dealing with the existing hegemonic masculinity in the sexual division of labor at spaces of home (Misra, 1998). The gap between feminist and domestic workers' mobilizations still remains wide (Geymonat Garofalo et al., 2021). In her work, Singha Lotika (2017) raises the subject of whether the concept of "paid domestic work" can be reconciled with feminism (pp.1) ? In addition, to WPDWs feminism. These inquiries are pertinent in the current period when social inequalities for the category of WPDWs are increasing. One reason for lack of reconciliation could be that the feminist movement has been conceived as a project of race and class hierarchies with different perceptions and interpretations in contexts. Within this perspective,it is difficult to see the unity of different categories of women in fighting for each other's oppression due to class hierarchies while noting that each of the women category needs the solidarity and efforts of others to fight against a masculine dominated society (Rojas Scheffer, 2021). It is evident that masculinity downplays the struggles and oppression of women in domestic labor whether Paid or unpaid and efforts for a united movement to contest the oppression. Waged work that focus on WPDWs, both in global and local contexts, is currently oriented toward global justice, with images of women domestic workers in movements demanding human rights, dignity, and equal occupational and social recognition (Marchetti et al., 2021;Fish, 2017;D'Souza, 2010). Women domestic workers' important milestones of activism have been noted in Brazil, Colombia, India and Taiwan (Geymonat Garofalo et al., 2021). In Kenya,WPDWs organizing is still in its nascent stages, where women organize themselves in groups to offer social, economic, and emotional support at the grassroots level. Women's groups are constrained due to a lack of political representation on issues such as poor wages,poor working conditions,physical and sexual abuse that are ignored, unlawful termination, lack of social protections and a lack of alternative forms of employment. In various contexts, including Kenya, WPDWs have not successfully attained the desired objectives of "decent work" as outlined in the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Decent Work Convention, which necessitates ratification by all nations. The inclusion of unreached and under-represented WPDWs , within the global WPDWs movement warrants careful consideration and strategic planning.

Kenya has an opportunity to move towards new narratives and elicit debates about women domestic workers mobilization and organizing towards social justice that are currently missing. These could extend to include diverse categories of women domestic workers, both in urban centers and rural territories, and intra-migrants from neighboring countries,eventually,considering also men domestic workers. Overall,feminism is founded on the belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes,a struggle against male privilege standards (Mohajan, 2022). Male privileges depend also on labor and social hierarchies of men and women where men paid domestic workers are disadvantaged and WPDWs are more disadvantaged. Feminism therefore encompasses various manifestations, including a social movement, a theoretical framework, an analytical approach, and a transformative project for theorizing marginal groups. Overall,feminism is centered on locating gender differences,gender inequality,sexual,gender, racial, and structural oppression of women, and many other categories. Iris Young locates the five faces of oppression as violence,exploitation,powerlessness, marginalization, and cultural imperialism that should be tackled to bring about social change (Young, 2000, 1988). These oppressions have been argued to have been extended in contemporary periods beyond five. Belly Hooks offers a compelling definition of feminism, underlying that “feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression,” and therefore Feminism is for Everyone (Hooks, 2015,2000). Hooks adds “It is therefore a unitary social and political movement towards democracy and solidarity for vulnerable social categories beyond women". The entire framework of feminism requires a transformative revolution in order to fully address its true aim within the context of genuine challenges and the lived experiences of the people impacted. Therefore, an intersectional feminist project towards WPDWs should include the real struggles and oppression of WPDWs in Kenya. The support of the government, through its administrative organs and organizations working to support women domestic workers, such as KUDHEIHA,WIEGO,women’s rights organizations, civil society,development actors,the private sector, and communities. There are limited studies incorporating men in the WPDW struggle, and the images of women fighting for recognition have not brought about significant social change. Further consideration should be given to changing the name feminism within the linguistic turn, which, as Massey argues,any connotation of woman or female has carried a linguistic, historical, and contemporary negative representation (Massey, 1994).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research design

This study utilized the qualitative method of focused group discussions, commonly referred to as FGDs, as an appropriate approach to listening to marginalized groups,such as women domestic workers (Kook et al., 2019). The choice of the FGDs advocates for listening to and privileging the voices of women domestic workers as the main protagonists of their experiences within paid domestic work. This is in line with the feminist approach of breaking women domestic workers' silence and giving them agency as an emancipatory act. Bringing out women's voices and silences is a non-traditional way of understanding women's position and opportunities to effect social change,in this study, a move towards social justice to WPDWs in Nairobi. The FGDs were complemented by photo elicitation, specifically researcher-driven photo elicitation, a form of visual method (Glaw et al., 2017).

The aim of the visual method was to elicit discussion, interpretation, and different insights from the women “attributing social and personal meanings and values” to visual phenomena (Ruby, 1995, quoted in Bignante, 2010). The researcher selected one image **(**see figure 1**)** as a visual, non-formal learning tool .This technique ,that is normally neglected as a crucial human learning and presentation of different worldviews,has proved to be beneficial to social research while interacting with a specific group of social categories including WPDWs.. The aim of the researcher was to find out if the participants could connect the photo to agency, alternative skills, empowerment, and solidarity for the possibilities of WPDW activism,while it was selected from a natural rural environment, connecting it to the rural origins of the participants. In addition,the approach advocates for feminist praxis in reflecting on self within a group and understanding women's dreams beyond working as WPDWs. It draws attention away from the center of WPDWs as victims to empowered social actors. However,the researcher understands that there are differing worldviews and different perceptions that could emanate from the photo elicitation, including bias. For example,the photo is of sisal baskets mainly used by women in Kenyan society and could highlight women's struggles with their daily burdens of caring for their families, while the researcher envisions freedom for women. Furthermore, the utilization of participant observation techniques was integrated in order to reveal the fundamental and innate human behavior inside the study focused on the human population (Baker, 2006). Observed human behavior,including emotions,feelings,thoughts,expressions, silences, and human sounds, is key to understanding the world in which humans live and the subconscious, natural,natural and hidden behaviors and attitudes.

Figure 1: Photo shared by the researcher for the FGDs
Source: Xinhua News 2022 . Africa

The researcher explained to the participants that the process was open participation, and as a group we were listening and learning from each other, and some women at the end of the sessions were in agreement that they had alternative perspectives about themselves and their occupation. The focus group context and open participatory process enabled researcher-participant observation as an attention to group micro-dynamics of power (Ayrton, 2019). The group's and researcher's positions were vital to understanding the different positions of power in scientific knowledge co-creation (Caretta & Vacchelli, 2013). Due to the physical distance between the researcher and the female participants,the FGDs were conducted and moderated by the researcher via Zoom Conference,a virtual meeting room.

The participants of the FGDs were eight (8) women between the ages of 20 and 50 who are currently employed as domestic workers in Nairobi city, working in different city neighborhoods. The women were selected through existing networks with the researcher. The researcher organized two FGDs with the same group of women in May 2023 and in September 2023, conducted with some guiding questions (See Table 1). The focus group discussions were debated in Kenyan sheng,a multicultural language code ("Swahili-English slang) unique to the Nairobi urban context (Ferrari, 2014). The language was chosen as it allowed the female participants to be comfortable expressing themselves while also sharing with the researcher. The participants consented to recording the sessions and were informed that the recording would be shared within the boundaries of the current thesis.

Questions in English	Questions translated in Sheng-Swahili
What motivated you to engage in paid domestic work in Nairobi?	Ni kwanini uliamua kufanya kazi ya nyumbani ya kulipwa Nairobi?
What were the constraints?	Vikwazo zilikuwa vipi?
What is the schedule of your duties from morning to evening?	Kuanzia asubuhi hadi jioni,majukumu yako ni gani?
What are some of the memories of experiences in the households you have worked for?	Ukifikiria venye ulianza hii kazi,nyumba zenye umefanya,uko na kumbukumbu gani?
When you think of your personal characteristics,how have they emerged in your work?	Unapofikiria sifa zako za kibinafsi, zimejitokeza vipi katika kazi yako?
Questions with researcher selected Photo	
Questions in English	Questions translated in Sheng-Swahili
When you see this photo,what comes to mind?	Unapoangalia picha hii, nini kinakukujia kwa mawazo yako?
Has working as a domestic worker fulfilled your lifelong goals as a woman?	Je, kufanya kazi kama mfanyakazi wa nyumba kumetimiza malengo yako ya maisha kama mwanamke?
What would you like to change about this job,thinking of women?	Je, ungependa kubadilisha nini kuhusu kazi hii,ukifikiria wewe kama mwanamke?

Table 1: Focus group discussion guiding questions

3.2. Sampling

The thesis applied non-probability or non-random sampling, specifically convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a type of sampling where members of the target population that meet certain practical criteria, such as easy accessibility,geographical proximity, availability at a given time, and the willingness to participate, are included for the purpose of the study (Simkus, 2023) The researcher made this choice of sampling based on the probability that the participants were mainly available on a Sunday afternoon since Sunday is normally women's off day. Eight WPDWs were the selected target population. The women had been contacted in advance and agreed to participate in the study. The women were of the intended target population, age 18 and above,the approved age for working in the country, and were all working in Nairobi city in different neighborhoods at the time of the FGD. The participant demographic profiles that were identified as crucial to the study were recorded (see Table 2). Participants were all women from rural peripheries in Kenya, between 20 and 50 years of age, with 1–10 years of experience in paid domestic work, and were either live-in or live-out workers.

Pseudonym	**Working arrangement**	**Age**	**Rural origin (Region)**	**Ethnicity**	**Education**	**Marital status**	**No. of children**	**Yrs in PDW**	**Aprox.no. of households worked in Nairobi**
Jane	Live-In	30	Bungoma	Luhya	Form 2 Tailoring/dress making	Single	1	5	3
Rose	Live-Out	38	Turbo	Luhya	Std. 7	Separated	5	6	3
Caro	Live-Out	30	Turbo	Luhya	Not disclosed	Single	1	10	7
Esther	Live-In	50	Machakos	Kamba	Std.6	Single	1	4	5
Millicent	Live-In	43	Migori	Luhya	Std.2	Separated	1	10	10
Cynthia	Live-In	32	Machakos	Kamba	Std.8	Married	3	10	4
Sharon	Live-In	20	Machakos	Kamba	Form 4	Single	0	1	2
Ann	Live-In	23	Luanda	Luhya	Form 4	Single	1	1	2

Table 2 : Women Paid Domestic Workers FGD Participants Demographics

3.3. Data analysis

The researcher followed thematic data analysis,identifying emerging themes that answered the research questions or were close to giving answers to the research questions. The focus group discussions were transcribed, analyzed, and interpreted following emerging themes that answered the research questions while connecting to the literature review (Nowell et al., 2017). The recording was transcribed and translated from Sheng-Swahili to English by the researcher while making an effort to keep the actual words of the women. Therefore,the expectations of formal English grammar accuracy in the transcription might be of low quality. The analysis of the empirical data was conceptualized through the feminist concept of intersectionality, first conceived by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989). My experiences as a WPDW employer,observations and interactions with other WPDW employers and women employees in Nairobi, and my positionality were central to the analysis of the data.

3.4. Limitations and assumptions of the study

The study mainly focused on understanding the experiences of WPDWs from Kenya with Nairobi, with a particular emphasis on the local context of Nairobi. The study encountered some constraints. The organization of the Focus Group Discussions (FGD) had delays beyond the initially anticipated timeframe, mostly attributable to disparities in geographical distance and time differences between the researcher and the WPDW participants. The discussion took place through a Zoom meeting platform since the moderator was not physically in Nairobi. Prior to the sessions, certain participants chose not to participate or withdrew due to concerns about the potential misuse of Zoom meeting recordings by researchers. This concern was valid with instances of misuse of WPDWs experiences observed on social media platforms for personal gains or political intentions in the country since social media is not censored in the country. Certain women expressed concerns regarding the potential loss of their sole means of sustenance in the event that their employers discovered their involvement in FGDs or presence on social media platforms. The researcher utilized her network of women employed as domestic workers who referred other WPDWs for participation and women employers who referred some of their women employees. This was possible since the moderator had lived in Nairobi and had established a close network of friends while also being familiar with the contextual experiences of WPDW in Nairobi. The moderator was conscious and clarified the objectives and contents of the study to WPDW participants to avoid the misperception that the FGD could be misused. It would have been much easier if the researcher was directly interacting with the women in their socialization spaces, which are familiar to the researcher, mainly during their off day on Sunday. Due to time constraints in the first session in May 2023, which lasted 54 minutes,a second brief session was organized to conclude in September 2023. Difficulties were met in coordinating for the same women to participate in the second session since some two women had transferred to new employers. The researcher had to wait for all the participants to conveniently participate once again. This request was honored by the women, but after a lapse of time, The female participants were not familiar with the use of advanced technology and Zoom meetings; there were some interruptions of voice, making some information unclear. Only two women had access to their own smartphones that they could use without further facilitation. Two women had to be facilitated by their female employers and four women by the moderators' close friends.

FGDs hold some setbacks as compared to other methods. The facilitation process and the virtual social meeting context could have caused the participants to withhold information or fit information within the context. However,the researcher notes that the research involves human beings as social beings, and this is a normal occurrence, while the researcher accepts what was shared as adequate and truthful. It was the first time the researcher engaged in moderating a FGD, using photo elicitation and observation, and the first time for the participants involved to participate in a study. This had limitations on the experiences and expectations of both the researcher and the participants. The convenience sampling technique applied was limited since only two ethnicities in Kenya participated in the study,while WPDWs are not confined to these ethnic origins. Therefore, the study findings and analysis strictly refer to the subpopulation of WPDWs that participated and cannot be generalized. The researcher is aware that the context of being employed as a WPDW has changed in current times in the city, and employees could be both live-in or live-out,so the researcher, due to the sampling method explained above,utilized both live-in and live-out participants. This was also considered due to the time constraints of the study. Overall,the demographics presented for the participants are fitting for only this specific group that participated in the FGDs. Generally, the demographic composition of WPDWs is typically characterized by a wide range of diversity, which poses challenges when employing non-probability sampling methods. The researcher is limited in her knowledge of the complex concept of women in paid domestic work, the feminist approach, and intersectionality, coming from a management background and public administration experience. Data coding and analysis were informed by a review of relevant literature as well as my own personal and contextual experiences. The moderator and the women belonged to diverse ethnic backgrounds. It is important to note that while the researcher and the subjects shared a common language of communication, namely the sheng language of moderation, this language is not our native mother tongue. This situation may have presented challenges for women in terms of their ability to express themselves freely, as well as for the moderator in terms of efficiently moderating the discussions. Although the researcher employed the observation technique, certain facial and bodily expressions and emotions within the Zoom conference could not be discerned, which are vital for investigating concealed social behavior and attitudes that could enhance the analysis of the information presented.

It was assumed that the female participants self-identified as women based on the prevailing binary gender classification of women and men within Kenyan society. It is important to acknowledge that women, both as a gender and a sexual category, are not fixed entities. There exist dynamic and evolving sexual and gender identities and manifestations that were not accounted for in the scope of this study.

3.5 Ethics of the study

At the start of the FGD,the researcher took the participants through the FGD process. First, making an introduction of yourself as the moderator, a brief background,the current study context in Padova,the main aim of the selected topic, and details of the research consent form used (see Annex 2).To conform to anonymity and confidentiality requirements,all reference names used were pseudonyms (see Table 1 above on female participant demographics) within the principles of qualitative research (Heaton, 2022). While the researcher gave the participants the freedom to each select a pseudonym,none of the women selected a name according to their ethnicity; all preferred to be referred to by English pseudo names. The participants' consent was sought to record their voices and were advised that the recording would be strictly used for purposes of the research within the current study. Participants were allowed to opt out or withhold their contribution if they felt uncomfortable doing so. The facilitator constantly repeated that participation was voluntary when requesting women's contributions. I adhered to feminist research requirements for researching vulnerable categories of women, including WPDWs. The study topic of women paid domestic work in Kenya continues to be a vulnerable topic, where studies mainly concentrate on negative experiences of women based on working conditions,bad employer-employee relationships, and women domestic workers physical, sexual, and psychological abuse in the past and present. The researcher, in line with the feminist approach, took care not to cause any or more harm to the women and to be sensitive to their vulnerability to women. This informed the integration of the photo elicitation to move beyond WPDW's representation as vulnerable victims without agency. I had established contacts for referral in case a female participant requested support. Lastly,the study complied with the citation of all scholarship materials,articles, videos, and websites quoted in the references section.

3.6. Positionality

Holmes Darwin (2020) adopts diverse definitions of positionality within the social sciences. First, as “both the description of an individual’s world view and the position they adopt about a research task and its social and political context ”(Rowe, 2014, quoted in Holmes Darwin, 2020). Second, it “reflects the position that the researcher has chosen to adopt within a given research study(Savin-Baden & Major, 2013, quoted in Holmes Darwin, 2020). Holmes Darwin adds that in addition to personal beliefs,knowledge of a context,ontological knowledge, and personal assumptions about social and world reality (pp.1-2). Within the social sciences, positionality is reflected in a researcher's beliefs, which are shaped by a range of factors, including political affiliation, religious convictions, gender, sexual orientation, historical and geographical context, ethnicity, race, social class, social standing,personal experiences, skills, and motivations for social change. Overall,positionality has implications for how the study in question is implemented,the study process, and the interpretation of results and final outcomes. My positionality within the study of WPDW lies in that I identify as an African Kenyan female of 43 years from a middle-class family. I was raised in the rural southern region of Kenya within the Kamba ethnic group and later moved to the capital city of Nairobi for my college education and work, where I had lived for 20 years before the beginning of my studies at Padova University. I consider myself a single mother of one child who has been a paid domestic worker’s employer in urban Nairobi due to work-life balance. My experiences with paid domestic workers span 3 years, from 2014 to 2017, where I employed more than 10 women domestic workers from different regions in Kenya,different ethnicities, ages, religions,marital statuses, levels of education, and one woman from neighboring EAC country Uganda. For my need to employ a WPDW for providing child care, I used my existing social networks from family and friends, the increasing number of city employment bureaus and paid daycare centers in the city, and alternative, expanding neoliberal market channels. Besides, I am not affiliated with any political group, and I consider some Kenyan ethnic cultural practices on women, such as construction of women as subjects to male,the interpretation of dowry payment, inheritance to family and husbands properties, women's singlehood, being differently abled, the perception of being highly educated as a woman, and restrictions on divorce and separation, as main women's struggles and oppression. Nonetheless,Kenyan women have been empowered beyond patriarchal expectations through solidarities, for example, the women's chamas (investments) that have enabled women to get out of patriarchal poverty.

I consider myself a self-conscious Kenyan feminist interested in analyzing the oppression of the Kenyan woman from a multidimensional point of view. There exists unresolved historical issues that persist in current times and have been subject to a notable degree of silence, matters that are at the heart of my current and future research. My aim, therefore, is to appreciate, critique, and find alternative narrations of the category of Kenyan woman. Kenyan women's oppression extends to different categories of women, such as married women,single women by choice,divorced women,teenage mothers,incarcerated women,women sexworkers, women in crime,the girl child, and women with limited abilities and evolving social categories.The study topic was primarily informed by researchers' interest in theorizing women in paid domestic work and reviving women's voices, noting that studies in this direction had received limited attention in the country's scholarship within the current period. Theorizing WPDWs aims to make women's lives better through awareness of themselves and harnessing women's empowerment opportunities. Moreover,recognizing the value of WPDW as decent and valuable work in society Nevertheless, I take note that Kenyan feminism extends beyond women as a category to many other evolving social categories in the country, including the queer community. I am aware that Kenyan women who publicly declare their feminism position are ridiculed in society and could face societal,political, religious, and scholarship affiliation exclusion since, in the Kenyan context,feminism is perceived as white women's ideology and as another culture that could interfere with standardized Kenyan culture. Nevertheless,issues affecting Kenyan women have received more attention in contemporary periods, and there is a need to progress on their theorizing,particularly deconstructing the static sexual binaries of male-female and existing gender versus social norms that privilege male dominance within the patriarchy structure.

My experiences with paid women domestic workers lie in my position as a single woman domestic worker employer and were both positive and negative. I am aware that I enter this study from the perspective of asymmetrical power as a former paid domestic employer and a current researcher in a western context researching women in paid domestic work back in my country. Due to this rationale, it was necessary for me to adopt a neutral stance in order to facilitate an environment where the participants could openly articulate their respective perspectives. The adoption of an approach that grants participants primary agency and positions the researcher in a secondary role, while recognizing that knowledge is collaboratively generated and shared by both the researcher and participants through lived experiences,which could be diverse. This perspective presents a departure from traditional research methodologies. I demonstrated empathy towards the circumstances faced by women, since I was able to establish a personal connection with the challenges experienced by female domestic workers in Nairobi, as well as relate to the majority of single women who participated in the study.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY CONTEXT

The empirical case study is based in the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, where unofficial country data estimate that 80% of WPDWs out of the 43,100 female domestic workers in the country are based in the city,working in urban private homes (ILO, 2013). Kenya is classified as the ninth-largest economy in Africa, making it a middle-income country in sub-Saharan Africa. The country is divided into 47 counties (former administrative provinces), adopted as the new political and administrative structures with the promulgation of the new Kenyan constitution in 2010. Nairobi is the largest county and the capital of Kenya, divided into 17 sub-counties. The centrality of the city in East and Central Africa has attracted many multinational organizations, including the United Nations headquarters in Africa. The city originated in the late 1890s as a colonial central railway depot supply center and new urban settlement linking Mombasa and Uganda (Nairobi City County, 2023). The etymology of the name Nairobi is derived from the Maasai phrase Enkare Nairobi, which translates to a 'place of cool waters',with reference to the network of rivers that flowed through the city's territory. In the past, before the city became an urban center,the area Nairobi occupied was an uninhabited swamp. In the past,there were three ethnic communities whose livelihoods depended on the networks of rivers, with the Nairobi River as the main water source that traversed the city territories. The maasai (pastoralists), the akamba (sedentary), and the kikuyu (agriculturalists) were eventually displaced by the colonialist idea of urban center establishment.

Nairobi is the most populated urban area in the country, with 4.3 million residents (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019). The city reports extreme economic inequalities between the rich and the poor. 75% of the urban population is absorbed by informal settlements (referred to as slums or urban villages contrasting it with rural villages. The number of slum inhabitants is expected to double in the next 15 years by 2030 due to rapid urbanization (Unhabitat, 2023). Nairobi is a multiethnic and multiracial city. Spoken languages in the city include Sheng,English,ethnic dialects, and different racial languages. Sheng is an urban, youth sociolect that mixes English, Kiswahili, and ethnic languages and shares many features with slang to forge a new, hybrid identity (Samper, 2002).

Since post-independence, urbanization has provided an attraction for rural-urban migrants in search of waged labor,including women. Nairobi is also known by other names, including ‘the City Under the Sun’, ‘the Green City Under the Sun', and ‘Kanairo’, a slang sheng language metaphorical word that has a meaning to how the city is shrinking in comparison to rural areas due to its many urbanization challenges. Within modernity and sense of place,Nairobi city is represented as the core,the symbolic emblem of a globalized and urbanized center. On the contrary,peripheral areas are marginalized and overlooked in development projects. There is less investment by the government for infrastructure such as transport and communication,hospitals,education institutions,other service industries, and manufacturing industries in the peripheries.

The city records an increasing rate of poverty between the rich and the poor, segregated by neighborhoods. The city battles urbanization and socioeconomic inequalities related to employment,polarized income inequalities,population increase, and insufficient provision of basic public and social services such as health,food for the poor,housing,power,waste collection, water, and road infrastructure. In addition,there are high crime rates and expanding informal settlements due to poor governance and city planning. Women from rural peripheries,predominantly from lower socioeconomic backgrounds due to diminishing livelihoods in peripheral areas and limited employment opportunities in the city, are often employed as WPDWs. WPDWs roles have been highlighted as supporting other women in formal employment with traditional household chores such as cooking, cleaning, and overall house management activities, as well as keeping guard over houses due to the high crime rates in neighborhoods. A significant number of WPDWs are live-in domestic workers, while emerging trends have seen many women opt for live-out arrangements. The reason for living out could be due to living with family,undertaking WPDW as casual work while combining the work with additional informal small businesses to supplement WPDWs income or taking care of the family. Women PDW is poorly paid, and most women end up living in the informal settlements in the city.

Past, and current empirical studies on WPDWs in Nairobi have primarily focused on the working conditions, highlighting WPDW exploitation and abuse in private households. The demand for the recognition of human rights in Nairobi by WPDWs is frequently accompanied by the rallying cry of ‘'Sisi Pia ni Watu’ (even us, we are humans) against resistance to employer exploitation (The Republic, 2022). Agaya and Asunza (2013) conducted empirical studies on the topic of WPDWs in Nairobi, specifically focusing on domestic workers in the Mukuru informal settlement. Another study by Guantai (2020) examined the various factors that influence the wage levels of domestic workers in Nairobi. Muasya (2014, 2016) explored the significant role played by domestic helpers in facilitating work-family balance for working women. Nyaura and Ngugi (2019) investigated the difficult circumstances faced by house-helps (domestic workers) in selected estates within the Eastlands Area of Nairobi County. Rombo and Lutomia (2016) conducted research on the experiences of house-helps in Kawangware from a queer perspective. Lastly, Mbugua (2014) explored the challenges encountered by women casual domestic workers in the Dagoretti sub-county. There is a scarcity of empirical research that examines the relationship between the historical colonization of paid domestic work (PDW) and current social transformations, particularly in the context of urbanization and globalization. Furthermore, the connection between WPDW and spatial contexts, such as geographies of home, as well as the idea of intersectionality, which can serve as a theoretical framework for understanding social justice within the context of WPDW, has not been established. The identification of this gap in knowledge has shaped the focus of this research, which aims to examine historical and current emerging ideologies within the framework of women PDW. The objective is to shed light on the socio-economic inequalities faced by women, recognizing their diverse and ever-changing experiences. Hence, act as a proposal to commence advocacy for WPDWs within the framework of feminism, as discussed in sections 2.8 and 2.9. The current Nairobi city administration, under the 5th Kenyan president since 2022, strives to make ‘Nairobi the city of order and dignity, hope, and opportunities for all’[7] .

[7] https://nairobi.go.ke/about-nairobi/

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The FGDs started by understanding the motivations of women to undertake PDW in Nairobi while tracing the factors that push and pull women into PDW. However,the motivations turned out to be connected to restrictions on women's labor opportunities in Nairobi and Kenya to a broader extent.

5.1 Women's socio-economic restrictions

The researcher started by understanding the motivations and restrictions of women that confine WPDWs to paid domestic work. Themes that emerged represented the widespread issue of female unemployment in both Nairobi and Kenya,to a greater extent, the limited availability of alternative employment opportunities for women, socio-cultural barriers, disparities in remuneration between urban Nairobi as compared to rural areas and smaller towns for similar domestic work employment, and the diminishing viability of farming as an economic means in Kenya's rural peripheries.

To start with,Jane-30 mentioned diminishing livelihoods in rural peripheries as a constraint that motivated her to search for WPDW in Nairobi city.

I had issues with school fees. I was a farmer,but when my child joined high school, and it was a boarding school, I understood I had to get the money since farming was not possible. I got paid domestic work in Bungoma town,but the salary was Ksh. 4000. My friend informed me that when I come to Nairobi, I can be paid Ksh. 6,000 and above. My friend searched for a job for me, and I started with Ksh. 8000. I then realized that here (referring to Nairobi city), the money is better than in Bungoma, where I was [Jane, 30., a live-in domestic worker]

Caro-30 cites the persistent current problem of unemployment in the city, while Rose adds that it is a massive problem not only in Nairobi but to a broader extent in contemporary Kenya.

I have not gotten any other job that I can do. I also have a child who depends on me for everything. I found out that there is no job that is easy to get currently. Then I saw that the only job here that I could do was this one. I am just doing it because there is no other way. So I have to do this work to help me raise my child too. [Caro, 30., a live-out domestic worker]

Rose-38 pointed out the socio-cultural practice of polygamy that deprives separated Kenyan women partners' child support while excluding men from economic, social, and legal responsibility.

I was married. I was living in Nairobi with my husband,so when we separated, I was just forced to look for a job, just here in Nairobi,and then I started engaging in paid domestic work. When we separated,he refused to take up child care responsibilities,and I have already informed you that I am a mother of five children, and they depend on me. I could not leave the children with him because you understand the situation with men. He will bring another woman tomorrow, and that other woman will not take care of your children, by the way. Then I decided to leave with my children,so it is a matter of self-sufficiency for me and my children,while the children depend on me too. [Rose, 38, a live-out domestic worker]

Esther-50 connected lower wages on the same job of women paid domestic work in a rural periphery to higher wages in the city, which Jane mentioned in the beginning concerning an urban periphery [Bungoma town];

For me, I started that job in a rural area,but I was only being paid a very small salary. I said to myself, Let me look for a job in Nairobi,so that I can come and find a lot more cash and take my child to school. [Esther, 50, a live-in domestic worker]

The motivations of Millicent-43 were slightly different. She first came to the city with a dream to continue her education and was later forced to engage in PDW.

I came with another woman here in Nairobi, Eastleigh. She promised she would support me with everything—enroll me in school,like that, like that. We stayed for 2 years; I didn't get any support, and she didn't take me to school. It was difficult even to afford to buy body lotion because she used to lock me in the house. One day, I came out and spoke to the neighbor, who said to me, "You can't suffer like this; you can work. I went into hiding, and she took me to another woman, where I started PDW. I started with a pay of Ksh. 500 per month; that is how much I was being paid. I continued like that, and I later got another place where I was paid Ksh. 2000. Like that, I found out that this PDW can help. [Millicent, 43, live-in domestic worker]

Jane-30 added a personal preference where live-in accommodation is provided by an employer.

This house job because we are given accommodation,we don't pay rent, because for now, if we say I go to security,it will mean that I should rent a house,and now that I have that salary and I am renting a house and maybe paying school fees and other needs,then that cash is not enough. Then,that is why the house job because we are being accommodated. You live like your own home,working,receiving accommodation and food. Now, the wages you receive, if it is school fees, you pay school fees or use for your own needs. [Jane, 30., a live-in domestic worker]

Later in the discussion, the act of engaging in women paid domestic work posed a conflict with the objectives and professional goals of the individuals involved. The researcher facilitated the participants during the picture elicitation session to get insight into the aspirations and motivations of women that extend beyond their employment as domestic workers. The objective was to examine and differentiate between how individuals and society perceive WPDW in anticipation for agency and the possibilities for self and group potential for practical actions towards organizing against the group's common struggles and taking advantage of activism knowledge and opportunities.

On my side, I view this job as not meeting my dreams. Because for me, I had a vision to be a driver. Then I was left with the children,so I am now raising the children. But I see that one day I must do this job of driving. Because when the children finish their studies,even for me, I will be able to pay the fee to learn to drive and progress in my life according to my dream. I want to be a driver and be assigned schoolchildren to drop and pick up at school. [Rose, 38, a live-out domestic worker]

My dream was to open a sewing workshop, and I applied for tenders from schools for making school uniforms. And I envision that when I am through with the responsibilities of school fees, I must start to search for the machine, I will look for a business house, and I will open my own business—that one of sewing. [Jane, 30., a live-in domestic worker]

I had wished to become a teacher, but because of a lack of money, I couldn't. So with the little cash I am getting here in this job, I save little by little to see how I can raise the college fees. I have hopes I can become a teacher, although it can take a little longer than expected. [Sharon, 20., a live-in domestic worker]

My dream was to become a video producer, so when I am here (in this job), I am searching for school fees. At least one day, I will come to achieve my dream. [Ann, 23., a live-in domestic worker]

Caro-30 stresses the challenges of other job opportunities while contesting that WPDW is not a real job, as evidenced by her tone and a click when she mentions that;

This housework job we do only because there is nothing else to do because you find it is the easy job to get here. By the way,there is no job even when you search for a hotel job; you cannot find one. You find what is available easily. So someone decides to just enter this job to do so that it can help a little bit instead of being idle. It can help slightly. [Caro., 30., live-out domestic worker]

This can be construed as a final acceptance of WPDW, wherein both Rose-38 and Jane-30 acknowledge that the income is inconsequential and one can commence with a significantly low remuneration in one household while searching for a better paying employer. On further discussion on the perceptions , the meaning and interpretation of paid domestic work the participants unanimously acknowledged that PDW has provided them with the means to fulfill their immediate daily basic requirements for self and family as well as acquire additional skills that can be useful in the future for personal growth.

On my side,this job has its own positives because it is the one that has raised my children for seven (7) years now. Because it is helping me on my side, it has raised my children and educated my children. Right now, 3 of them have finished Form 4, the 4th born is in Form 2, and the last born is in Grade 6. [Rose,a live-out domestic worker]

It has helped me; I can't say it is a bad job. If it was a bad job,even for me, I couldn't take it up; I could leave it. But because of the goodness it is helping me,it's because of this reason that I am persevering to go through these challenges because they are helping me somewhere. If it were not that, I don't know where I could be. [Rose, 38, a live-out domestic worker]

It also helps,because you meet people of all kinds. This one makes a lot of noise, but this one is gentle. So it helps you to learn how to live with them. You know, for now, when you meet this one making noise, I will stay with them like this. When you meet the good one, I will stay with them like this too. So sometimes it helps us to know how to identify people and how to live with the people.Because if you stay with them and learn from them,you will know this is how I will stay with them. Even when you go to another place and meet this same kind of person,that one you are used to,you will know how to handle them. [Cynthia, 32, a live-in domestic worker]

Cynthia-32 highlights the complications of describing an ideal employer and the social dimension that makes human beings complex. She highlights a strategy to negotiate her perception of the two types of employers that she segregates as good or bad employers.

When prompted further to explain whether paid domestic work requires possession of any skills,the perception of WPDW as unskilled emerged. Rose-38 contradicts the skills with a formal education certificate with the assumption that only innate abilities traditionally associated with women are the requisite qualifications for securing a WPDW job. Anne-23 adds that WPDW in urban households reinforces the persistence of traditional patriarchal sexual divisions and stereotypes of existing fixed dominant binaries of women - men roles as a practice of socialization within Kenyan society.

Haha, this house job does not require a certificate. Someone requests that if you have an identification document,then you can be employed. This is as long as you understand house rules. Housework,even when you go to someone else's house, is like your house; you will do the work as you do in your own house. [Rose, 38. live-out domestic worker]

Rose's-38 statement above homogenizes employers, while later in the discussion, the women were in agreement that employers, households, cultures, and tasks are differentiated. Gaining additional or better skills while engaging in WPDW was highlighted by Jane-30, Sharon-20, and Rose-38. Rose-38 contradicted herself when she was in agreement with other participants that PDW enables one to acquire useful skills while earlier in the discussion she was of the idea that PDW is unskilled work, contrasting it with innate female abilities and possession of academic certificates. On the contrary, perceptions of additional skills suggest that the skills are facilitated by the employer in Nairobi, who appears to be more skilled as compared to the stereotypes of the domestic workers' rural skills that can be interpreted as not fitting the modern city culture. This perception highlights the hierarchy of the female employer in the WPDW. The women describe how the attained skills can be taught to the women back in rural villages, whom Jane-30 perceived as not conforming to modern urban lifestyles and cultures of cooking. For example, Rose 38, Jane 30, and Sharon 20 all mentioned transferable modern urban cooking skills,which could be introduced to rural women. However,the cooking skills are presented as homogeneous by the female employers and within households.

Especially like cooking,when you have been shown all these things,when you know how to cook, and when you get money, you can open your small hotel and start cooking the foods for other people and get money. It is also good because she has given you some skills to use somewhere else in your job now. [Rose, 38. live-out domestic worker]

Like me, let's say maybe I am married or maybe I go home. I have my sisters, and I have to show them if it is cooking. If someone says that they don't know how to cook, I tell them, let me show you, and I teach them to cook. [Jane, 30. live-in domestic worker]

Sharon-20 expressed how the acquired cooking skills can assist in searching for another job in another household,expressing it as ''to grow''.

Maybe you don't know how to make chapati or pilau. Then you come and learn. At least you feel the place where you have been; you have been growing; you know much. You search for a job somewhere else. [Sharon, 20., live-in domestic worker]

On the contrary, the women maintained that they are unable to get out of PDW, which suggests that they have acknowledged their subject position of working as WPDWs in urban households. This can also be seen by the cumulative years of job experience of six participants, ranging from 4 to 10 years, except Sharon and Ann who each have 1 year of experience. Upon analyzing the symbolic and material dimensions of WPDWs, it becomes clear that their ability to change their social status is restricted. This reinforces the notion that the hiring of a domestic worker holds both symbolic and material significance for middle- and upper-class employers and households in Nairobi. The limitations of the alteration of their social status can be further revealed by each female participant

5.2 The help for urban Nairobi households

Urban households in Nairobi city have been portrayed as in need of help from other women as ideal helpers to help with the burden of domestic labor or broader social reproduction roles predominantly assigned to homogeneous women in Kenyan society. The researcher encouraged the women to provide a detailed account of their daily routines within the families where they worked. This was to understand the WPDW's role, their position in urban households, and their tasks to inform social depletion,work-life balance, and locate the crisis of care in urban Nairobi. This connects to social reproduction theory and the Potential to reject the idea of the home as the only assumed space of caregiving.

Most of the time, I clean the house at night. In the morning,it is to wake up, prepare breakfast for the child, and then take them to school. When I come back, I continue cleaning the dishes. Afterwards, I go to my small business outside. At around 2 or 2:30, I go to pick up the child from school, and we come back to the house. If it is homework, we do it. I give the child something like milk or fruits to take. Then I prepare myself for dinner in the evening. [Jane, 30, a live-out domestic worker]

For me, when I arrive, the first thing is to arrive early, like at 7 a.m. I start to prepare breakfast for the child, and I take the child to school. When I come back, I start with the utensils,washing clothes,like all house chores, and even having to go take lunch to the child. Later, I go pick up the child from school in the evening, bathe the child, and assist the child with homework. I go back to my place when I leave them, preparing supper. [Rose, 38, a live-out domestic worker]

In the morning, when I wake up, I prepare tea and prepare the child. I wait for the time I have to take the child to the bus. I take the child to wait for the bus and ensure they board and go to school. So when I come back, I have to do the remaining jobs: clean the house, wash clothes, and then wait for the evening tasks. [Millicent, 43, a live-in domestic worker]

I arrive in the morning too; I take the children to school; I start to clean the utensils; I then move to the washing clothes; I clean the house. I pick up the children at 16:00, I bathe them, I make supper for them, and then I leave to go home. [Caro, 30, a live-out domestic worker]

I wake up in the morning, prepare the child's breakfast, and take the child to the bus stage to go with the bus. Then I come back to clean the house, I take tea for breakfast, I wash clothes, and then at 16:00, I go to pick up the child. [Esther, 50, a live-in domestic worker]

I clean the house at night when I am about to go to sleep. I clean the house and wash the clothes because I have a small child who is three and a half years old. After I clean the house and wash the clothes at night,in the morning I have a child who goes to school at six. I prepare the child; he or she goes to school, and the child is picked up by the bus. When the child is picked up, I go inside and prepare breakfast for the people. When I finish preparing breakfast for the people, I then take my clothes and hang them. After hanging the clothes,if it is a day of watering the sukuma wiki (kales) here outside, I water them. Then I go and check on my chicken; if it is feeding them, I feed them; if it is to put water in for them, I put the water in. Then, after that, I go back to the house to do the small jobs, like cleaning utensils. If I want to go to the shop, I go to the shop if I need anything from the shop. [Cynthia, 32, a live-in domestic worker]

The presented excerpts illustrate the multifaceted tasks and responsibilities of paid social reproduction that extend beyond understanding PDW as a series of tasks. This inquiry is relevant for gaining insights into the concepts of time poverty, work-life balance, the repetitive nature of tasks, and bodily, physical, and mental labor specifically for WPDWs. None of the participants mentioned a male figure assisting in house chores, it can be deduced that women are primarily responsible for undertaking social reproduction obligations,conforming to society expectations. The contradiction between the significance of daily chores for the overall well-being of families and the compensation provided to WPDWs highlights the inadequate remuneration for these responsibilities, as will be presented in the discussion. Cynthia-32 noted that she extends her labor to other households for additional income. Cynthia-32 depicted the urban tasks providing modern lifestyles in the city, which she contrasts with the rural outskirts characterized by additional agricultural activities, water retrieval, and animal care. Cynthia's-32 depiction of the employer's vegetable and chicken garden serves as an indicator of the employer's social status since it showcases their symbolic ownership of material possessions. These tasks are not limited to the confines of employers' private residences but rather extend to include schools, as the women highlighted that taking care of children was their main responsibility.

Furthermore,the tasks are inextricably linked with cosmopolitan production and consumption lifestyles within city households. In its broadest sense, the concept of social reproduction overrides and is intricately connected to economic, social, cultural, political, and ecological domains,which have historically and in the contemporary period been overlooked by the patriarchal capitalist system. By accepting employment within the confines of home, WPDWs fail to challenge the normative status quo of male dominance.

5.3. Narratives of women’s lived experiences

To understand women’s lived experiences within the concept of women's paid domestic work and the geographies of home,the researcher asked the women to remember both their good and bad experiences in the households in which they had worked. There were moments of silence, which the researcher noted as a mechanism to preselect what the participants could share. Five women shared their experiences.

My boss from a past job had a bad spirit. When I cook, if it is good food like rice, she says to me that I cook githeri. During serving time, the employer serves rice, first to the children, and then tells me, Let me serve mine. I tasted the children's rice. The employer tells me to serve githeri. I start to eat, and he or she will have the githeri after tasting the rice. Then, for her to taste the rice,the employer serves a full plate. For me, I end up forcing myself with the githeri until it is finished. The next day, I eat githeri githeri until another day, and the employer will never eat the githeri. On the other hand,there is no conversation allowed in the house; it is also not allowed to do this and that,so I left the employer. [Sharon, 20., a live-in domestic worker]

In the houses we work in,they are very very different.Because you can go somewhere and find you have cooked the food, you, the housegirl, and the man in the house will not take that food. He will tell the wife he cannot take the food prepared by "the maid." I stayed with another woman; we were staying very well. Then a time came when I cooked the food. She came and cooked her food with my husband. For us, we cook and eat with the children; she cooks hers and the husband. It got to the point where your food was divided and set aside on your plate; everything was divided and set aside for you. Those ones you use for yourself are now inside, and yours is outside. [Millicent, 43, a live-in domestic worker]

There is also a place I was working; for this one,it was like this: It's like I cook lunch,I cook lunch.When I put the food on the table,she will serve it and give it to the children. After feeding the children,the employer gives me the children to take them to play. For me, I have not had my lunch yet. I go and supervise the children as they play. At 16:00 p.m., I bring the children back, and then is when I take my lunch [Jane, 30, a live-in domestic worker].

When something happens,like someone in the family has taken something without telling her (my employer), she comes and shouts at me. She feels like I am the one who stole or made such a mistake; without asking,she shouts at me. When you tell her that 'it's not me',she can't listen to that. So if a mistake happens in the house,it is you, the housegirl, who has done it. It is not a child or another member of her family. For example,she had kept foods like groundnuts and juice in her bedroom. I did not have the key, and I wasn't entering her bedroom. So she opened and shouted at me that I had taken the food. There was a time I asked her,I don't have the keys for sure; I have never used the key to your bedroom. Then,how do I enter that bedroom? I had a young male adult in the house, and I told her to ask him if he might have entered the bedroom. Finally, at the last minute,she found the groundnuts and juice in the boy's bedroom. For me, she had already shouted at me and marked me as a thief. I stole her things. [Jane, 30; live-in domestic worker]

Like for us who are day scholars, every time you exit from work, if the employer is around, she makes sure she searches for your handbag,the one you use for carrying your phone. She checks inside,shaking it too much that handbag. Even she removes everything,if you had carried the phone, it could fall down. checking if you have stolen from them. There is no day the employer has trusted us; she has not been convinced that there is a day you can leave their house without carrying anything. She perceives that when I am there,I have either carried food I take to my children or something else I take to my home. For sure, they can't trust you; they perceive you as a thief. When you enter there,the employer tells you to leave your handbag at the gate; it should not enter my compound. When you enter with it,as you leave,she has even told the soldier,when that one exits, to check her handbag to find out what she has carried inside the handbag. For sure, we are represented as thieves. [Rose, 38, a live-out domestic worker]

Five women narrated their experiences as mainly bad memories. These experiences locate the body as a space on its own inscribed with lived memories within spaces of home and work. The researcher noted that there was some discomfort narrating the experiences and that there may be narratives that were withheld. The researcher later prompted the women to identify the good experiences,which were limited apart from economic benefits mentioned in Section 5.1 above. It was surprising how the narratives were limited while noting that 6 women had a work experience of 4–10 years and most women had worked in 2–10 urban households. Experiences can be spatiotemporal and forgotten after a lapse of time. Nevertheless,the researcher concluded this could be a limitation of FGD in social research and the environment of the discussion. None of the women shared extreme experiences of physical and sexual abuse, which can be attributed to improved women's agency and opportunities for support on reporting channels for women's abuse in the city. Sharon-20 was quick to note that silence by the employer was part of her own experience and Jane - 30 the act of being shouted at. Rose-38 and Caro-30, who were live-out workers, were of the opinion that experiences are different for live-out or live-in WPDWs. The women repeated that each of their experiences depended on whether the employer was good or bad,while from the narratives, the good and bad characteristics of the employer are complex.

The researcher proceeded to understand the concept of intersectionality within paid domestic work linked to the experiences of women participants. The researcher asked the participants to think of their personal characteristics and highlight how they emerged from their working experiences. This question was met with difficulty,as the women were not in a position to answer directly and were unconscious of how this connected to their experiences. The researcher guided the participants to think through the personal characteristics recorded at the beginning of the section and how they generally presented themselves in their years of working. The participants highlighted the social differences of ethnicity,sexuality, age, and social class. However,these were observed to be to a very limited extent, leaving the researcher concluding that the social distinctions are not freestanding and need to be understood within other paid domestic work factors, as highlighted in the discussion below. In addition,they can be identified as silent when perceived directly from employer-employee interactions due to hidden consequences such as the possibility of the employer losing a helper while urgently in need of one. However,the researcher has the viewpoint that these differences can better be understood from the perspective of employers searching for helpers. Rose-38 highlighted that employers and employment bureaus are central in understanding the construction of social differences among WPDWs, as highlighted in the discussion. In the literature,the social constructions appeared from media representation in Section 2.5 of the stereotypes.

5.3.1 Ethnicity

The women homogeneously agreed that ethnicity is too much in Kenya, connecting it to how it is presented in the political domain and regional divisions. They described ethnicity within domestic work as follows:

The second house I went to look for a job was a Kikuyu household. The mkikuyu refused to employ me, citing that she could not deal with a Luhya; they are very stubborn. A luhya can beat you in your own house. It forced me to look for another job with lower pay,and this one had better pay. [Rose, 38. live-out domestic worker]

In Pipeline,the employer asked me,What ethnicity are you? I said I was Luhyia. I was told Luhyia's no,even though I didn't enter the gate. I continued searching [Ann. 23, a live-in domestic worker]

There was a place I went, and I was told they wanted a kamba. Then I wondered how this ethnicity was and if it was a job with good pay. [Caro, 30, a live-out domestic worker]

This statement brought out the assumed stereotypes in Section 2.4 of women searching for WPDWs in the city as Luhyia and Kamba, while the women in my study were Luhyia and Kamba ethnicities. However,according to Caro-30, Kamba ethnicity was preferred, as she mentioned from one employer. While these stereotypes are not supported,they could be better understood by understanding regional disparities and cultural beliefs in specific contexts. These preferences restrict other women outside these ethnicities and women from mixed ethnicities and mixed races in Kenya, as well as women from outside Kenya, mainly EAC, who could benefit from WPDW.

5.3.2 Being a mother

The participants were of the perspective that being a mother was a privilege for accessing WPDW and could be an exclusion for those with no experience of motherhood. It was a perception that a mother is mature, and giving birth was represented as an ideal measure of womanhood, conforming to society's construction of motherhood and being responsible for the children. This perspective could exclude teenage mothers,women who choose to delay motherhood,women who choose not to give birth,barren women, or women with different perceptions of gender identities and expression, as highlighted in Section 2.4. However,this was a perception of Rose-38 while she connected motherhood to women's age, which could be an advantage as well as a disadvantage in seeking and maintaining long-term commitment in WPDW employment.

Nowadays,employers ask you if you have a child. Have you given birth? If they find you have given birth and you have a child, they know you will work perfectly and they will retain you longer. Because you will work, keeping in mind those your children have left behind. [Rose, 38. live-out domestic worker]

They prefer mature women aged 35 and above, as long as you have given birth and have a child. [Rose, 38. live-out domestic worker]

It can be noted that this connects to the burdens and ideologies of motherhood and the sociocultural construction of ideal motherhood. This perception can be a disadvantage to women, specifically single mothers, who take up any form of employment to sustain their families, as highlighted by the women's acceptance of working in vulnerable conditions and their lack of agency for contesting exploitation experienced within the households they work for. From the narratives,it is clear that women are constrained to undertake WPDW due to their single marital status,apart from Cynthia-30. Being single is a conscious abstraction from the normal standards of a perfect wife in patriarchal Kenya. Women are symbolically tied to men through cultural practices of dowry payment, and those who contest the institution of marriage and ideologies of childbearing and family are excluded. There are many factors that contribute to singlehood in women and are unique to each woman while not necessarily tied to class,ethnicity, age, or other common differences between WPDWs. It can be noted that it is the privileges of men and disadvantages to women given by the patriarchy system, while the law, which is a contradiction of conventional and customary, excludes male fathers from joint responsibilities of childcare. The customary patriarchal law that is male-dominated still prevails in the country, and women have fewer powers to enforce child support outside of normalized heterosexual relations that position men as superior to women, as in the case of Rose-38. Beyond this matter,it is a question of how women's sexuality is represented in society and the dichotomies between men and women. In addition, there are sex and gender contradictions and between what is natural, such as the biological characteristics of a woman, to give birth and assume caring responsibilities.

5.3.3 Being a poor woman

The women participants were of the opinion that WPDW is predominantly undertaken by poor women. Through their expressions, such as 'I have nothing,there is nothing else I can do, I have no place to go, and the problems back home,the women were in agreement that they had to survive. While poverty is structural and multidimensional, as highlighted in Section 2.6, only women can describe further their circumstances of being or becoming poor. Being poor was connected to seeking work as a WPDW, where employers directly stereotype WPDW seekers on the basis that they are already poor, as highlighted in Section 2.5. On this perception, the women were in agreement that it is one of the reasons they are poorly paid and lack agency to negotiate for the minimum wage from employers. Moreover,they could lose an employment opportunity. The excerpts on how much the women are paid indicate that their salaries are far below the minimum national wage, which constrains them to cyclical poverty. Jane-30 had requested to be connected to the labor ministry to obtain assistance in negotiating for adequate wages. However,her perception is limited since aspects of lower wages are interconnected and complex and are not easily enforced on private employers who have different needs and interpretations of the labor laws.

There is no employer who can employ a wealthy person for domestic work; they want these poor people. [Rose, 38. live-out domestic worker]

Paid housework is for the poor; their family is poor; they have no money [Caro, 30, a live-out domestic worker].

When they see [the employers], a woman looking for paid housework,she comes from a poor background [Ann., 23., a live-in domestic worker].

On disability, the women highlighted that they haven't witnessed any disabled person employed as a domestic worker. Anne-23 was of the perception that it can also depend on which disability,but also that disabled persons are perceived as not perfect. Rose-38 added that it's because WPDW is associated with menial tasks and employers pay for the work, so they want a normal person. On the contrary,differently abled women can prove to be capable of performing PDW. The women added that in current times,employers often request HIV tests and, since the COVID-19 pandemic, negative COVID certificates. These aspects discriminate against women from accessing the only source of employment that can be available to them.

While understanding why the women perceived themselves as being treated differently by their employers, Rose-38, Caro-30, and Sharon-20 highlighted that it is because of their backgrounds and lack of other alternatives for livelihood and that they have to just survive.

*In my opinion, I can see that. It's like now she sees that I have no capability, I don't have anywhere I can go, and there is nothing I can do (aaah, by Caro-*30*). It's because of that that the employer treats me like that. Because if I had somewhere else I could go or something else I could do, I could leave the employer (women unanimously agree) and go manage something else I could do. But because even myself, when I look ahead and back, don't have it,and these children are dependent on me,it forces me to go through all these challenges, and I persevere. That is the reason. My problems are the ones causing me to go through these challenges (exactly by Caro-30). .[Rose, 38*, a *live-out domestic worker]*

But if you leave the work,where do you go? You have nothing (agreed in unison by Sharon). You just have to admit it because you have no other choice.[Caro, 30, a live-out domestic worker]

Problems are the ones that make us persevere,because if you look at the problems at home,it is a must that you persevere in this job instead of leaving and going back to the problems back in your home,so you persevere. [Sharon, 20., a live-in domestic worker]

Lastly,while observing the power dynamics,Rose-38 and Caro-30 were the most vocal and controlled the discussion,answering most questions. Cynthia, 32, was less active due to the responsibility of caring for two children at the time of the interview. While she kept her video camera on, she allowed the researcher an observational space of WPDW beyond the physical work to emotional, love, and affect in caring spaces.

The premise of these narratives could be the starting point for women-paid domestic workers activism in Nairobi through support from different actors. Through the photo elicitation,women gave their worldviews towards this aspect, which is missing according to Section 2.9. The participants could present their perspectives on the cooperative efforts,skills of women,time use, and women as mirrors of the communities in which they live. Jane-30 was of the idea that women's domestic rights can be improved only by connections to the labor ministry. While Rose-38 was of the belief that protests or activism in Kenya are to the WPDW's disadvantage, They could be terminated by employers, lose their only source of employment, or be arrested by the state. This calls for collaborative efforts to activate WPDW activism.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

From the FGD,the definition of paid domestic work coincided with the ILO's definition, with women homogeneously highlighting that it is paid housework,a role associated with domestic and care responsibilities within geographies of home in Kenya. Within the theory of social reproduction,paid domestic work can be theorized as the paid labor of social reproduction.

6.1. Continuities of precarity in women's paid domestic work

All eight women participants from different rural regions in Kenya unanimously agreed that PDW is for women from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The women reported their struggles to find employment for an alternative livelihood as emanating from their poor backgrounds,limited education, and general unemployment in the country. While they acknowledged their agency to undertake other jobs,Rose-38 and Caro-30 noted another constraint was the lack of 'formal education certificates for upper primary and secondary education' requested for employment in other jobs in the city, namely security (soldier), hotel, factory and computer jobs. They noted that these other prospective jobs likewise paid low salaries that could not meet the rising living costs of basic needs such as housing,food, transportation, and child education in the city since 7 out of the 8 women were single mothers. It is noted that, through the years of experience the participants have gained,once the women start paid domestic work,there is a higher probability they will remain paid domestic workers. These connect to aspects of feminization and the precarity of the occupation (Jokela, 2018). It can be noted that WPDW's social position does not change while productive work in modernity is framed as progress.

The motivations and restrictions for engaging in PDW contrasted with women's professional aspirations, with implications that PDW is devalued by the participants as not adequate for women's progress. Women take it up as a last result, as highlighted by Caro-30. However,the participants—seven of them were single mothers—all expressed a level of satisfaction with PDW employment as a source of current livelihood. Rose-38 highlighted how the paid domestic job has elevated her from earning lower wages of Ksh. 6,000 to negotiating for higher wages of Ksh. 8,000 with the same employer. However, this is far from the minimum proposed national salary for Nairobi, which is Ksh 13,572.90. The women participants were in agreement that it doesn't matter the pay as long as you get a job to start with. Sharon-20 highlighted that many domestic workers in the city are paid an average of Ksh. 5,000, while noting that any higher amount than this could be a source of discrimination by an employer. In Sharon's -20 case,she gave an example where the employer perceived that paying Ksh 6,000–Ksh 7,000 was more than enough to purchase her own bread for breakfast with the extra amount or eat left-over food. Cynthia-32 mentioned that her paid domestic work is not constrained to only one household, while Jane-30 added that she combines PDW with running her own small business with permission from her current employer. This could be interpreted as meaning that paid domestic work wages are not sufficient to meet workers needs. It can also be read from a mutual relationship with the employer—that of sisterhood—as two women helping each other with the burdens of social reproduction (Romero, 1988).

While Nairobi is perceived as a very modern city where technology is advanced,most of the housework is manual, and many households lack modern housework technology due to urbanization challenges of sustainable energy,water, crime, and polarized wages. In addition,housework technology can be paradoxically highlighted by Ruth Cowan as'more work for mother' (Parr, 2005). Nairobi, as a city in the Global South, has furthermore become a dumping ground for the Global North's obsolete technology and cheap plastics, mainly from China,the new colonial entrants in the country.

6.2. Geographies of Home

At first glance, most of the household routines in the city's households would appear as homogeneous, as described by the participants. The women later noted that the tasks are very differentiated, specifically by each employer, and also different, for example, if employed in a rural context, as cited by Cynthia-32, or if they live in or live out, as cited by Rose-38. The care of children was central and connected to the main reason for the employment of WPDWs as commodified help. This connects to the struggles of social reproduction by women within geographies of home and the crisis of child care due to social depletion in the urban city (Fraser, 2016). The tasks associated with child care extended to other spaces of care, such as schools (Fraser, 2016). This can denote the different spaces of care beyond the home.

Rose-38 points out the image of the employer as another woman in an heterogeneous relationship whose unpaid housework and caring responsibility she transfers to a paid domestic worker for pay while excluding the man from any household responsibility,connecting it to two women's burden of social reproduction. The idea of the employer's as singular boss" or plural "the bosses" was regularly repeated in the discussion, referring to the woman employer and highlighting hierarchies of power, domination by the employer, and subordination of domestic workers. The woman's employer was under male dominance within the home, as highlighted by Millicent-43, where the male figure in the household refused to eat the maid's food. This indicates how maids occupational and social identities are reinforced within the spaces of home. It could also indicate how two women are differently oppressed within social reproduction roles in households.

The concept of geographies of home can be seen as a complex and multifaceted social phenomenon (Blunt and Varley, 2000; Mallet, 2004). It encompasses various dimensions, including the physical home of both the employer and employee. Home as a social space,a space of memories,a place of (un)belonging, and social exclusion for WPDWs are highlighted by the negative memories of women's lived experiences. As a place of work, it highlighted the daily routines and practices of the home connected to modern cosmopolitan consumption cultures and lifestyles, which can inform PDW and home as symbolic and material. Geographies of home reinforce social exclusion, positions, and markers of social identities, such as when Rose 38 and Millicent 43 were portrayed as thieves. While negative experiences were highlighted as being caused by the woman's employer,Millicent-43 noted that in her case, they emanated from another household member. Overall,WPDWs experiences underscored Lefebvre's production of space and the triad of perceived, conceived, and lived space with how space is lived by power (Lefebvre, 2013,1974).

6.3. Intersectionality within women's paid domestic work

The concept of intersectionality within the paid domestic work phenomenon emerged, locating social class,sexuality,gender,ethnicity, age, and rural-urban citizenship. However,these categories are not freestanding. They are reproduced within the concept of women's paid domestic work and the notion of home as a space for paid domestic work or broader social reproduction. However,there were limitations, as most women could not locate these axes within their working experiences, questioning whether they could be better understood by interrogating WPDW employers and the employment bureaus. All the participants were women, reinforcing the dominant stereotype that WPDW is women's work. The participants confirmed that housework is for women as an implication of their socialization process and feminine characteristics. The women participants were from two ethnicities, Luhyia and Kamba, and were questioning if it has to do with common stereotypes of these ethnic identities as WPDWs in the city or if there are other regional and individual realities. Rose used the stereotype of the Kamba ethnicity as a WPDW.Dominant stereotypes of Luhya and Kamba ethnicities as preferred WPDWs in the city are dominant and were reinforced by the participants,employers,employment bureaus, and media. This is consistent with how the media had previously portrayed them in the TV comedy that was the subject of a literature analysis (Rombo and Lutomia, 2016). Women domestic workers are heterogeneous, and therefore their experiences were not homogeneous even when they shared similar social differences (Marchetti, 2022). None of the women presented a similar narrative of their lived experiences, but there emerged similarities between lower wages,gendered occupations,occupational and social class identities, and their daily struggles for livelihood. Feminist intersectionality is therefore a framework for theorizing heterogeneity, similarities, and differences.

Locating intersectional socio-economic inequalities within WPDW could be the basis for the intersectional struggle for rights in Kenya that is missing (Marchetti, 2021; Bernardino-Costa,2014).Overall,the concept of WPDW highlights continuities of gender and uneven geographies in Kenya between regions,in this case,the uneven geographies between the capital city of Nairobi as the core versus the rural territories (Massey, 1994).

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS AND FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the study refer to the worldviews of the eight women paid domestic workers who took part in the FGD and start by answering the research questions. The women participants identified various socioeconomic restrictions that led them to seek and take up women-paid domestic work. The restrictions both refer to regional, city, and personal restrictions that include diminishing livelihoods in Kenyan peripheries and responsibilities for WPDWs to take care of their own children, while noting that seven out of the eight women were single mothers. The women confirmed that WPDW is the only job opportunity available to them due to their educational level, and generally, unemployment and underemployment in Nairobi and Kenya in general affect more women than men. 95% of rural women, as indicated in the literature, are poor, and poverty can be attributed to structures of colonialism, patriarchy, and present-day capitalism. Poverty is more pronounced in rural peripheries in Kenya. Overall,the women perceived themselves as productive workers providing for their families while also contesting that WPDW is not a real job.

The restrictions and exclusion of other forms of women's employment push women to work within geographies of home, specifically in private households in the city in need of helpers for domestic work. WPDWs support other women in households in sharing the broader burden of paid domestic labor assigned to women in Kenyan society,a burden more pronounced in the city of Nairobi. The other woman's employer was represented as from the middle or upper class. The roles of the domestic helper were diverse, while the women unanimously agreed that child care is the main role that leads to their employment,a social reproduction role for raising future generations. Therefore,the role of WPDWs is both productive and reproductive for the households in which they have been employed and for their own households. The contributions of WPDWs are to support the daily well-being of families within diverse roles of social reproduction in households. The existence of the space of home and its vital role in social reproduction bring out the symbolic home as the main space of women's paid domestic work and the notion of home as multidimensional.

The concept of intersectionality emerged from the study including social differences of class,sexuality, ethnicity, and gender as identified by the participants. The social differences connect to other personal and group characteristics, including education level, years of experience in domestic work, marital status, rural origin, and age. These axes are not fixed but evolve within space-place-time, informed in the contemporary period by spaces of globalization and urbanization and adopted shared ideologies. Intersectional axes of power cannot be grasped outside macro- and micro-Kenyan and urban Nairobi contextual factors, cultures, and social construction of women in PDW. These factors include colonial-paid domestic work ideologies,current policies, society's construction and perception of domestic work, women as ideal paid domestic workers within private spaces of home,gender and sexuality, and different interconnected ideologies of the concept of WPDW both at a global and local scale. Moreover, intersectionality emerged within colonial continuities, patriarchy, and contemporary capitalism power structures. In addition,intersectionality intersected with other factors: structural unemployment affecting more rural women,rural-urban migration status, stereotypes of WPDWs,the gap in implementation of PDW regulations,the existence of the home as the dominant micro-space of WPDW, patriarchal masculine dominance, employer hierarchy of power, and a lack of state welfare support for poor women that exacerbate WPDW socio-economic discrimination.

These diverse themes within the concept of WPDW and the multidimensional concept of home lead to multiple and complex lived experiences of WPDWs that confirm their socioeconomic discrimination. Socioeconomic discrimination plays a crucial role in shaping the concept of intersectionality, which is valuable for understanding and investigating the socio economic injustices faced by WPDWs in the urban Nairobi context. However, it is important to note that intersectional axes of power did not emerge from each woman participant with equal weight,therefore there were no homogeneous shared experiences. However, it can be noted that intersectionality is a constantly evolving concept mediated by masculine structures of power—colonialism, patriarchy, and contemporary capitalism—that exacerbate the socioeconomic discrimination of WPDWs. It is therefore important to continuously narrate WPDWs experiences to better inform intersectionality concept in order to move forward scholarship debates from Kenya and Africa that are missing towards social justice , alternative feminist thinking and the possibility of solidarities on activism for WPDWs .

Overall,the social concepts of women paid domestic work, geography of home, and intersectionality are complex and require scholarship debates on how to proceed within feminist thinking. The concept of intersectionality within WPDW experiences is complex and lacks a theoretical footing, both from scholars in the Global North and the Global South. The thesis was limited and cannot be generalized to all women paid domestic workers in Nairobi,only to the specific eight women. Therefore,future research is called for to be advanced with other women-paid domestic workers in the city to locate intersectionality within geographies of home. Many narratives of women's lived experiences can motivate debates about the possibility of women's paid domestic worker mobilization, which is missing in Nairobi and in Kenya.Evolving vectors of intersectionality can be highlighted through incorporating discussions with women domestic employers,employment bureaus,the media, and organizations charged with training and supporting women-paid domestic workers. It is recommended that future studies connect to the social reproduction and care crises to inform the social depletion and struggles of other categories of women in the city and forge alternative visions of caring. Future studies should advance to spaces of geographies of care for children,the elderly,differently abled persons, and other categories in the country, highlighting the crisis of care that has less been theorized due to the static and neglect of the culture of care borne by women in the patriarchal-capitalist society. These will inform the struggles of WPDWs and their employers to highlight the burden of social reproduction and, therefore, the struggles and oppression of women. Comparative studies on women's paid domestic work in other towns and rural areas are necessary. In addition,studies on men-paid domestic work can produce alternative narratives while locating alternative theorizing of gender and sexuality in women-paid domestic work. Lastly,a move towards decent work, sustainable cities, communities, and sexual equality.

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ANNEX

Annex 1: CONSENT FORM

ANNEX 1

CONSENT FORM

Title of Project:Women In Paid Domestic Work and the Geographies of Home: Voices from Nairobi, Kenya
Researcher: Gladys Mueni Mutunga

		Please initial box
1.	I confirm that I have read and have understood the information sheet dated 28 May 2023 and 24 September 2023 for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information,ask questions and have had this answered satisfactorily.	☐
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason, without my rights being affected.	☐
3.	I understand that, under the Data Protection Act, I can at any time ask for access to the information I provide and I can also request the destruction of that information if I wish.	☐
4.	I agree to take part in the above study.	☐
5.	I give permission for the transcript of my interview/ research to be used for research purposes only (including research publications and reports)	☐
6.	I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential I understand that I have the right to anonymity. I assign copyright of my transcript to Gladys Mutunga , who may quote the transcript either with strict preservation of anonymity.	☐

_____	_____	_____
Participant name	Date	Signature
Gladys Mutunga	28.5.23/24.9.23	Gm
_____	_____	_____
Researcher	Date	Signature

The contact details of the researcher are:
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