



Faculty for Culture and Society

Resistance under repression

The political mobilisation of female migrant domestic workers in Lebanon

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M.A. International Migration and Ethnic Relations (two-years programme)

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Course number: IM622L – 30 Credits

January 2019

ABSTRACT

The aim of this thesis is to understand how the political mobilisation of migrant domestic workers (MDWs) employed in Lebanon started and continued. It also tries to comprehend how some of them could found a politically active collective of MDWs, the Alliance of Domestic Workers in Lebanon (Alliance), by analysing what factors enabled and restrained the open political activism of MDWs from their first steps as activists until now. Drawing on semi-structured interviews with two founding members and seven international and Lebanese organisations, the MDWs' political mobilisation is chronologically recaptured. Extending Lahusen's definition of political mobilisation, the thesis critically reflects on Johnston's concept for protest to evolve in repressive states. The analysis shows that the women activists are left in a lawless position and refer to the *free spaces* of Lebanese and international non-profit organisations, where their activism begins. These organisations help the women to build up their *protest capital*, enabling them to start their own group, the Alliance. Within their own group they organise themselves not only against the injustice they experience as MDWs but also emancipate themselves from their dependency on the NGOs. The findings approve that though international and Lebanese organisations have played a crucial part in successfully mobilising the women, the MDWs' experience of lack of influence inside these *free spaces*, shapes the group's actions, collective identity and course. Their political mobilisation can be seen as a long-term, organic process, in which knowledge, collective identity, collective action and experience are tightly interwoven and are the motor behind the members' activism.

Keywords

Migrant domestic workers, domestic work, Lebanon, political mobilisation, labour protest, free spaces

Acknowledgements

This work would not have been possible without the enormous support of the members of the Alliance of Domestic Workers in Lebanon, who offered me their scarce time and trust. I am grateful for having had the opportunity to meet them. Likewise, I would like to thank the Migrant Community Centre, the Domestic Workers Union, FENASOL, the International Labour Organisation, the International Domestic Workers Federation, INSAN Association and KAFA (enough) violence and exploitation for sharing their knowledge, insight and time with me.

I am also grateful for the support of my supervisor Margareta Popoola and of my friends, whose advice and patience encouraged me throughout this thesis.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

Alliance	Alliance of Domestic Workers in Lebanon
ARM	Anti-Racist Movement in Lebanon
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CSO	Civil society organisation
DW	Domestic Worker
DWU	Domestic Workers Union
FENASOL	The National Federation of Worker and Employee Trade Unions in Lebanon
GS	General Security
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IDWF	International Domestic Workers Federation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INSAN	INSAN Association
KAFA	KAFA (enough) violence and exploitation
MCC	Migrant Community Centre
MDW	Migrant Domestic Worker
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MOI	Ministry of Interior
MOL	Ministry of Labour
PEA	Private employment agencies
PROWD	Action Programme for Promoting the Rights of Women Migrant DWs
RLF	Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation

1. Introduction

“The old dies but the new cannot be born.”¹(Antonio Negri)

Globalisation, the increased mobility of capital, goods, and information coupled with a reduction in travelling cost, enabled and enhanced the mobility of people to look for employment abroad.² Borders no longer enclose a country’s labour market. National and international labour laws only reflect this development partly, leaving migrant workers – especially females – without sufficient legal protection.³

In Lebanon, MDWs comprise about 250.000 women, resembling almost all domestic workers (DWs) in the country. The harsh treatment they experience from their employers dominates the public discourse in the country.⁴ For a decade, international and local NGOs have been calling on the government to improve their working conditions without reaching any major improvements. On the contrary, domestic work remains excluded from the Code of Labour and subject to the regulations of Lebanon’s restrictive immigration regime, the kafala system.⁵

In 2011, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) started their project “Action Programme for Promoting the Rights of Women MDWs” (PROWD) to promote the ILO convention C189, which stipulates decent working conditions for domestic work for the first time, in Lebanon. The project finished in 2015 with the creation of the Domestic Workers Union (DWU), the first trade union for DWs in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA).⁶ In the union, MDWs should work hand in hand with Lebanese trade unionists and NGOs on improving their working conditions.⁷ Despite these good intentions, problems occurred: The Ministry of Labour (MOL) declared the union as illegal and due to internal disputes with the union’s leadership the most prominent MDW unionists left in 2016. A year later, these eight women organised their own group, the Alliance, to continue their fight for MDWs’ labour

¹ Klatzer, Jürgen (2018): *Blaupausen für ein neues Europa*. In: Österreichischer Rundfunk. (Accessed: 02.07.2018).

² Castles, Stephen (2012): *Understanding the relation between methodology and methods*. In: Vargas-Silva, Carlos (Ed.): *Handbook of research methods in migration*. Cheltenham: Elgar. Pp: 17-18.

³ Fudge, Judy (2014): *Feminist reflection on the scope of labour law. Domestic work, social reproduction, and jurisdiction*. In: *Feminist Legal Studies*. 22 (1). P: 2.

⁴ ILO (2016a): *Intertwined. A study of employers of migrant domestic workers in Lebanon*. Geneva: International Labour Office; Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (FUNDAMENTALS); Labour Migration Branch (MIGRANT). P: 1.

⁵ Bureau of Lebanese and Arab Documentation (2010): *A comprehensive translation of the Lebanese Code of Labour*. In: *Argus of Lebanese documents*. 56 (1). Pp: 2.

⁶ ILO: *Action programme for promoting the rights of women MDWs (PROWD)-project*. In: ILO. (Accessed: 20.07.2018).

⁷ ILO (2016b): *Building bargaining power. How domestic workers in Lebanon made a courageous step to form a union*. Beirut: ILO. P: 9.

rights.⁸ Due to the deportation of one of their founding members, only seven are now active in the country.⁹

1.1 Aim and research question

The aim of this thesis is to understand how the political mobilisation of MDWs employed in Lebanon started and continued. It also tries to comprehend how MDWs could found the Alliance by analysing what factors enabled and restrained the MDWs from their first steps as activists until now.

My research questions are as follows:

1. How did MDWs start to be and remain politically active?
2. How did MDWs found the Alliance?
3. What factors enabled and restrained the open political activism of MDWs from their first steps as activists until now?

1.2 Limitations

The term “female migrant domestic worker” comprises a multitude of different women. The thesis focuses on a specific group: political active MDWs from African and Asian countries organised in the Alliance. It does not take into consideration DWs who are unable or unwilling to be politically active nor Palestinian or Syrian refugee women, who also make up a small number of domestic helpers in Lebanon. Due to their Arab nationalities, different laws apply to these women and their experiences might vary from African and Asian DWs. Though MDWs have been organising themselves since the first arrivals of Sri Lankan DWs in the late 1980s, my interviewees name 2010 as the year their activism began. Events before this year are only roughly discussed. The setting of my fieldwork is limited to Beirut and thus to MDWs working in the capital. This is due to lack of time and access I had to women living in other Lebanese cities or villages.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of eight parts. In the following chapter, the reader is familiarised with the political and legal environment of MDWs in Lebanon. A short overview of the literature concerning the political economy of domestic work, labour protest in Lebanon and MDWs in Lebanon in the third chapter illustrate the relevance of this thesis. In the consecutive theory

⁸ O'Regan, Kirsten (2017): *A day out and a union*. In: *Dissent*. (Accessed: 05.01.2019).

⁹ Khawaja, Bassam (2016): *Lebanon deports domestic worker rights organiser*. In: *HRW*. (Accessed: 25.04.2018).

chapter, the concept of political mobilisation is anchored in the discussion on protest within non-democracies, followed by a brief overview of the method and methodology underpinning this thesis. Afterwards the findings of my interviews with two founding members of the Alliance and seven international and Lebanese organisations are presented. The final chapter critically discusses the thesis' main findings, showing potential for future research.

2. Contextualisation

This chapter first introduces the political environment of Lebanon for civil society organisations (CSOs). Then the development of domestic work in the country is recaptured, followed by an explanation of the regulations of the kafala system and the authority responsible for foreigners in Lebanon, General Security (GS). Lastly, a short overview of the support structure for MDWs offers an overview of the aims, approaches and constituency of the organisations offering help to the women.

2.1 Lebanon's political environment

Lebanon is a small country, located on the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. Around six million people live in the country, including the high numbers of Palestinian and Syrian refugees.¹⁰ Officially, Lebanon is a democratic republic with a parliamentary system of government, guaranteeing its citizens and residents equal political participation.¹¹ The country's complicated system of equal power sharing among the 18 religious communities has for a long time encouraged the distribution of economic and political benefits among sectarian and social-economic lines.¹² Fawwaz Trablousi sees Lebanon as a *mafocracy*, in which an oligarchic elite controls, comprises and competes over the country's economic wealth. Access to political participation is thus limited to a small circle of power holders.¹³

Nonetheless, Lebanon has seen the development of one of the most vivid civil societies in the MENA-region. Though the country's law grants political active citizens and CSOs the freedom of speech and association, its imprecise formulations leave room for interpretation, allowing the state to restrict these freedoms.¹⁴ A recent report by CIVICUS describes the situation as follows: "Lebanon's legal system is [...] used to sanction journalists, activists and citizens who criticise political figures and expose governance deficits."¹⁵ In this year's ranking, Freedom House reflects this development and describes Lebanon as partly free, rating citizens' political

¹⁰ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) (2018): *The world factbook. Lebanon*. In: CIA. (Accessed: 08.08.2018).

¹¹ Lebanese Constitution of 1990. Preamble.

¹² Assi, Abbas (2016): *Democracy in Lebanon. Political parties and the struggle for power since Syrian withdrawal*. London, New York, NY: I.B. Tauris (Library of modern Middle East studies, 166). Pp: 52 ff.

¹³ Trablousi, Fawwaz (2014): *Social classes and political power in Lebanon*. Beirut: Heinrich-Böll-Foundation. Middle East Office. Pp: 98-99, 100-101.

¹⁴ Haddad, Tania (2017): *Analysing state – civil society associations relationship. The case of Lebanon*. In: *Voluntas*. 28 (4). Pp: 1754.

¹⁵ Firmin, Andrew (2017): *Contested and under pressure. A snapshot of the enabling environment of civil society in 22 countries*. CIVICUS. World Alliance for citizen participation. P: 27.

rights as very restrictive but their civil liberties, such as freedom of political expression, as moderately protected.¹⁶

2.2 Domestic work in Lebanon

Lebanon has since the 1950s been a liberal economy, which is dominated by the trade and banking sector. After the end of the civil war, the political elite further focused on the financial and trade sector to continue attracting capital, encouraging women to work, while simultaneously cutting back in social spending. Though economic interests welcomed female labour participation, it did not contribute to a re-negotiation of the patriarchal value system, which ascribes women the role of the carer and household manager but not of the decision maker to impact social roles and policies.¹⁷ Thus, economic policies intersect the patriarchal division of labour in Lebanese families, increasing demand for DWs.¹⁸

Interregional political and national social conflicts played a crucial role for opening Lebanese households to the global flow of migrants. Since the end of the 20th century, wealthy Lebanese households have been employing refugee women and girls from the lower social classes, often originating from ethnic minorities and neighbouring Arab countries.¹⁹ Inter-Arab labour migration remained dominant for the general migration flow into the MENA-region until the beginning of the civil war in 1975.²⁰ As the Lebanese civil war soon turned into an interregional conflict, many Lebanese were reluctant to employ an Arab woman in their household because of the tightened political relation between Syria and Lebanon and among Lebanese themselves during and after the civil war.²¹ From the mid-1980s on, Asian maids filled this gap and were soon joined by women from African countries.²²

¹⁶ Freedom House (2018): *Freedom in the world 2018. Democracy in crisis. Country profile Lebanon*. In: *Freedom House*. (Accessed: 01.01.2019).

Freedom House (2018): *Freedom in the world 2018. Democracy in crisis. Methodology*. In: *Freedom House*. (Accessed: 01.01.2019)

¹⁷ Khatib, Lina (2008): *Gender, citizenship and political agency in Lebanon*. In: *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies. Gender and diversity in the Middle East and North Africa*. 35 (3). P: 447.

¹⁸ Sugita, Seiko; Esim, Simel; Omeira, Mansour (2009): *Caring is work. Meeting social care needs in Lebanon*. Paper presented at the ninth Mediterranean research meeting. Florence and Montecatini. 25-28 March 2009. Organised by the Mediterranean programme of the Robert Schumann Centre for advanced studies at the European University Institute. Pp: 12-13.
ILO. (2016a). P: 8.

¹⁹ Jureidini, Ray (2009): *In the shadows of family life. Towards a history of domestic service in Lebanon*. In: *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies. War and transnational Arab families*. 5 (3). Pp: 76, 77.

²⁰ Thiollet, Helen (2011): *Migration as diplomacy. Labour migrants, refugees, and Arab regional politics in the oil-rich countries*. In: *International Labour and Working-Class History*. 79 (1). Pp: 105-106.

²¹ Barak, Oren (2007): *"Don't mention the war?"*. *The politics of remembrance and forgetfulness in post-war Lebanon*. In: *Middle East Journal*. 61 (1). P: 52.

Jureidini (2009). Pp: 74, 76-77.

²² Jureidini (2009). P: 90.

2.3 The kafala system

The term kafala system summarises a complex and long-lasting catalogue of regulations and practices, which most Arabic-speaking countries use to manage migration to and within their territory. In Lebanon, it is a remainder of feudal times, when the recruitment of labour force was the landlords' and not the state's decision.²³ Nowadays, MOL and GS control labour migration. The system mostly applies to people from low-income countries as they cannot buy an on-arrival visa and need a Lebanese citizen's invitation prior to their arrival.²⁴ Its main component is that the employer of a migrant worker is her or his warrantor and in charge of administering her or his entry to, stay in and exit from Lebanon. Whereas an employer can dismiss the foreign worker any time and without justification, changing employer requires the migrant to have the consent of the former and the assurance of the new workplace. Otherwise, she or he would be without valid papers, making her or him an illegal resident and subject to immediate deportation.²⁵ Moreover, the regulations are not stated in any legal code and the kafala system mostly consists of oral memos and internal policies between the MOL and GS.²⁶ As no legal description exists stating clearly each authority's rights and duties, violations against them by GS, the employer or the MOL are difficult to prove. Whereas most migrant workers can then refer to the Code of Labour, domestic work is exempt from the code, denying MDWs the right to join or form a union, regulated working hours, holidays or a minimum salary.²⁷

2.4 GS's monopoly of power

GS is part of Lebanon's security apparatus and affiliated to the Ministry of Interior (MOI).²⁸ It is responsible for monitoring the entry, stay and exit of all foreigners.²⁹ Together with the MOL, the agency implements, executes and decides on the regulations of the kafala system, including the conduction of investigations into and the decision to refer conflicts between DWs and employers to Lebanese courts that NGOs or other third party mediators could not

²³ Mr. A. FENASOL. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

²⁴ Migrant Forum in Asia (2012): *Reform the kafala (sponsorship) system*. Policy brief (2). Quezon City: Migrant Forum in Asia. P: 2.

²⁵ Sater, J. (2013): *Migrant workers, labour rights and governance in middle income countries. The case of Lebanon*. In: Seeberg, Peter; Eyadat, Zaid (Eds.): *Migration, security and citizenship in the Middle East. New perspectives*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan; Palgrave Macmillan. P: 121.

²⁶ Ms. J. KAFA. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

²⁷ Bureau of Lebanese and Arab Documentation. P: 2.

²⁸ Brigadier General Dr Saliba, Amine (2012): *The security sector in Lebanon. Jurisdiction and organization*. CARNIEGE. P: 2.

²⁹ GS: *Functions of the General Security*. In: GS. (Accessed:17.07.2018).

resolve.³⁰ It is responsible for renewing or granting residence permits to the MDWs. A report by INSAN found that the agency often misuses this right to sanction certain behaviours of MDWs that are actually compliant with Lebanese law, such as living outside their employers' house.³¹ When challenging the agency's decision in court, MDWs mainly face three obstacles: 1) The centralisation of complaints at GS because the authority often detains or deports the DW rather than investigating into her complaint. 2) GS often does not send the MDW their written decision, making it very difficult to prove a violation of the law in court. 3) Before the complaint against GS goes to court, the DW must prove that GS did not answer to her complaint. This is a time consuming and complicated bureaucratic process, hardly compatible with the workload and financial resources of a MDW.³²

2.5 The support structure for MDWs in Lebanon

Within the last twenty years local and international NGOs, religious organisations and churches have developed a diverse structure of support programmes for MDWs. They conduct workshops and trainings on personal development, the kafala system, human rights, offer festivities and excursions for the women or provide the women with legal aid.³³ Some organisations, such as KAFA (enough) violation and exploitation (KAFA), operate a shelter for MDWs in Beirut, others like CARITAS and the Anti-Racism Movement in Lebanon/ Migrant Community Centre (ARM/MCC) have centres where migrant workers from all sectors can come together.³⁴ The organisations vary in their political agenda. Some, for instance KAFA or INSAN Association (INSAN), strongly advocate for the rights of MDWs, calling for the abolishment of the kafala system, the inclusion of domestic work in the Code of Labour or a special law for DWs.³⁵ Others aim to unite DWs worldwide, such as the International Domestic Workers Federation (IDWF), or perceive themselves purely as humanitarian supporters.³⁶ The organisations differ in their approach how to include MDWs

³⁰ Nasri, Alix; Tannous, Wissam (2014): *Access to justice for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon*. Geneva: ILO. P: 51.

³¹ INSAN (2016): *Trapped. Compressed. Migrant domestic workers in Lebanon*. P: 22-25.

³² Ms H. INSAN. Skype interview. June 2018.

³³ Tayeh, Marie-Jose (2012): *Working with migrant domestic workers in Lebanon (1980-2012). A mapping of NGO services*. Beirut: ILO. Pp: 14-16.

³⁴ KAFA: *Support centre*. In: KAFA. (Accessed: 0.01.2019).

ILO (2018): *A mapping of migrant resource centres in the Arab states*. Beirut: ILO. Regional office for the Arab state. Pp: 11-12.

ARM: *About us*. In: ARM. (Accessed: 05.01.2019).

³⁵ Ms. J. KAFA. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

Ms H. INSAN. Skype interview. June 2018.

³⁶ Mrs A. IDWF. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

in their work. At ARM/MCC the women are equal members, others cooperate with MDWs during the conceptualisation of their programmes, but not in the decision-making.³⁷

Since their arrival in Lebanon, MDWs have been organising themselves within their national communities. Most of these communities have a regularly elected president and vice-president, who is the contact person for their embassy and NGOs. Amrita Pande sees in the communities of DWs “[...] similarities to formal unions. The groups have rules of membership, hold regular meetings and a yearly election of leaders, and also have a constitution. Some are even given token recognition by their consulates for their contribution to “social work.”³⁸ As Lebanese and international organisations, the groups vary in the degree of their political activism.³⁹

Since the ILO’s PROWD-project, one federation of trade unions, the National Federation of Worker and Employee Trade Unions in Lebanon (FENASOL), supports MDWs by hosting the DWU.⁴⁰ The DWU is a rather new entity in the scene and despite being illegal has been operating since 2015.⁴¹ It, too, calls for the abolishment of the kafala system and the implementation of C189 and offers its members computer and language courses, legal aid and medical services. In its initial period about 350 DWs were members but due to problems described in the introduction many women left the union.⁴²

Eight of these women founded the Alliance in 2017. About 20 MDWs from African and Asian countries are currently active in the Alliance, offering workshops on the rights of MDWs, empowerment trainings or organising the yearly protest march of migrant workers on Labour Day. The group also calls for the abolishment of the kafala system, the inclusion of domestic work in the Lebanese Code of Labour and the implementation of the ILO Convention C189.⁴³

³⁷ Ms S. ARM/MCC. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut. ILO (2018). Pp: 17-18.

³⁸ Pande, Amrita (2012): *From “Balcony Talk” and “Practical Prayers” to illegal collectives. Migrant DWs and meso level resistance in Lebanon.* In: *Gender and Society.* 26 (3). P: 397.

³⁹ Ms S. ARM/MCC. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

⁴⁰ Tayah (2014): *Organising domestic workers through research. The story of participatory action research with women migrant domestic workers, NGOs, and union members in Lebanon.* Beirut: ILO. Pp: 12-13.

⁴¹ Women Economic Portal (2015): *Towards a “union” for foreign domestic workers amidst threats from the Ministry of Labour.* In: *Collective for Research and Training on Development - Action.* (Accessed:06.082018)

⁴² O’Regan.

⁴³ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

J. Alliance. What’s App interview. June 2018. Beirut.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Domestic work under patriarchy and the dynamics of the global market

Feminist scholars define domestic work as a broad variety of bodily and emotional tasks such as cleaning services, the responsibility for the physical and mental well-being of the family and for sexual, health, educational, and religious services. Domestic work takes place in public and private settings (e.g. homes, schools, hospitals) and in regular and irregular working conditions.⁴⁴ In their reading it is the motor for the social pro- and reproduction of society and enables life – biologically and metaphysically – to continue and prosper.⁴⁵

Nancy Fraser's work on the crises of care, where she connects the increased demand for care work to the current three crises of capital, ecology, and finance, inspired many scholars to analyse domestic work within the dynamics of the global market.⁴⁶ Fiona Williams uses Fraser's concept to link the intersecting dynamics of migration, gender, and care work to domestic work on a macro level. She finds that domestic work has become a "fictitious commodity"⁴⁷, whose price and conditions are set on the global market and purchased on the local labour market.⁴⁸ Adding on to Fraser's three crisis, Judy Fudge brings in the crisis of labour law, where she shows that labour laws, as labour markets, are social constructs, reflecting social hierarchies and neglecting women in general and female labour migrants especially.⁴⁹ Thus, labour markets intersect social and economic interests, creating a hierarchy based on gender, ethnicity, and nationality.⁵⁰ Rodríguez shows that this hierarchy can be due to colonial heritage and a new form of imperialism, devaluing the skills of women from the Global South when migrating to the Global North socially and financially.⁵¹ Bridget Anderson concludes that migration policies deliberately channel female migrants to the domestic sector,

⁴⁴ Fudge. P: 6.

⁴⁵ Anderson, Bridget; Shutes, Isabel (2014): *Conclusion*. In: Anderson, Bridget; Shutes, Isabel (Eds.): *Migration and care labour. Theory, policy and politics*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp: 213-214.

⁴⁶ Fernandez, Bina (2011): *Exploring the relevance of Fraser's ethical-political framework of justice to the analysis of inequalities faced by domestic workers*. In: *International Journal of Social Quality*. 1 (2). Pp: 85-101. Williams, Fiona (2014): *Making connections across transnational care*. In: Anderson, Bridget; Shutes, Isabel (Eds.): *Migration and care labour. Theory, policy and politics*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp: 11-30.

⁴⁷ Williams. P: 13.

⁴⁸ Williams. P: 13.

⁴⁹ Fudge. Pp: 1-2.

⁵⁰ Fudge. P: 4.

⁵¹ Rodríguez, Encarnación Gutiérrez (2007a): *The 'hidden side' of the new economy. On transnational migration, domestic work, and unprecedented intimacy*. In: *Frontier. A Journal of Women Studies*. 28 (3). Pp: 60, 70, 72-73.

enabling female citizens to work.⁵² National women's contribution is necessary as shown by Verity Burgmann. She defines *neoliberal globalisation* as the internationalisation of liberal economic politics, beginning with the globalisation in the 1970s. She refers hereby to the tightened competition among states worldwide for capital and their deliberate adoption of neoliberal politics, such as privatising state property, cuts in social spending and reduction of labour protection.⁵³ The need to keep labour costs low to attract and accumulate capital increases the need of households worldwide to have two incomes.⁵⁴ Considering that despite a rise in female employment, family tasks remain a woman's duty and an insufficient provision of state sponsored care work, employers of DWs require their workers to be cheap, flexible, and female. Nation states adhere to their citizens' demands by imposing strict immigration rules, restricting access to their labour markets and labour laws.⁵⁵

3.2 Labour protest in Lebanon

Looking at labour protests in Lebanon, scholarly analysis is scarce. In his book on the role of women in the Lebanese labour movement in the 1940s, Abbas points out that though the workers successfully fought for a labour law, the state intentionally excluded certain categories of workers to divide the working class, such as labourers employed as domestic servants or in the agricultural sector. Both domains have traditionally been taken out by migrants, refugees and poor women from the rural areas.⁵⁶ Snyder shows that the state formulated the labour law intentionally unprecise to leave space for its own interpretation and to scatter the growing labour movement.⁵⁷ A recent study by the ILO and Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation in Lebanon come to similar conclusions for the weak status of the Lebanese labour movement: The deliberate infiltration of state authorities through regulations and instalment of followers, lack of democratic union structure and the high numbers of foreigners and workers employed in the informal sector.⁵⁸ Elizabeth Piccard ponders how the labour movement could be re-vitalised. She concludes in her study on Asian workers in Lebanon that

⁵² Anderson, Bridget (2014): *Nation building. Domestic labour and immigration controls in the UK*. In: Anderson, Bridget; Shutes, Isabel (Eds.): *Migration and care labour. Theory, policy and politics*. Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp: 32-33.

⁵³ Burgmann, Verity (2016): *Globalisation and labour in the twenty-first century*. London, New York: Routledge (Routledge advances in international political economy. 27). Pp: 1-2, 5.

⁵⁴ Burgmann. P: 7.

⁵⁵ Anderson; Shutes. P: 221.

⁵⁶ Abbisaab, Malek Hassan (2010): *Militant women of a fragile nation*. Syracuse. N.Y: Syracuse University Press (Middle East studies beyond dominant paradigms). P: 81.

⁵⁷ Snyder, Allan (1961): *Organising labour in Lebanon and Jordan*. New York: Ithaca. P: 176.

⁵⁸ The Consultation and Research Institute (2016): *Characteristics and structure of the union movement in Lebanon*. Beirut: Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation. Country Office; ILO. Regional Office for the Arab States. Pp: 37-39, 48-49, 53-54.

including the high numbers of foreign workers in the country would be an option, yet, economic interests fuel the divide between Lebanese and migrants.⁵⁹

3.3 MDWs in Lebanon: From victims of - to activists against - the kafala system

Especially since the MENA-region hosts one of the highest numbers of DWs worldwide, international academia's interest for the women's living conditions has been increasing over the last 20 years.⁶⁰ One of the earliest studies on the inhumane working and living conditions foreign workers endure under the kafala system undertook Anh Nga Longva for Kuwait. She concludes that to legally bind employees to their employer without sufficient protection, the Kuwaiti state installs a systematic dependency of the worker on her or his employer, enabling exploitation and abuse to continue unpunished.⁶¹ For Lebanon, Pande highlights how tightly linked MDWs' legal, financial and social dependency on their employers are, constructing the picture of a cogwheel, where the employer and state decide on the degree of exploitation and dependency the MDW lives under.⁶² In her study on the channels Ethiopian women use to access Lebanon as DWs, Bina Fernandez shows that through the kafala system the Lebanese state delegates the selection of who can migrate and how to the private sector and social networks of former MDWs. The women are more likely to be subject to human trafficking and exploitation.⁶³ Jureidini, however, ascribes the violent treatment female employers often practice towards their domestic worker to the specific historical and social developments in Lebanon. He blinds out the striking similarities in the lack of legal protection granted to DWs regionally, which has been discussed by Elizabeth Frantz for Jordan or Nurchayati for Saudi Arabia.⁶⁴

Despite this legal, political and financial marginalisation, scholars started to analyse the forms of resistance MDWs employ at their workplace. Nyla Moukarbel draws on Scott's definition

⁵⁹ Picard, Elizabeth (2013): *The Arab uprisings and social rights. Asian migrant workers in Lebanon*. In: HAL. <halshs-00938259>. Pp: 8-9.

⁶⁰ ILO (2015): *ILO global estimates on migrant workers. Result and methodology*. P: 18. Geneva: ILO.

⁶¹ Longva, Anh Nga (1999): *Keeping migrant in check. The kafala system in the Gulf*. In: *Middle East Report. No 211. Trafficking and transiting. New perspective on labour migration*. P: 21-22.

⁶² Pande (2013). "*The paper that you have in your hand is my freedom*". *Migrant domestic work and the sponsorship (kafala) system in Lebanon*. In: *International Migration Review*. 47 (2). Pp: 426-429.

⁶³ Fernandez (2013): *Traffickers, brokers, employment agencies and social networks. The regulation of intermediaries in the migration of Ethiopian domestic workers to the Middle East*. In: *International Migration Review*. 47 (4). Pp: 814-843.

⁶⁴ Jureidini (2011): *An exploratory study of psychological and social factors in the abuse of migrant domestic workers by female employers in Lebanon*. Beirut: KAFA. P:

Frantz, Elizabeth (2013): *Jordan's unfree workforce. State-sponsored bonded labour in the Arab region*. In: *The Journal of Development Studies*. 49 (8). Pp: 1083- 1084.

Nurchayati (2011): *Bringing agency back in. Indonesian migrant domestic workers in Saudi Arabia*. In: *Asian and Pacific Migration Journal*. 20 (3-4). Pp: 479-502.

of “every-day forms of resistance”⁶⁵ to illustrate how Sri Lankan DWs combat their employer in the household.⁶⁶ Pande uses the same concept, explaining the women’s resistance at a meso-level. Many communities of MDWs organise their forms of protest on the balconies of their employers, in churches and the private homes of workers not living with their sponsor. In these places, the women talk about ways to fight their marginalisation, offering an alternative to the systematic discrimination they live with.⁶⁷ Marie-José Tayah depicts the process that led to the founding congress of the DWU, the first union for MDWs in the MENA region. She highlights that through exchange women from different nationalities realised that their problems are due to the sponsorship system, laying the ground for solidarity and trust to evolve beyond their communities.⁶⁸ Farah Kobaissy and Elisabeth Longuenesse and Paul Tabar criticise Lebanese CSOs and international academia for discussing DWs differently than male labour migrants, enforcing the divide between the workers and the artificial state of exception Lebanese immigration and labour policies create for domestic work.⁶⁹ In their recent article Dana Mansour-Ille and Megan Hendow recapture the evolution of the DWs’ open activism from micro to meso level, summarising the shift in the literature and international community from portraying the women as victims to gradually acknowledging an evolvment of agency.⁷⁰

The scholarly discourse on MDWs and labour migrants in general has seen a shift from victims to activists, yet the current trend is still new and needs additional research. So far, only Pande, Kobaissy and to some extent Mansour-Ille and Hendow offer a thorough study on the autonomous activism of DWs in Lebanon. I intend to add to their work by offering an insight into the evolution and continuity of female MDWs’ activism.

⁶⁵ Scott, James C. (1990): *Domination and the arts of resistance. Hidden transcripts*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁶⁶ Moukarbel, Nyla (2009): *Sri Lankan housemaids in Lebanon. A case of ‘symbolic violence’ and ‘Everyday forms of resistance’*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

⁶⁷ Pande (2012). Pp: 383-384, 414, 416.

⁶⁸ Tayah (2014). Pp: 2-3, 13.

⁶⁹ Longuenesse, Elisabeth; Tabar, Paul (2014): *Migrant workers and class structure in Lebanon. Class, race, nationality and gender*. In: HAL. <halshs-01305367>. P: 3.

Kobaissy, Farah (2016): *Organising the unorganised. Migrant domestic workers in Lebanon*. 3. Cairo, New York: The American University in Cairo Press (Cairo papers in social science, 34). P: 36.

⁷⁰ Mansour-Ille, Dina; Hendow, Megan (2018): *From exclusion to resistance. Migrant domestic workers and the evolution of agency in Lebanon*. In: *Journal of Immigration and Refugee Studies*. P: 10.

4. Theoretical framework

In the following it will be discussed how female MDWs recruit and organise their resistance within a non-democratic state. I will first introduce Lahusen's theory of political mobilisation, illustrating the triangular relation between social structures, the exercise of political agency and collective action in the process of political mobilisation. Drawing on Johnston's concept of political mobilisation within repressive regimes and complemented by the studies of Almeida, Osa and Schock and Papa et al., the definition of political mobilisation by Lahusen will be set into the context of a non-democracy to understand how protest can evolve when safe spaces for protestors are scarce. Moore's understanding of the political mobilisation of workers will bring back in the figure of the domestic worker as an agent of change. In the final section the main variables for the empirical analysis will be summarised.

4.1 Political mobilisation: Definition, aim, evolution, and continuity

Lahusen defines political mobilisation as “[...] a sustained sequence of synchronised communications and actions, an asymmetric interactive path that aims to inform, persuade and socialise people into a preorganised activism.”⁷¹, describing it further as “[...] a multi-layered process that involves a sequence of communications and actions [...]”⁷². Political mobilisation's aim is to change the structure it grew from. It is political because the motor behind mobilising people is the goal of creating an alternative to the current system, such as the participation of MDWs in the decision-making process of Lebanon.⁷³ Political mobilisation can be understood as the summary of four different parts happening simultaneously and in accordance with one another through the actors' verbal exchange and action: Shift of perception, organisation of the activism, formulation of protest in concrete action and ordering the group, action and aim into a bigger framework of meaning.⁷⁴

Political mobilisation is an integral part of social movement theory and looks at the evolution of protest organised by a broad collective of people, suggesting different causes for mobilisation to happen.⁷⁵ Labour movements' initial point, for instance, is that workers perceive their employers' actions towards them as illegitimate and unjust, feeling deprived of

⁷¹ Lahusen, Christian (1996): *The Rhetoric of moral protest. Public campaigns, celebrity endorsement and political mobilisation*. de Gruyter: Berlin. New York. P: 54.

⁷² Lahusen. P: 53.

⁷³ Lahusen. P: 33-34.

⁷⁴ Lahusen. Pp: 1, 53-54.

⁷⁵ Della Porta, Donatella; Diani, Mario (2009): *Social movements. An Introduction*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons. Pp: 5-8.

their rights and experiencing a situation of power imbalance, motivating them to take action. MDWs' struggle can thus fall under the broad category of labour movement.⁷⁶

Political mobilisation does not happen in a vacuum. In non-democratic regimes protesters usually demand more personal freedom from state authorities, denouncing the repressive state praxis that deprives them off their rights to political participation.⁷⁷ Almeida defines state repression and an authoritarian political environment mainly as the blocked political participation of citizens by state elites, where the state deliberately increases the citizens' risk of getting involved in politics by closing and tightly monitoring their entry into political decision-making. Only a small and exclusive circle of power-holders can enter.⁷⁸ Challenging the political elites comes with a risk of severe restrictions.⁷⁹ Therefore, non-democracies often violate the basic principles of civil rights, such as freedom of speech, freedom of association or equal access to state institutions.⁸⁰ Johnston adds that the degree of repression states employ varies through time, depending how threatening the elites evaluate the political participation of its citizens.⁸¹

4.2 Shift in perspective: Realisation

Defining an experience as unjust, first requires a domestic worker to become aware that what she is experiencing is a violation to her rights. For this process of realisation, she evaluates and orders her experiences according to a framework she has been developing over time.⁸²

Lahusen introduces three stages of verbal communication to induce this shift of perspective: *information*, *persuasion*, and *socialisation*. *Information* requires the least effort of activists to convince others to join because receiver and distributor of *information* understand what constitutes the problem. The to-be activist only needs a snap to turn from knowing to acting. *Persuasion* requires direct communication between mobilised and to-be-mobilised actors, such as between a NGO-representative and a MDW. It aims at convincing the individual rather than a broad group to change her opinion. With *socialisation* activists produce their

⁷⁶ Moore, Sian (2011): *New trade union activism. Class consciousness or social identity?* Basingstoke, England: Palgrave Macmillan. Pp: 54, 56.

⁷⁷ Johnston. Pp: 16, 113.

⁷⁸ Almeida, Paul D. (2005): *Multi-sectoral coalitions and popular movement participation*. In: Coy, Patrick G. (Ed.): *Research in social movements. Conflicts and change*. 26. Oxford: Elsevier/JAI. Pp: 68-69.

⁷⁹ Almeida. Pp: 68-69.

⁸⁰ Osa, Maryjane; Schock, Kurt (2007): *A long hard slog. Political opportunities, social networks and the mobilisation of dissent in non-democracies*. In: Coy, Patrick G. (Ed.): *Research in social movements. Conflicts and change*. 27. Pp: 127-128.

⁸¹ Johnston, Hank (2011): *States and social movements*. Cambridge: Polity (Political sociology series). Pp: 98-100.

⁸² Lahusen. P: 15.

own meanings and contents for distributing information and knowledge, internalising the meanings they received in exchange with others.⁸³ Discourse and exchange between people is crucial. By communicating with one another, the marginalised themselves become aware of the reason for their lack of influence. The awareness process initiates the deconstruction of their powerless position as MDWs start to think why and how to regain a position of power.⁸⁴ Power can thus be seen as a process of consciousness that has the potential to change the self-perception of the individual, while still restraining their scope of action.⁸⁵ Without communication no new knowledge would be produced and the status quo kept. However, consent does not simply appear, but is built on the DW's experiences of the structures governing her. Thompson sees the experience of social structures as an act of an individual's agency. During an experience, humans evaluate the world around them, which requires knowledge, reflection, and consciousness of their relation to the environment. Even though he considers an experience to happen spontaneously, the ability to think independently, critically and differently within and outside the given structures, is what characterises human agency.⁸⁶ The term political agency merges the process of enacting humans' individuality with their ability to think of alternatives to the present. MDWs' past, present and possible future experiences affect the perceptions of their environment, becoming visible through interacting with it.⁸⁷ Maiguashca defines political agency thus as "[...] a fundamentally social, contingent activity in which political subjectivity is understood not as given but as a continually evolving process that connects deeply personal sentiments and impulses to wider social views and actions."⁸⁸ Realisation can be seen as a crucial part of enacting political agency and as a step towards gaining political influence.

Lahusen explains what mechanisms lead to people's decision to join a protest group, yet we do not know how exactly this takes place nor how this might be possible for MDWs living in a repressive regime.

⁸³ Lahusen. Pp: 14-15, 53.

⁸⁴ Papa, Michael J.; Singhal, Arvind; Ghanekar, Dattaray V.; Papa, Wendy H. (2000): *Organising for social change through cooperative action. The [dis]empowering dimensions of women's communication*. In: *Communication Theory*. 10 (1). Pp: 92-93, 96.

⁸⁵ Papa. et al. Pp: 93.

⁸⁶ Burgmann. Pp: 17-18.

⁸⁷ Marchetti, Rafaele (2013): *Introduction. Political agency in the age of globalisation*. In: Maiguashca, Bice; Marchetti, Rafaele (Eds.): *Contemporary political agency. Theory and practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge. P: 3.

⁸⁸ Maiguashca, Bice (2013): *Exploring the conditions for political agency. Rethinking politicisation from a feminist perspective*. In: Maiguashca, Bice; Marchetti, Rafaele (Eds.): *Contemporary political agency. Theory and practice*. Oxon; New York: Routledge. P: 119.

4.3 *Free spaces and duplicitous groups*

In non-democratic regimes, the public becomes present in the private since the private is the space where critique can be articulated without fear of punishment. Opposing the government is restrained to spaces where the regime's direct control is absent, creating a certain degree of freedom as surveillance is still felt and subliminally influencing the discussions. Free implies here safe from state persecution and this freedom is ensured because the persons trust each other. Building up strong long-term relations is another feature and by-product of *free spaces* and requires regularity of space and time for relationships to begin, maintain and grow.⁸⁹

As restricted regimes often limit their civil society's public engagement, non-state organisations run by citizens are very important for inducing resistance. The government usually grants these groups limited autonomy, offering their members a certain degree of safety. In repressive regimes, to be officially recognised, CSOs need to operate under a non-political character to escape state surveillance. Johnston calls them *duplicitous groups* and describes their function as "[...] the first microstructural manifestations of political opposition [...]"⁹⁰, whereupon protest or social movements can emerge. Important to note is that *duplicitous groups* can operate permanently, providing activists with a stable organisational infrastructure to formulate and structure resistance. Examples of such collectives are churches.⁹¹

Free spaces are thus important for the continuity of the mobilisation process. They offer activists the material resource of a secure place to meet and practice first instances of protest, while supplying them with an organisational infrastructure to develop future actions. Moreover, they function as a recruitment and experimental space, where new members might be recruited, and ideas tested.⁹²

4.4 **Collective action**

Collective action lies at the centre of Lahusen's definition of political mobilisation. He perceives collective action as the performance of political agency. The shape collective action takes on is the outcome of an internal struggle among a group's members on how to alter the power imbalance. Based on their experiences, they decide with which action(s) the group pursues their goal.⁹³ Drawing on these experiences, activists build up *protest capital*, a term

⁸⁹ Johnston. Pp: 113, 117.

⁹⁰ Johnston. P: 117.

⁹¹ Johnston. Pp: 116-119.

⁹² Johnston. Pp: 114 - 115.

⁹³ Lahusen. Pp: 50-52.

Lahusen borrows from Bourdieu's concept of capital to stress the individual's autonomy. Dissidents continuously accumulate certain resources or skills out of a pool of resources and skills, such as social networks, knowledge of the system and legitimacy from their followers.⁹⁴ Collective action can be seen as the individuals' experience of, realisation of and reaction to the structures governing them.⁹⁵ Through collective action, power is exercised in a similar way as in communication. It restrains yet enables action to take place.⁹⁶ MDWs perform their agency by deconstructing the image of the powerless female and substituting it with the indispensable worker, widening the scope to imagine something that was constructed as non-existent and questioning the legitimacy of the government.⁹⁷ Thereby they act inside, upon and within the system.

However, what makes MDWs undertake these actions when living in a repressive regime where their political activism is risky?

4.5 Group formation and collective identity

Collective action requires a group of people, such as a collective of MDWs, which is responsible for the management and continuity of the mobilisation process by building up *protest capital* and creating their own organisational infrastructure and system.⁹⁸ Lahusen defines organisation as "[...] different (contested) formats and procedures to finalise, formalise, structure and reflexively define collective action."⁹⁹ He describes mobilisation also as the "[...] organisation [...] of the 'environment'"¹⁰⁰, a process of struggling internally how to order and structure the group's perceptions of their surrounding and to turn their perceptions into actions benefiting their goal.¹⁰¹ Johnston's theory on protests within repressive regimes focuses on the external factors initiating political mobilisation, explaining how protest can emerge within state repression. Apart from a brief reference to the meaning of trust and sharing a hobby, belief or interest, he neglects to include an analysis on the dynamics happening inside a group.

⁹⁴ Lahusen. Pp: 48-50.

⁹⁵ Lahusen. Pp: 12-13.

⁹⁶ Lahusen. Pp: 33, 46.

⁹⁷ Burgmann. P: 22.

Rodríguez (2007). Pp: 71-72.

⁹⁸ Lahusen. P: 50.

⁹⁹ Lahusen. P: 43.

¹⁰⁰ Lahusen. P: 44.

¹⁰¹ Lahusen. P: 44.

5. Method and methodology

In the following, the method and methodology of this thesis are presented to outline how the research was conducted to comprehend the thesis' conclusions. In the method part, I will explain my research design and discuss the material I gathered on its validity and reliability. In the methodology part, I will outlay the dilemma of speaking for others coupled with my own position as a researcher.

5.1 Method

5.1.1 Case-based research design

The thesis analyses the different factors that were important for the political mobilisation of MDWs in Lebanon and for the establishment of the Alliance. It uses a case-based research design as the design enables the researcher to define and look at the complex relation between the case's units of analyses.¹⁰² I thus looked which factors the two founding members of the Alliance, the international and Lebanese NGOs described as having impacted the women's political activism and in which ways these factors could have affected the MDWs to found the Alliance. Hereby, I analysed to which extent my theoretical framework could explain my findings. Focusing on only one case, I could familiarise myself with the different units under study thoroughly, enhancing my understanding for the peculiarity of the case and showing the relations between factors.¹⁰³

The material presented in this study is my choice and generalisations are thus difficult to make, decreasing the external validity of the study's findings.¹⁰⁴ A strategy that circumvents this is to be as transparent as possible when describing the study design, study implementation and analysis to provide the reader with knowledge to draw her or his own conclusions.¹⁰⁵

5.1.2 Entering the field

The DWU was my point of departure as the founding process comprised a pool of international and local organisations involved in the political fight of MDWs in Lebanon: ARM/MCC, DWU, IDWF, FENASOL, INSAN, ILO and KAFA. I contacted these organisations prior to my two-month stay in Beirut from May to June 2018.

¹⁰² 6, P., & Bellamy, Christine. (2012): *Principles of methodology. Research design in social science*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Pp: 104-106.

¹⁰³ 6; Bellamy. Pp: 105- 106.

¹⁰⁴ 6; Bellamy. P: 107.

¹⁰⁵ 6; Bellamy. P: 117.

I also contacted the Alliance; however, I did not receive a reply. This changed when I told the executive director of the MCC that the Alliance did not respond to my Facebook message and E-Mails. She suggested to write them another message over Facebook, saying that I have spoken to her to make sure the group can trust me. Her advice was fruitful, and I received an answer by one of the Alliance's founding member J. over *What's App*. This conversation enabled me to gain the trust of J., my first interviewee, and an invitation to the service in the French-Protestant church the coming Sunday.¹⁰⁶ The chat and attending the service were my entry point into the group and J. invited me to a meeting of the Alliance the Sunday after, where I met the other members of the Alliance and my second interview partner T.

5.1.3 Interview sample

As my aim is to understand how MDWs started to become politically active and were able to found the Alliance, I chose to interview two of the group's founding members to understand their perception on their mobilisation process and intention behind the Alliance. I talked to two out of seven founding members currently living in Beirut. I chose J. and T. as both can speak English fluently and were available for an interview during my stay in Beirut.

J. has been working in Lebanon since 1990 and is still employed in the same Lebanese family. J. informed them about her involvement for the rights of DWs but chose to keep her political activism secret from them. She is from an African country, a very active member of the Protestant church in Beirut, the former vice president of her community and involved mainly with KAFA, INSAN and ARM/ MCC. J. can speak French, English and taught herself Arabic.

T. has been working in Lebanon for about the same time as J. and has changed her employer once. Since about ten years she is working for a non-Lebanese family, who knows about her activism but not of the Alliance. T. is also Christian but comes from Southeast Asia. She is involved in ARM/ MCC and has been engaged with activists from Nepal prior to her participation in the DWU and Alliance.

Another part of this research is to find out which factors influenced T. and J. to become and continue politically active and found their own group. Therefore, I met the organisations involved in establishing the DWU and the Alliance to understand which kind of support these organisations provide MDWs and the impact they try to generate thereby. I had so two

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Appendix 3.1.

different point of views I could compare, gaining a deeper understanding for the environment my interviewees described. I chose to include these CSOs in my sample:

ARM/ MCC is one of the few Lebanese organisation in which migrant worker activists and Lebanese activists are equal partners. The organisation has supported the Alliance during their first months and when organising the yearly march on labour day for the rights of migrant (domestic) workers. Most of the members of the Alliance are also active at the MCC.

Since the DWU is affiliated to FENASOL and all founding members of the Alliance were involved in creating the DWU, interviewing both organisations offered me more insight into the relation and dynamics between the three entities. Meeting DWs who are still active in the union and the president of FENASOL enabled me to comprehend and order the information J., T. and the organisations provided me with.

INSAN has conducted one of the few researches on the legal legitimation of GS's implementation of the kafala system and has been advocating for the rights of DWs since almost a decade.

The ILO has in the past ten years been very active in advocating for improving the rights of DWs and is the initiator behind the DWU.

KAFA is involved in advocacy work and strongly engaged in policy recommendations for abolishing the kafala system.

For gaining a global perspective on the fight of MDWs, I chose to interview the regional coordinator of the IDWF. The organisation has also been involved in creating the DWU.

For an overview of the organisations interviewed I have ordered them alphabetically in a table (Table 1).

Table 1: Organisations interviewed

Name of Organisation	Type of organisation	Location	Year of establishment	Focus group(s)	Goals and activities
ARM/ MMC Ms S. (Executive director)	Grassroot collective of Lebanese and migrant activists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beirut • Saida, • Jounieh 	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant workers • MDWs 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of kafala system • Inclusion of domestic work in Code of Labour <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a migrant community centre • Free educational classes • Organising demonstrations for the rights of migrant workers
DWU M; H; P; (General Secretary, Member of the Executive Board, Member)	Not officially registered trade union	Beirut	2015	DWs employed in Lebanon	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of kafala system • Implementation of C189 <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language classes in Arabic and English and computer courses • Support MDWs in hospitals • Reach out to MDWs outside Beirut
FENASOL Mr A. (President)	Federation of trade unions	Beirut	1905	All workers employed in Lebanon	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of kafala system • Inclusion of domestic work in Code of labour • Implementation of C189 <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational support of DWU • Conciliate between employer and worker

<p>IDWF Mrs. A. (regional coordinator for the Middle East)</p>	<p>International non-profit organisation for the rights of DWs</p>	<p>Hong Kong Regional office in Beirut</p>	<p>2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWs worldwide • Organisations of DWs worldwide 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking DWs' organisation worldwide • Linking the struggle of DWs to the global labour movement <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing training for DWs' organisations • Raise awareness about the vulnerable position of DWs
<p>ILO Ms M. (Project coordinator)</p>	<p>International, tripartite organisation of the UN</p>	<p>Geneva Regional office in Beirut</p>	<p>1919</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Employers • Workers 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of C189 <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise Lebanese governments on the implementation of C189 • Financial and structural support of the DWU
<p>INSAN Ms. H. (International advocacy manager)</p>	<p>Human Rights non-profit organisation</p>	<p>Beirut</p>	<p>1998</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stateless persons • Migrant workers and their children 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of the kafala system • Implementation of C189 • Inclusion of domestic work in the Code of Labour <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know-your-rights workshop for MDWs • Legal support for MDWs

<p>KAFA Ms J. (Co-founder)</p>	<p>Feminist non-profit organisation</p>	<p>Beirut</p>	<p>2005</p>	<p>Women and children, who are victims of gender-based violence and trafficking</p>	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of the kafala system • Inclusion of domestic work in the Code of Labour or a special law for domestic work <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings to empower MDWs • Support centre providing psychological help
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5.1.4 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews offer me the possibility to address directly the themes that the I consider relevant for answering my research questions, while remaining open to new and unexpected information the interviewee might give.¹⁰⁷ While this increases the internal validity of the findings, it simultaneously decreases the external validity of the results as they might only be applicable within the specific context of the political mobilisation of the two members of the Alliance.

As semi-structured interviews' main characteristic is their loose structure, the interview-guide serves only a rough framework for the conversation. However, this framework needs to be developed prior to the appointment. As my theoretical framework suggests *free spaces/ preorganised activism*, collective identity and collective action as important for the beginning and continuity of political mobilisation, I designed questions tackling these factors to understand how J. and T. became politically active and how their mobilisation process is linked to the Alliance. For the members of the Alliance I ordered my questions under the themes: "Personal experiences in Lebanon" and "Founding the Alliance" with the sub-theme "Collective identity".¹⁰⁸

Regarding the international and Lebanese organisations, I tried to find out how they support MDWs to become politically active, their evaluation of the DWU and if they face any difficulties regarding their work, such as from GS or employers. I thus focused on *free spaces*, collective identity and collective action. For the organisations I ordered my questions under the themes: "Experiencing the Lebanese regime" and "Mobilisation process" with the sub-themes "Free spaces and oppositional speech situation" and "Collective identity"

The open structure of my interview guide made it possible to ask sharp follow-up questions, gaining a deeper understanding of the meanings the two women attached to certain events, e.g. their participation in the DWU or their interaction with GS. I could explore in-depth how their political mobilisation progressed, and which meanings J. and T. ascribe to these experiences they described in our interviews. My prior research and conversations with the organisation helped me hereby enormously to follow J. and T.'s description of their experiences, especially when we talked about the DWU.

¹⁰⁷ Behnke, Joachim; Baur, Nina; Behnke, Nathalie (2006): *Empirische Methoden der Politikwissenschaft*. Paderborn: Schöningh (UTB Grundkurs Politikwissenschaft. 2695). P: 234.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Appendix: 2.

5.1.5 Conducting the interviews

In total I conducted ten interviews (one with each of the seven CSOs and two with J. and one with T.) during my stay in Beirut from May to June 2018. The interviews were recorded with the consent of the interviewees and transcribed in English. I included all relevant connotations, gestures and mimic of my interviewees in the transcripts when they emphasised a word or statement.

I conducted three semi-structured interviews with two founding members of the Alliance. For two interviews I met with each member personally. The first conversation with J. was done over the mobile application *What's App*. I found talking over the mobile app to be an icebreaker but difficult to have a deep conversation when body language is absent. I later met J. for a face-to-face interview, where I clarified some of her statements during our *What's App*-conversation. The face-to-face interview with J. lasted for about an hour and with T. I spoke for two and a half hours.

The interviews with the organisations lasted between an hour to two and a half. All interviews with the NGOs and FENASOL and the DWU were conducted at their offices, except with the international advocacy manager of INSAN, whom I spoke to via Skype.

I spoke to almost all organisations in English, except when I met with the president of FENASOL and the DWU. For my meeting with the president I worked with a non-professional translator. Another non-professional translator, who I know personally, translated this interview for me. During the interview I conducted with the three members of the DWU, a representative from FENASOL translated the conversations between me and the three unionists from French to English and from Arabic to English. In both interviews, I experienced misunderstandings between me and my interviewees to be an obstacle to ask sharp follow-up questions because the translator interpreted my or the interviewees' questions and answers, sometimes missing the intention behind the interviewees' or my statements. I asked or rephrased questions to avoid these misunderstandings.

5.1.6 Participant observation

The data gathered in an interview is highly influenced by my position in the field because each person influences and interprets the interaction with the target group through their personal background. Combining participation observation with interviews, however, can be used to enhance the researcher's understanding of the information provided in the interviews with the target audience, e.g. when an event or a person is described in the interview.

Kawulich defines participant observation as:” [...] the process enabling researchers to learn about the activities of the people under study in the natural setting through observing and participating in those activities.”¹⁰⁹. Especially, when applying a *focused observation*, where the information provided in the interviews guide the researcher’s decision which activities of the group to watch.¹¹⁰ Observing the interactions of the group can help to gain a deeper understanding of the inter-group dynamic and increase the validity of the study’s findings.¹¹¹ In addition to my interviews, I gathered five participant observations, applying the method of *focused observation*. I observed two meetings of the Alliance, the protest march for the rights of DWs this June in Beirut and two services at the French Protestant church in Beirut, which J. and three other members of the group regularly attend.¹¹² A factor increasing the reliability of the data is to spent a long period of time in the field, enabling the researcher to develop a deeper trust, comprehension and awareness of the target group.¹¹³ As my field trip was limited to two months, I had to use my time efficiently. I decided prior to the meetings I observed, which actions to focus on based on my interviews with J. and T., the seven organisations and my theoretical framework. During the meetings of the Alliance, I paid attention to how the leaders of the group negotiated with one another about the cancellation of the theatre play, understanding what T. meant as “no hierarchies”¹¹⁴ or which characteristics of *free spaces* the organisations offer MDWs. The participant observation also enabled me to get to know my interviewees and the other members of the Alliance better.

During my observation it was important to me to carefully monitor my target community’s behaviour and interaction, while remaining a certain distance and reflection.¹¹⁵ For instance, I did not state my personal opinion on the internal problems between the Alliance and FENASOL or the DWU, nor did I actively participate in the discussion during the meeting of the Alliance where they discussed the cancellation of the theatre play.

5.1.7 Deductive coding

A single-case study approach needs detailed information to draw reliable and valid conclusions. It is important to order this pile of data according to a tight yet flexible system when analysing it. Behnke et al. define *deductive coding* as a method where the study’s

¹⁰⁹ Kawulich, Barbara B. (2005): *Participant observation as a data collection method*. In: *Forum. Qualitative Social Research*. 6 (2). P: 2.

¹¹⁰ Kawulich. P: 15.

¹¹¹ Kawulich. P: 4.

¹¹² Cf. Appendix: 3.

¹¹³ Kawulich. P: 15.

¹¹⁴ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹¹⁵ Kawulich. P: 3.

theoretical frame sets the themes and codes. The analysis is set within the framework defined by the research questions and theories underpinning the study.¹¹⁶

I first read through my three interviews with the two founding members of the Alliance and my participant observations to familiarise myself with my material. Then, I ordered the description of J. and T.'s political mobilisation chronologically, beginning with their first actions, continuing with their participation in the DWU and concluding with the Alliance. The interviews with the organisations were ordered regarding the description of their support programmes, reflection on the DWU and limitations they face. Throughout this process, I developed the following themes drawing on the factors Lahusen and Johnston consider relevant for political mobilisation to begin and continue: Knowledge, *free spaces/ preorganised activism*, collective identity, collective action and experience.

Throughout this process, I discovered that I could not use all interviews of the organisations equally, especially my conversations with the DWU and FENASOL as J. and T. are no longer involved with them.

¹¹⁶ Behnke. et al. P: 348-349.

5.2 Methodology

In the previous chapter semi-structured interviews, participant observations and additional literature were described as the main sources of knowledge used in this thesis. I perceive knowledge as the outcome of an individual's interpretation of reality that is shaped by interacting with her or his social surrounding. I place myself thus in the tradition of social constructivism that takes into consideration that "[...] social institutions are "constructed" [which; Hoc] means roughly that they do not exist independent of people's actions, beliefs, and desires [...]"¹¹⁷. Being able to fully relate to how my protagonists comprehend their position as a female MDW living under the kafala system in Lebanon is difficult and can only remain an attempt. Because "[...] where one speaks from affects both the meaning and truth of what one says, [...]"¹¹⁸. Therefore, I will give an account on where I see myself positioned to explain potential bias.

I am a white woman coming from Germany with a focus on Middle Eastern studies and two longer stays in the region. Being an outsider to the NGO- and activism scene in Beirut enabled me to gain a neutral picture of the internal quarrels yet kept me from acquiring a thorough understanding of the dynamics. My prior stays in Egypt and Jordan sensitised me for the peculiarities and specific state-citizen dynamic in the region, influencing my conclusions when evaluating the effects that the lack of democratic state structure had on J. and T.'s mobilisation process. My focus on women's agency throughout my studies enhances my capability for analysing how female migrant enact their political agency. Despite my degree, I am not an expert nor a Lebanese national and I am not familiar with the women's home countries, lacking the in-depth knowledge to fully comprehend the outer environment the women live in. I tried to increase my understanding by interviewing the Lebanese and international organisations, conducting participant observations and experiencing the environment of Beirut and Lebanon first hand for a short time of two months.

I am aware that my German nationality, gender and purpose influenced the behaviour and thus the kind of information I gathered through my interviews and participant observation. My gender and nationality enabled me to gain the trust of the members of the Alliance quickly. In addition, I was not the first foreign student J. and T. talked to. I sensed a familiarity the members of the group showed in our interactions as researcher and research

¹¹⁷ Rosenberg, Alexander (2012): *Philosophy of social science*. 4th ed. New York: Westview Press. P: 134.

¹¹⁸ Martín Alcoff, Linda (2009): *The problem of speaking for others*. In: Jackson Youngblood; Alecia; Mazzei, Lisa A. (Eds.): *Voice in qualitative inquiry. Challenging conventional, interpretive, and critical conceptions in qualitative research*. London, New York: Routledge. P: 118.

subject. They were aware that my scope of power is very limited and that I can hardly affect improvements on their situations but the information they share with me affect the quality of my research.

5.3 Ethical considerations

Interviewing female DWs engaged in the fight for legal recognition requires a high level of self-awareness and reflection to ensure the safety of the women. No information is given that might reveal the women's identity. I am not stating any personal information, such as their names. One official of an NGO also asked me to keep her name and information confidential. Thus, no names of any official are included as to keep the person's anonymity.

6. Presentation of findings

In this chapter the founding process of the Alliance is chronologically recaptured and complemented by the accounts of international and Lebanese organisation on their support programmes for MDWs, reflections of the DWU and factors hampering their work. It begins with T. and J.'s descriptions how they became political activists, continues with their participation in the DWU and concludes with the founding of the Alliance and the group's current situation.

6.1 Becoming an activist: T.

“I became an activist in 2010. I joined a demonstration under the Human Rights Watch (HRW). At that time, I was so attracted because of, they have a picture of a lady. It is made of like box or something they make her hanging like committing suicide so that time they were calling awareness that migrant workers are dying and so I was interested [...]”¹¹⁹

T.'s first demonstration took place outside the church she goes to every Sunday. At the demonstration members of HRW informed MDWs about their rights by directly talking to the women or through distributing leaflets to them. T. describes the impact this new knowledge had on her as follows:

“Then I realised because I have been in contract that I don't have a day off and that my contract was three years and all I know is that at that time most of the contracts that are signed is only for two years, but we were, I was cheated. I am not the only one, but I am talking on my behalf that I was cheated at that time. So, I had to go through the three years contract. And I just, I was thinking of the situation like mine.”¹²⁰

During the demonstration a young man walked up to her, asking:

“[...] Do you want to help? And I said. Yeah, of course. And then he said: You can give this to your community to let them know about what is in this flyer. So, I started asking for them to join me and then most of them were scared. [...] I wasn't thinking like, I just joined like that and I was just like, they always say: Oh no, maybe this will be on television and my madame will see me on television and then they will say: What am I doing? And then I explain to them that this is our right, even if they will see you on the television. You can explain that and show it to them [...]. And at that time there is a few of them joined, from my community [...] And so after that when I joined that, this was my first, in joining the demonstration.”¹²¹

¹¹⁹ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹²⁰ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹²¹ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

When asking which steps, she took after the demonstration, she tells me the following:

“[...] then I met a guy from Nepal. He was active with his community. Also, we became good friends and then because we went together in the same church, this is where we know each other very well. And then we continue our work and supporting migrant workers. [...], whenever he met like journalists or someone who is interested to know what’s going on in Lebanon, he will contact me. He would say I am not available if you want you can sit with this guy or lady, he will be talking about MDWs.”¹²²

The high rate of suicides was widely debated in the Lebanese public at the beginning of T.’s activism in 2010. T. and her friend also discussed this issue, focusing on the reasons behind the MDW’s decision to end her life:

“So this time we were trying to solve like do you believe that they would commit suicide something like that and then we end up like for me, I don’t believe in someone who will leave their country that is far away from her family and the purpose why she leave her family because she wants to give them like a better education, and a better life, so you know, so what is purpose of you go to a country miles away from home and there you will just kill yourself [...] So this is how we were like no this is not true and somebody has to be in this situation that they have to punish the ones who are doing this.”¹²³

When she heard that a young DW jumped from a balcony after having worked in Lebanon for only two months, T. talked with a befriended freelance journalist about her death:

“So, it was really hard time to accept the situation of a migrant workers. She [the young DW; Hoc] never had the justice for that and no one was accountable for her death. No cases and then ending up like I was telling my friend: Why every time if a DW commits suicide this is the truth. Why is only the name of the migrant worker appear in the newspaper, which is not fair? It should be the employer’s name and the address wherever they are, where they live because it is not fair that only the migrant workers pictures or passport or dead body is on the newspaper. But where is the employer?”¹²⁴

Her journalist friend agreed with her and came up with the following plan:

“[...] he told me: I will mention that [to name the employer’s name; Hoc] to this newspaper. So, after that, when I called him about that, he really did. Went to the journalist who wrote it on the newspaper and the reply was: You know, we cannot do anything because her employer

¹²² T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹²³ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹²⁴ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

is in a high-ranking position in the army. That's why the reason, their name wasn't on the newspaper. So where is justice? And who is accountable for that?"¹²⁵

Then T. decided the following:

"I need to be more involved because it happens already to my community, you know, and I will not wait [...] and so it was like I have to join another demonstration. So, although it was a help that my colleague already, the one who was with me before in the human rights he introduced me to others. So I had connections that they will call me, like: I have a question and then end up somebody call me from BBC, [...] So I was not thinking of anything negative, that I will be like: Oh, I am saying it against the Lebanese people or the Lebanese government that they are not doing anything. So, I just like, go on and go on and just active in demonstration until I... They had a demonstration again about the migrant workers. It was called the Anti-Racism Movement. Then I met another guy who is leading this movement. So, I joined that demonstration again and we were in fact in the pictures, putting, writing on something we want from the government. I think it was from then on, from 2010 it was that continuous yearly. Yeah, I never miss anything from the demonstration."¹²⁶

6.2 Becoming an activist: J.

Before becoming a political activist, J. has been the vice-community leader for her national community, which enabled her to take part in the workshops that NGOs offer for MDWs. In J.'s case, her position enabled her to take part in various workshops, it was her personal interests to learn new things and meet new people, that made her go:

"But for the first time really, I say the curiosity, I say let me know and then maybe, maybe it's good, maybe I will learn more something, having found people but I don't feel before the activist, to be a fighter [...]"¹²⁷

Even though J. participated in workshops of NGOs, she does not describe her participation as an act of political activism. This evolved later because:

"Before I cannot understand people. Why, I will blame always, why she run away? Why she do that? [...] I keep my work. So, I was saying why she don't keep her work? But now I can be in the place of her, I can take her place so I say maybe, I break too much cases of so maybe, maybe that she, she somebody abused her, maybe she don't eat, maybe of course now I understand why she run away [...] because of workshop I think of things I understand and say okay I put in her place and why I will ask first before I just good or not good. Back when the

¹²⁵ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹²⁶ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹²⁷ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

workshop is inside you even your life, every day, you can use it to contact to talk to people...to everything, to walk in the road. Even before I am shy to walk in the road even if say okay if you treat all these Lebanese and then you have to walk on their side [whispers] like you feel shy and I don't know. But now I don't care, I am what I am, I do what I do. So, I am doing it. All the workshop give me all these little bit things really, really it's helping so I am ready to give it for somebody else if somebody...for example, the girls I lead now, I can give them you know in their life every day to be this and this [...]."¹²⁸

Due to the workshops, J. was able to meet MDWs who worked in families that granted them less personal freedom than her own, extending her knowledge about the situation of MDWs in Lebanon, feeling sympathy for the women instead of blaming them. This encouraged her to take part in a flash-mob:

"I go with them [KAFA; Hoc], flash mob, show the DWs for a few two minutes let's say it was a movie two minutes, it's but it was a powerful so that flash mob because it was flashing everywhere in the world, so it was a powerful."¹²⁹

6.3 Support of international and Lebanese organisations

In the last chapter J. and T. name HRW, ARM/MCC and KAFA as three organisations with which they collaborated during the initial phase of their political mobilisation. The executive director of ARM/ MCC describes the function MCC has for political active migrant workers and MDWs as follows:

"There are other migrant workers and mostly DWs who come here because they want to use the space as a political place to organise. So, they either need first and foremost space because there are no spaces, there are no spaces, no safe spaces in this country and this was the main reason why MCC was opened anyway in 2011. They [migrant workers; Hoc] want support in organising a protest and writing a statement and writing translation and advice and you know different sorts of things related to their struggle against the sponsorship system and against all these horrible labour conditions or they want to report, or they want to discuss a case together."¹³⁰

When asking what she means with safe spaces, she explains:

"People come here, they don't expect to be shouted at and you know, face racist insults, right and left, they expect people to you know, love them and respect them. They have a good time here, so people come here and break out from the outside world or from your employers or

¹²⁸ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹²⁹ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹³⁰ Ms S. ARM/MCC. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

from the service or from all the different factors that are outside. So that is what we mean by safe space. [...] In terms of activists, safe space is a place where they are able to organise in the presence of other activists that are citizens.”¹³¹

KAFA has a different approach. The feminist organisation tries to support the political struggle of MDWs by combining advocacy and empowerment. The co-founder explains this as follows:

“[...] as KAFA at least [...] we try to have like a one on one meeting with ministers, to go to conferences where they [MDWs; Hoc] can address decision-makers directly. And we have made a few efforts on this level. As KAFA we did it for example, a workshop with them on letter writings and they wrote directly to the minister and we sent letters. [...] We agreed at that time with them to write about the right of associations. So, one letter was addressed to the Minister of Labour to recognise the right of association. The other one was about the kafala system addressed to the GS. One of them was to the Notary Public Committee, saying that they signed the contract in Arabic language and it is not translated.[...] But the important thing again is the process because this type of letter took like three, four workshops with the workers to convey their concerns, draft it in clear ways so we can translate it later, it took discussions.”¹³²

Another organisation J. cooperates with is INSAN, which provides legal advice for MDWs. The international advocacy manager explains their workshops as follows:

“I mean we do this know-your-rights-training but these are always very superficial you know the problem with the, the difficulty with DWs’ cases are that a lot of depends on the case to case specificity and usually it is not very standard so of course since you know your rights are good so you know you’re supposed to receive your wage at the month, your employer should give you a residence permit etc. But then, if not, what are your options are depends really on what kind of situation you are in. So, we do the general ones, but we make sure that they know how to contact us and even how to contact other [NGOs; Hoc].”¹³³

The IDWF focuses on know-how regarding organising bigger groups:

“Generally, it is organising. So, it is about how to organise and to keep this strong over time. Because normally there is some kind of rotation. There are ladies who will leave and others who will arrive and the idea is to have continuity. So, in that sense developing a work plan with a constitution, by-laws, and electing the people, the members. So, this kind of structure.

¹³¹ Ms S. ARM/MCC. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹³² Ms. J. KAFA. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹³³ Ms H. INSAN. Skype interview. June 2018.

But for the groups who are already active and engaged and working. Also, on the other spectrum, we try to talk about what are the rights, how to demand... Communications, we set up communications. Skill training, that is another important. Because domestic work it is very, it is impossible to... okay what is domestic work? Normally, it is domestic chores but there are many ladies who see that ... for example having a degree in nursery or medical health care. Specific skills that might improve their wages.”¹³⁴

The ILO’s project manager outlines these skills the ILO tries to build up with MDWs:

“[...] we are trying to train them into becoming more, in terms of communication skills [...] That type of job is very, very stressful. I mean it is very emotional because there is so much personal going on. Sometimes they love the family they are working in, where they love the children but... and they don’t understand. So, it’s not, there is so much emotions going on there. Whether it is a positive experience or a negative experience. So sometimes if they want to make a point, they might not necessarily have the skills of focusing on, you know, like a priority item. Because you know with decision-making, with policy making, with advocacy, you need to be very focused, you need to select, you need to be emotional intelligence in terms of understanding your audience, to decide when to speak, what to say or not. So, these skills and it is natural that they don’t have because at the end of the day these are workers in a certain sector. They are not professional negotiators and so on. So, but we are taken that into account in building that self-confidence, in building that, you know, allowing them to understand how to prioritise, how to communicate their issues, how to, not to be intimidated by the other... no matter who that other person is...”¹³⁵

One way how the ILO tried to teach MDWs these skills was through creating a union for DWs, the DWU.

6.4 Participation in the DWU

My two interviewees were part of the MDWs who founded the DWU in 2015. Despite their initial enthusiasm for the union, they were soon disillusioned due to internal problems between them and FENASOL’s leadership, the Lebanese trade union the MDW unionists need to operate the DWU in Lebanon as foreigners cannot found a union.

T. describes the lack of transparency regarding the provision of crucial information to ensure the women’s safety:

¹³⁴ Mrs A. IDWF. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹³⁵ Ms M. ILO. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

“The part of the union is that we were really trained under the ILO before we go on like workshop, training other communities like all the communities from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Madagascar and Ethiopia and there are so many, from the African also. So, it was like we have to train this people and the first of all we were trained under the ILO and then they say we will make this really huge group, so you have to invite from your community 10 person, then it grows, grows so you know. So, they say we will make a union. Before that we were doing that, we have no information that it was forbidden that it was.”¹³⁶

Being a member in an organisation, the government declares illegal, might have kept many women from joining due to their fear to lose their work permit. The participants of the project were denied full information to reach their own decision to whether to continue or stop with establishing the DWU.

Another problem the women encountered was an equal participation of DWs and Lebanese unionist in decision-making. J. sees this as due to the patriarchal power structures within FENASOL:

“I think also they used the stereotypical man. So, I am a man, you can, you are a small woman, you are DWs [...] like a doll you want to play with us only but the decisions coming from the big man and we are a woman, you are a man so you cannot say something like this we feel.”¹³⁷

When the members of the union asked FENASOL about the exact numbers of members or the amount of money FENASOL spent in their name, FENASOL’s leadership did not answer them. T. recalls the situation as follows:

“So I opened up the word transparency in the union, when there was an open forum like a what you want to say about this union now it is established and we are all growing and stuff like that and so I said you were saying that we will do this and that and then I want transparency and everything because we have our membership [about 20 US\$ per year; Hoc] you know and we are paying and we are 500 of us and where is the money? Where the money goes? So, they say, okay, you want transparency, you know like in front, we would do that to all of you, we will make a list of everything blablalbla you know and then end up like nothing.”¹³⁸

As neither FENASOL nor the ILO showed T. any records, she decided to leave the DWU and was soon joined by J. and the other six founding members of the Alliance.¹³⁹

¹³⁶ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹³⁷ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹³⁸ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹³⁹ T.; J. Alliance. Personal interviews. June 2018. Beirut.

Despite these negative experiences, T. and J. mention positive outcomes of their time as members in the DWU. Especially learning of the ILO convention C189 impacted the women's perception of their work. This impression was enhanced during the meeting with the Alliance, where they made posters for the march on 24th June 2018. All women wrote on their poster: "Implement C189".¹⁴⁰ T. names the implementation of C189 as the goal of the Alliance: "Our goal is this you know we have under the labour law, under the ILO that it calls the constitution 189."¹⁴¹ J. summarises the convention as follows: "[...] you have to have the right, the laws, you have to have retire, you have to have holidays, all these things inside the decent work so you have to have your right as a work."¹⁴² During their time in the DWU, T. and J. could attend a training on C189 in Italy. J. describes the training as follows:

"I know the decent work really when I went to Italy to the centre, I work for one week, we work of, the centre works for decent work for DWs so too much things that I learned from there. [...] It was a knowledge more and it was also fun day and you know a lot of people and you know about your work and you know you are not alone everybody is working in your side, in your right, in your side but you don't feel you are alone and then really it was, it was nice and perfect time."¹⁴³

T. adds:

"[...] it was like peaceful. You will walk, you will go anywhere, nobody will talk to you or say anything you know you are just like this is my world, like I am free and nobody, you go to the shop and like wow, I want to go back because nobody is like treating me here the way they are treating me in Lebanon. So, if you compare, if I will compare, this is really way [enhances], way difference, like a huge difference. [...] they [Italians; Hoc] treat them like normal, like free you can, you are, you have your rights, you can speak out there is freedom of speech. Like there is nobody who will say you will be like you know in prison because of what you're saying. Or you will be in prison because of what you did and even if you don't commit a crime, you are just standing up for your right and then you would be put in prison."¹⁴⁴

J. summarise the effects the workshops and trainings during her time in the DWU had on her work as an activist:

¹⁴⁰ Participant observation. June 2018. Beirut. Cf. Appendix 3.3.

¹⁴¹ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁴² J. Alliance. Personal interviews. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁴³ J. Alliance. Personal interviews. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁴⁴ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

“Then also they are teaching us too much things to, to empower women to have your right, to organise something, if you organise be like this, if you organise something be like that if you have a lead somebody don’t be like this, don’t be like that.”¹⁴⁵

T. evaluates the benefits more critically:

“I am thinking that I use you, you use me. But we never use anybody. They [FENASOL; Hoc] are using us. In that case why I said that, because we are without the migrant workers what would they do? If you have your organisation and this organisation is about workers, migrant workers and you have fun, and this is not a joke, this is very serious. This is a lot [enhances], of money, the fund is really a large amount of money.”¹⁴⁶

6.5 Reflection of Kafa and ILO on the DWU

The DWU can also be seen as a learning process for some of the organisations which supported the union’s founding. In retrospective, these NGOs name specific lessons they learned.

Concerning the internal problems between my interviewees and FENASOL, the ILO’s project manager analyses the situation as follows:

“[...] trade unions like worldwide and specifically the Arab union. There is a very patriarchal. It is very patriarchal structures, it’s... there is lots of chauvinism in their mind-set, in their behaviour and so on. And I wouldn’t say, they evolved fast enough to cater for the DWU. [...] So, they are interested as a union for the DWU to exist and to advocate for their rights but when it comes to like... day to day interactions... they have their own... men in their 50s, 60s, used to a certain way of talking to women, on decision-making and all of that... In that sense it wasn’t like a fresh start for them they continued the way they operate and yet there is a new entity, which is a DWs union, which is all women, which has their own mind-sets and concerns and way of doing things. So that did not go very well together, and we are still struggling with it and still trying to navigate a safer way for them to ...because the DWU needs a national union to operate and the FENASOL are slowly but surely developing but we are not completely there yet.”¹⁴⁷

She also points out:

“Another level of problem is that among the community leaders competition also started. So that coupled with the approach of FENASOL also led to some of the important leaders to

¹⁴⁵ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁴⁶ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁴⁷ Ms M. ILO. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

leave FENASOL.[...] . So today if you look at the map of organised DWs we have two structures that are rivals and as an outsider who is very keen on supporting DWU this is very problematic. Because already they face a lot of challenges, already, you know, they need to be... to come together... the good element need to be there together try to push for change. It also part of the long-term strategies that as an ILO we are trying to... Because we support both. So while we continue to support the DWU, we are also supporting the Migrant Community Centres that also offer a safe space for DWs to come. So ... but ideally eventually they should come together. We are trying to come up with ways how that could happen. After the establishment of the union and elections and so on and also when the DWs started to leave, there was kind of a stagnation period and then we have new projects coming to the ILO [...] So what we did is we organised a strategic planning meeting with the DWU whereby they define what is the objective that they want to reach, which is recognition by the government and as a.. as a long-term goal but before that is gaining credibility as a union. Because for the union to be able to attract members they need credibility. So how would they provide credibility? It is by being well-organised and providing services.”¹⁴⁸

The co-founder of Kafa describes the process of establishing the DWU as follows:

“I say created because it is kind of a... I wouldn't use the word imposed but it's very much initiated by ILO. So, of course, there is a... on the other end there is a will... at FENASOL to host this. But it was really kind of initiated by ILO, an ILO initiative. [...]. So basically, it's not a bottom-up approach, it's rather a top-down approach.”¹⁴⁹

The DWU remembered the co-founder of Nari, a political and self-help group for Nepali MDWs that Kafa unsuccessfully tried to initiate. She concludes:

“If I were to think again about a similar project, I would do it in a looser way, in a more fun way. Not rigid with like: "We want to get this achieved in two years." It didn't really work like that. I think people were not finding their right place in this group besides having fun and other things. But they could not really connect to the overall aim that we wanted for this group. Although we took this participatory approach, but it was really as if we were far away.”¹⁵⁰

6.6 Founding the Alliance

J. recalls the one-year gap after she and the other seven founding members of the Alliance left the DWU in 2015:

¹⁴⁸ Ms M. ILO. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹⁴⁹ Ms. J. Kafa. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹⁵⁰ Ms. J. Kafa. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

“ So, [...] we just stay together [...] we are eight people [...] we meet just to talk, to hug each other and in the end strong bond, support each other don't cry. What we do now? We leave this fight. We, we think it would be better if we are a syndicate. We found the syndicate but now we lose it, what we can do? So, that then we start, we say: okay, let us start another one, beginning again. We start again, beginning zero and then we start to have to find the members, to make the work, just the beginning like the syndicate. So, as we are now, as we are Alliance of migrant DWs.”¹⁵¹

The devastation J. describes here when the eight women left the union, enhances the deep emotional bond the members of the Alliance have attached to the fight of DWs over the years. T. explains why the women continued their political activism for the rights of MDWs despite this disappointment:

“We know the pain of this migrant workers who are newly come, newly in Lebanon. We feel their pain, because we've been there. So that's why our purpose is that we don't want anybody to, to pass through what we have been through before and we want that we will see a progress.”¹⁵²

Though their motivation was still present, J. recalls her group's first steps after leaving the DWU as follows:

“Now we don't have anything, we just us, DWs as our hand only we have so...we start from that and then we start to find small, small way with MCC and dammah [a female collective in Beirut; Hoc] and we have a friend for that and then they will give us advice, do like this, make like this, do that, you can do that, stay together all the time, you can manage yourself organising you know.”¹⁵³

J. explains how their experiences in the DWU impacted them when founding the Alliance:

“[...] we do it we decide like this because you know before that when we have with the syndicate somebody always in your head has to say you do that, you have to do this – no, you don't have to do that! Okay, your voice, I don't want to hear that voice anymore, no I don't want to do that, no say *khalas* [enough; Hoc] to do that, *khalas* [enough; Hoc] to listen what somebody else in our head, let's do it like we are, [...] so we need allies [...] but we decide in the last, nobody will decide in our place again to say no, do that, do that. No, that is *khalas* [enough; Hoc], really full because it no makes sense and your voice is never heard.”¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁵² T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁵³ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁵⁴ J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

T. adds:

“We don’t have what do you call this there is a word that I just... hierarchical. There is no you have this job, this is your job. Before when before we decided to form the Alliance is that we decided okay you will be the one this, you will be given the money. But in the end, when we get the fund, we forget everything that we have our own task. We just do it because we agreed together that we will be like equal with each other and that what you can contribute and help for this Alliance you can do it and then we will just gather together what our decision will be made and all and if we decide to do this then fine. So, it’s just like this. We don’t really have the official saying that this is your task, this is my task.”

Leadership is hereby understood as a shared task, including and negotiating the differences among the women because this is a potential to draw upon and what J. describes as “like we are”. Decisions are collectively taken. The meeting I observed, where the cancelation of the theatre play the Alliance and Zoukak Theatre were organising, was discussed, enhanced this impression. The founding members constantly encouraged each participant to express her opinion and to be fully aware that the Alliance cannot guarantee. It was crucial for the leaders that their members received full information and were fully aware of the potential security consequences.¹⁵⁵ T. explains the reason behind the founding members’ behaviour at the meeting as follows:

“[...] if ever we face problems, or we have something we don’t hide because we agree the first day that we formed this Alliance, we said we want all transparency. If there is anything that is hidden that we don’t know, especially if it comes to money you know. I have the saying I always [say, Hoc] absolute power, corrupts absolutely. [...] but if we stay our mouth close and ignore everything like before in the past we will never learn. We will never have progress even in the Alliance. I told them many times if there is something that is wrong, we will make it right. We will confront the person. We want to open up in the meeting, you have to say something not to hide it or something. Or else this Alliance will not stand. It will fall apart.”¹⁵⁶

Her statement shows that she and the other founding members have reflected on the reason for taking her decision and concluded that long-term change can only happen in an open environment where every opinion is heard and discussed. Equality, transparency and flat hierarchies are deliberate choices of the women to lead their struggle themselves. They decide to continue co-operating with NGOs but only as equal partners.

¹⁵⁵ Participant observation. June 2018. Beirut. Cf. Appendix 3.2.

¹⁵⁶ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

6.7 Actions and their limits for the Alliance

At the beginning of their activism the two women did not feel restricted by GS. On the contrary, J. and T. describe the atmosphere before 2015 as very open and that the security of the migrant workers protesting was not discussed among them and the NGOs.¹⁵⁷ However, T. describes personal restraints she experiences:

“I think it is, for me it is like when you are under the kafala system. I, I will explain it like, you are already a property of your employer. Like you are not allowed to do anything unless they will say so: Okay you are free to do this or you can talk to anybody, to sit there. It’s like you are a robot [...] But for me if I saw somebody like that I don’t have the courage also to approach the worker, why don’t you sit down or sit somewhere else? Because maybe the reactions of the employer will say: Who are you? You are giving us a shame on this, you know, this is my country, you know all this things. Because it happens in the airport that a foreigner was like, the employer was trying to drop the hand of her worker and then one of the foreigners said: Why are you grabbing her like that? And she said: It’s none of your business. And then the foreigner said: Yeah, it’s none of my business but now it is my business because of what you are doing to her. You see, so that’s the case on me also that I say, okay it’s none of my business but this time you are hitting her, it is my business. But in a socialised area I don’t do that for shame. Especially ...I am, I am a migrant worker, I work in a house, like, I have no rights as they believe by themselves that I have no right, I am not equal with them. Although we are all equal, we are all created equal, but people just been ignorant that they don’t accept that. Here in Lebanon most of them, Lebanese even in the shops, it happens to me many times, in the taxi, it happens to me most of the time until now, I have been here for 28 years, but it still it happens to me that they are not treating me well. Like yeah, I have the money, I, why would I enter a shop? I know it is expensive. [...] But they will just ignore you or something like turn their back or something and say oh excuse me, I want to ask question, that is expensive, you know. They will do like that, just being so rude, you know, when you are in a shop.”¹⁵⁸

J. adds:

“We feel like we are prisoner for that system. We can’t move. Some say even like slave. Said like we are slave. That’s why people call it modern slavery. You don’t have the last words. You don’t have right. If your garant [employer; Hoc] want to send you in 24 hours they [GS; Hoc] deport you. [...] The system of live for MDW. You are here to work. Clean house and toilet. No more than that. DW no have right to talk, to say anything, to do what they want to

¹⁵⁷ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁵⁸ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

do. You must to say even yes for your boss every time. You are them property, they do like they want for you. No one protects us here. [...] All of this we have problem if you are activism. But we can have problem with normal people like madam or mister = patron or patronne . = garant. Our boss also because this normal people think we teach them DW things and they changes for example. If one DW said YES all the time before when we talk to her explain her she has right to eat, to rest, to have a room, to have a day off, to say NO for something not always YES she come back to her work and start to say NO. Or asking something she never ask before. Her boss start to notice and this time they will make problem for us why we teach her. [...] The madame or patronne can speak to GS report there we are somebody bad. Or they invent too much things to make dirty our name.”¹⁵⁹

J. describes in her quote that employers can report MDWs to GS. The threat of the Ministry of Labour to have GS raid the founding congress of the DWU in 2015 was the first time my interviewees thought that the Lebanese state did not tolerate their open activism and that they could be punished because of their political engagement. This impression was further enhanced when in the year after, GS deported two Nepali activists and one founding member of the Alliance without giving reason why. J. recalls the deportation of the founding member as follows:

“She renew her paper like every year. After four months waiting, they [GS; Hoc] said you cannot stay you leave Lebanon in one-week time. Really, we don´t know the reason. That time we are shocked and not understand. Not believe even what happen. [...] that´s why we are until now afraid for any interview, show in the tv open face or video.”¹⁶⁰

T outlines how the deportation of her Nepali colleagues reinforced the Alliance´s decision to withdraw from public actions:

“[...], we didn´t even realise that we will be in danger with GS or whatever. But after that it was like slow down. This comes like maybe from 2016/17. Yeah because of our colleagues who were arrested from Nepal [former members of DWU; Hoc] and then even though one of them was, had the paper, was documented and the other one was undocumented, they were deported, and they were taken from the home. And now, after the migrant workers...so we never know when they [GS; Hoc] are gonna strike so it was like okay, we need to slow down.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ J. Alliance. What´s App interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹⁶⁰ J. Alliance. What´s App interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹⁶¹ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

In November 2017, the Alliance organised a theatre workshop in cooperation with Zoukak Theatre and the Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation (RLF). J. describes the idea behind the theatre play as follows:

“Before we want to make the theatre in labour day. Because every labour day we walk, we march and then we reach in one place, we have speech. Because of the deportation of Gemma [deported founding member of the Alliance; Hoc] we said let’s make theatre to show [...] We want kafala system and everything and change it and everything, we want to make it not in the road it’s on the stage that we want to do but is not gonna happen.”¹⁶²

Shortly before the play’s premiere, GS wanted to know the names and contact details of every women involved in the workshop. This direct involvement of GS led the founding members of the Alliance to cancel the play in May 2018.¹⁶³ During the meeting I attended, where the leaders of the Alliance informed their members of the cancellation of the play, the women debated different strategies how to pursue their fight.¹⁶⁴ T. outlines the background for their decision in our interview as follows:

“[...] so we just like this is the time for us like be silent and move slowly because of what happened to our colleague [...] the GS just give her ten days. She must leave the country it was like, because we were very close, with each other so it was like: How did it happen? And because of too much exposure, this is, that was the main reason that we decided. Because you, they [GS; Hoc], they watch you like in demonstrations.”¹⁶⁵

One consequence the women drew is to cut down their media presence as T. explains:

“[...] we will change it [the Alliance’s Facebook page; Hoc] soon because our photos are there and we want to take it out because our colleagues they were targeted. So we move now slowly, slowly and even in the media when this event that we will have in Zoukak the theatre event that we had they said oh we will invite media okay but nobody was thinking you never, you don’t know everybody who is coming, you don’t know their face who is coming where they come from. Just remember there are agents from the security. They don’t say I am from the security, wearing uniform, you know no.”¹⁶⁶

This attitude I could observe when I met with the Alliance to make posters for the march. When one member suggested to use a microphone as the previous year, the others reminded

¹⁶² J. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁶³ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁶⁴ Participant observation. June 2018. Beirut. Cf. Appendix. 3.2.

¹⁶⁵ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁶⁶ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

her of the potential danger this attention could cause them. They also decided against carrying any banners stating their group's name and to speak on stage during the protest march.¹⁶⁷

Another strategy they pursue is to connect more with other Lebanese and international organisations to protect them from potential danger GS might impose on them.

T. summarises the current situation as follows:

“Although you are fighting for your rights but it's limited you know so you cannot do anything if things are limited. You cannot, you don't have the freedom to speak something that is against them or what they did or that is not supposed to be treated like this. It is forbidden, everything is forbidden and only the things that are not forbidden, is that you have to work. Because this is your job. That's it. But if you will complain, that's a big issue. So you have to abide on their laws, they are the laws so you have to follow... so we are doing it but slowly, slowly, slowly but surely. If we know that it is endanger, we have to move back or we have to do it secretly. Or is there any other way that we can do it that we can bring awareness to others that this is happening to us?”¹⁶⁸

6.8 Actions and their limits for the organisations

In the previous chapter, J. and T. describe different factors limiting their political activism.

Similar reports the co-founder of KAFA:

“So, the second component of our work is about advocacy. Unfortunately, it's not a component that is very active due to the stagnation of the situation in Lebanon. It is very hard to change things, it... in the current situation. But with years we have built our advocacy demands and we have sharpened our arguments and our vision what we would like to see achieved. Now it's time to pass to action because even if there is no political will, it will come, I mean even if there is no... a little bit of light or hope from the political institutions but... an action has to take place.”¹⁶⁹

The ILO's project manager names Lebanon's political instability and the Syrian crisis as restraining:

“Another is that specifically in Lebanon... there isn't... the political structure is... the political environment is not very stable. So migrant workers is not on top of the agenda of their priority issues for parliamentarians to come together and vote and advocate. You know, there are so many issues that are still in the pipeline, on the economic level, social level. So, migration

¹⁶⁷ Participant observations. June 2018. Beirut. Cf. Appendix 3.4, Appendix 3.5.

¹⁶⁸ T. Alliance. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁶⁹ Ms J. KAFA. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

might not be like on the top agenda. Another thing is that since 2009 we didn't have a parliamentary election. So, the... these are important milestones. So, when C189 was adopted, it wasn't adopted in an environment where the country was moving towards, you know, reflection, and changes at policy level and so on. And then it got more complicated with the Syrian crisis, with the refugee crisis, where by the population is ... is there is a demographic challenge in Lebanon. So again, this also increases Xenophobia, it increases you know, nationalistic feelings so it becomes us and the other. And unfortunately, the DWs would be considered as the others rather than how much they contribute to the society, to the economy, to the well-being of the families and so on.¹⁷⁰

The international advocacy manager of INSAN reports similarly:

“I mean limited in the sense that of course we can meet with the Minister of Labour and present your recommendations but how much of these recommendations is actually picked up? If you take a historical view of what has happened in the past few years there were a lot of workshops, conferences with or without ministers, meetings with ministers whether it is one NGOs or many NGOs, a lot of publicity and media work but it didn't really resolve in any change and part of it is that there is no public pressure or public support to these kinds of activities but also because the government has been totally unwilling to move the agenda for.”¹⁷¹

She also mentions restrictions INSAN faced from GS:

“[...] traditionally when there were cases involving DWs we have done a lot of individual case campaigns when there were cases of deportation and they were targeted at the arbitrary power of GS and when you go against GS then you do have some problems in the country. So, our offices were raided once because of the campaign we have done, my colleague was detained for questioning for a few hours just because of that special campaign. So, GS can really make your life miserable. We have been, I mean, our relationship with them is okay but we have had times when it was very strange, and we were subjected to harassment because of that.”¹⁷²

The executive director of ARM/MCC also mentions security concerns:

“[...] obviously there are so many, so many obstacles that don't allow the MCC to be run by migrant workers themselves. This is why it still needs two partners at the centres at this point. We experiment in many different ways. We tried to hire a migrant coordinator that was a migrant worker or domestic previously for many reasons that didn't work. We tried to hire an assistant coordinator that were migrant workers, DWs. We still have this case at this point but

¹⁷⁰ Ms M. ILO. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹⁷¹ Ms H. INSAN. Skype interview. June 2018.

¹⁷² Ms H. INSAN. Skype interview. June 2018.

it hasn't been the most successful for many reasons. Whether it has elevation to capacities or skills or most importantly safety issues.”¹⁷³

She, however, perceives the approach of many NGOs as an obstacle:

“[...] the main problem is also how many activists, and NGOs and Human Rights people, who work or perceive this struggle, who always look at migrant workers as victims, as passive people, who have no power, who have no voice. And thereby after years of trying to change that, now they would include them in their meetings as talking people. [...] Anyway, basically this needs to change. I mean, the whole change that needs to happen is the way that women's rights groups and other Human Rights groups see migrant workers. There have been migrant workers in the country longer than many of us activists have been doing our activism. For 20 and 30 years, since the civil war they didn't come in as activists maybe but they build all this knowledge and all this leadership and all this connection being in the country. So, this cannot be side-lined.”¹⁷⁴

The secretary of the DWU reports that lack of funding is one of the main problems the DWU faces:

“The main problem is the financial problem. Because we are not able to cover huge expenses as a trade union. The second main problem is that we don't have access inside the houses to confront the employer to their employee. And as a union our main goal is to raise the voices of the workers and to claim better situation for the workers. This are what we are capable of doing. We don't have the capacities, maybe we can assist one girl that is sick to cover her expenses. Maybe we can cover one ticket, but we cannot like cover a huge expenses, it is out of our capacities as a trade union but we know that this union is our tool to raise our voices to be recognised by the government and to have better situation for DWs.”¹⁷⁵

The only organisations which does not report on major problems or unsuccessful programmes is IDWF:

“Generally, no, no. We never, personally in all these years I never had any kind of obstacles and not that I am aware of. No NGO was shut down, no person was threatened, no, no, no....No, no, so far, luckily, here in Lebanon there is a freedom that I don't see anywhere else in the region.”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Ms S. ARM/MCC. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹⁷⁴ Ms S. ARM/MCC. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

¹⁷⁵ M. DWU. Personal interview. June 2018. Beirut.

¹⁷⁶ Mrs A. IDWF. Personal interview. May 2018. Beirut.

7. Discussion

In the following the factors that J. and T. report to enable and restrain them to become politically active and found the Alliance will be discussed and compared to the involvement of international and Lebanese organisations in the political fight for and of MDWs. Lahusen and Johnston's theoretical framework will hereby be critically questioned.

7.1 Knowledge

Knowledge can be seen to play an important part throughout the process of founding the Alliance. In the beginning of T. and J.'s activism, both received information that differed from what they considered to know about the situation of MDWs in Lebanon. Only through exchange with others did both gain this knowledge, evaluating and linking it to their prior experiences as a MDW in Lebanon. This process re-shaped their perception of the reality they experience: T. knows she has rights but was not granted these rights, considering herself to be cheated and through the conversation with her friend realised that MDWs' death might be due to lack of safety measures at their worksite. J. realises that it is the treatment MDWs experience from their employers that impacted their decision to leave the employers. Gaining knowledge can also be seen as empowering in J.'s case. Through the workshops and trainings, she attended, J. gradually realises that she has power in the form of skills and know-how that she can share and teach other MDWs, helping them and maybe even improving their situation. This kind of practical knowledge, such as being familiar with the legal situation of MDWs or how to organise a bigger group, the women also needed and used to found the Alliance by themselves.

International and Lebanese organisations often provided them with these kinds of knowledge. The information they shared with the women were impacted by the organisations' perception of what MDWs need. Hereby, the CSOs differ: MCC focuses on safe space, KAFA on bringing MDWs in contact with decision-makers or the ILO on organising DWs in trade-union structure. Differing, however, can be seen as an important characteristic for founding the Alliance. Each entity gave J. and T. different resources that were important for the beginning and continuity of their political activism. In addition, these NGOs were not the only knowledge producer. This also happened between MDWs: During the discussion of T. and her Nepali friend or when J. talked to the MDWs she met in the workshops. Exchange of information is thus important, and it would be interesting to further analyse how activists' different social roles impact the content and quality of information, maybe leading to different shapes of their political activism.

Therefore, as Lahusen notes, receiving new information or knowledge can begin political mobilisation. It produces and distributes the kind of information that is necessary to convince others to become politically active. This can happen through different formats of exchange, such *information* as in T.'s case or for J. *socialisation*.¹⁷⁷ Being in a similar position of power can but do not have to simplify the persuasion of the to-be-activist. T., for instance, describes the start of her activism as a quickly happening shift from being a listener to becoming a demonstrator, whereas J. reports on a gradual process.

Not only in the beginning of their activism but throughout can communication be seen to be the channel of transmitting and constructing knowledge. Power can evolve here as Pape et al. rightly noted.¹⁷⁸ Through exchange the women could deconstruct their former perception of the reason behind MDWs' employment situation, motivating them to take action for the rights of MDWs or leaving the DUW and founding the Alliance.

In addition, having a similar structural position might simplify the persuasion of new protestors but does not guarantee it.¹⁷⁹ It is important to consider the environment the actors live in and its potential impact. As seen in the demonstration, T. first participated in, not every woman took part due to fear of the potential consequences by her employer. This might be due to the regulations of the kafala system as Pande concludes. As the employer mainly decides on her or his employee's working condition, the women experience their worksites differently.¹⁸⁰ J. does not report on problems with her employers, whereas T. was denied days-off and a two-years contract. However, the kafala system is only one component and it could also be due to lack of personal interest in political activism.

7.2 Preorganised activism, free spaces and collective identity

As mentioned previously, the *preorganised activism* of international and Lebanese organisations were important for the founding of the Alliance as they distribute and produce the knowledge that impacted T and J to become political active for the rights of MDWs. They taught the women the necessary skills to organise the women's political activism: First as individuals, then as unionist and then as founders of the Alliance. Moreover, these organisations, such as ARM/MCC, gave the members of the Alliance a place to regularly come together with other Lebanese and migrant activists or MDWs from other national communities. They provided them with a regularity of time and space to build up these skills

¹⁷⁷ Lahusen. Pp: 14-15, 53.

¹⁷⁸ Papa. et al. Pp: 92-93, 96.

¹⁷⁹ Lahusen. Pp: 14-15.

¹⁸⁰ Pande (2013). Pp: 426-429.

and knowledge, extend their social networks, deepen their relationships to one another and internalising and gradually identifying themselves with the aims of these organisations, such as demanding the implementation of C189. The women themselves have been building up strong emotional attachment as part of their personal long-term involvement to the struggle of MDWs, motivating them to continue fighting despite the risk and painful experiences their political activism brings with it. This emotional bond is linked to the low social position the women take as MDWs in Lebanon and has grown stronger throughout the years and by experiencing similar situation of injustices, as T. and J.'s statement indicate. Collective identity is formed in these spaces but also among each other. Here, J. and T. are familiarised with this narrative that offers them a broader perspective than their own case and gradually socialises them with the aim of the NGOs. As seen in T.'s case, her social network, too, induces in her this identification with the fight for MDWs.

The interviews with J. and T suggest that they are not only knowledge receivers but also critically evaluate this knowledge and its producers. Due to lack of state support for DWs, international and Lebanese organisations carry responsibility for the women. The knowledge the organisations share with them, for instance, impacts how they read their environment to some extent. Therefore, the women trust that NGOs work in their, the MDWs, best interest. In the DWU, J. and T. felt that this was not always the case. T., for instance, indicates that there was a financial interest of FENASOL to host the union. Kobaissy concludes similarly as T. in her book on the establishment of the union. She – as J. and the ILO's project manager – reports on the lack of influence the women experience, linking it to a patriarchal division of power inside FENASOL.¹⁸¹ An equal power-division between MDWs and NGOs can be seen to be important. A disbalanced share impacts the perception of J. and T. towards the benefits their engagement brings for them in the NGOs. They feel misused and decide to end their participation in the DWU. Apart from Lebanese and international CSOs, J. and T.'s accounts on their initial phase of activism indicate that migrants themselves constitute such *free spaces* through their friendships and social networks. Interesting to note is that though J. was a vice president of her community, she does not consider her position as political. Pande considers community leaders to be the first instances of organising protest – as does the executive director of ARM/MCC.¹⁸² So far, research on the connection between community leaders and activism is scarce and it would be interesting to look deeper into this link.

¹⁸¹ Kobaissy. Pp: 74-76.

¹⁸² Pande (2012). P: 397.

For founding the Alliance, the *preorganised activism* of international and Lebanese CSOs was crucial. This is where knowledge comes from and is distributed: Socialisation into a protest infrastructure where MDWs can build up their *protest capital* in form of know-how and skills.

Johnston is correct to introduce *free spaces* as the beginning of protest when freedom is scarce. They provide the regularity of time and space, which is crucial to build up strong relationship that protect these *free spaces* from the infiltration of outside repression – whether as social or state repression.¹⁸³ The description of safe spaces by the executive director of MCC can be seen as an example. The degree of freedom inside these *free spaces* enables their users to practice the difference to the outside environment. J. and T., for instance, could try out and discover alternatives to their experiences as MDWs in Lebanon, such as demanding with Lebanese and international activists their rights. However, as seen *free spaces* are not free from internal power struggle and neglecting a discussion of constituency of equal share of power can lead activists to leave this *free space*, decreasing the potential of change these places can induce. Developing an equal share of power is also necessary for activists to be able to try out alternatives. Limiting the freedom inside these spaces hinders the conceptualisation of new actions, blocking the fight of the activists. Trust between the users of *free spaces*, as Johnston notes, ensures the continuity of these spaces.¹⁸⁴ When mutual trust is absent, these spaces can crumble apart, as seen with the DWU. He and Lahusen neglect to include collective identity as an important factor of *free spaces* or *preorganised activism*. Though knowledge and space are important, if both do not personally affect the activists-to-be, it is difficult to motivate them to become and remain politically active.

7.3 Collective action and experience

Their previous experience as individual activist and unionist shape the constituency of the Alliance: Flat hierarchies, full provision of information for their members and co-operating with NGOs as equal partners. The process of founding the Alliance is the application of the skills, know-how, social networks and emotional attachment, J. and T. have been building up throughout their time as activists in the scene. The evaluation of experiences shapes organisational structure and the group's action. This could be seen when the members decided to cancel their theatre performance or to keep anonymous throughout the march. Their decisions are based on the evaluation of their past experiences of the structures governing them and their individual evaluation of them. Since the beginning of their engagement for the

¹⁸³ Johnston. Pp: 113, 117.

¹⁸⁴ Johnston. Pp: 113, 117.

rights of MDWs, my interviewees have acquired a thorough knowledge about MDWs and their rights, built up a broad network of supporters and participated in different forms of activism. Especially their participation in the DWU impacted the shape their mobilisation has now. The eight women turned the experiences of their previous membership in the DWU into part of their *protest capital*, which they use to build up the Alliance: An open, free space by MDWs to fight for their rights in coalition with other organisations involved in the movement. The seven leaders try to divide the power equally among them and their members through flat hierarchies, a high level of transparency and an open information policy. Experience justifies this decision.

Witnessing how their co-founder and long-term friend had to leave Lebanon due to her activism impacts the women's collective action now. At the beginning of their activism J. and T. do not report to be aware that their political activism could lead to their deportation. The Lebanese government might not have considered the protests of NGOs as enough pressure to change the kafala system. The deportation of prominent migrant leaders started after the founding of the DWU. However, not every woman active is deported, requiring additional research to affirm this argument. Important to note is that the perception of my interviewees has changed due to the deportation of their colleagues and co-founder. Since then they link their activism with danger to lose their work and the income of their families. Their engagement has become risky because both assume that if they face GS there is hardly any way to combat the authority's decision. Though they know their rights, they are aware that they cannot claim them. The members of the Alliance decide to build up a safety-net of Lebanese and international organisations to decrease the risk of arbitrary decisions of GS.

The CSOs supported women in developing collective action. They often provide funding for the women's collective action, physical support, such as their organisation's offices, or advice. However, the support they can provide the women with is limited. This is partly due to the impact of Lebanese political landscape that hardly supports the NGOs regarding financial support or applying their recommendations in their policies. Some, as INSAN or ARM/MCC, face restriction from GS, decreasing the degree they can involve MDWs in their organisation or denounce the practices of GS.

Experience is highly important for the development of collective action. The evaluation of experience is linked with knowledge, know-how, and social networks. This is what Lahusen

calls *building up protest capital* and can be seen as continuously done by J. and T.¹⁸⁵ The application of *protest capital* is done through collectively acting and as such as a performance of what Maiguashca defines as the exercise of political agency.¹⁸⁶ Out of their personal experiences as a political activist the women build up individual knowledge, sharing and exchanging this knowledge with the other women and then decide together how to apply this knowledge best when. Knowledge and experience are hereby also outcomes of social interactions with individual reflection. The environment and perception of their position of power impacts the kind of action they decide, too: Limitation they associate with their powerless position when facing GS or as a MDW. However, this only shifts their action but does not end them.

Hence, I draw the following conclusion regarding the factors that enabled and restrained J. and T. to found the Alliance:

1. Organisations were crucial for founding of Alliance. They provided the necessary know-how, social networks, space, time, framework of reference and money to enable T. and J. to become activists, continue their activism and eventually found the Alliance
2. Free spaces are not a-political spaces. Establishing a union within a union, the ILO aimed at changing three patterns of power at once: MDWs, FENASOL and the Lebanese government. According to my two interviewees this was not successful because the ILO tried to organise MDWs into the structure of trade unions, while merging the inner power hierarchies of FENASOL into the dynamics of DWs. Trade union structure, as described by my interviewees, was the end-product the ILO wished to produce but it was not the women's making. *Free spaces* should be the platform where activists can try out their ideas, creating an alternative model.¹⁸⁷ In the DWU, J. and T. describe the actions as already prescribed and could so not be developed by the actors themselves, leading to the repetition rather than transformation of these structures. Inside power dynamics are present and openly discussing them could be important for their continuity. As otherwise free spaces limit activists in the development of their actions, such as prescribe their outcomes.

¹⁸⁵ Lahusen. Pp: 48-50.

¹⁸⁶ Maiguashca. P: 119.

¹⁸⁷ Johnston. P: 114.

3. *Protest capital* is a helpful term to describe interplay between knowledge, experience, communication/ exchange and collective action. All four factors were found to impact the shape of the Alliance to a high extent.
4. Collective identity is tightly connected to the interplay of these four factors but requires personal identification. It impacted the women to continue their political engagement and to start and keep the Alliance running.

8. Conclusion

The political mobilisation of J. and T. and their decision to continue their activism for the rights of MDWs can be seen to have culminated in the Alliance. Throughout this process, the women have been engaged within different networks and organisations, experienced different degrees of freedom – on their worksite, within international and Lebanese organisations and GS –, faced obstacles and surmounted them. In the group the two women materialise their experiences of the DWU and their prior activism. Inside the Alliance they create a free, open space apart, within and upon the Lebanese state and NGO-sector. The group's organisational constituency and identification are strongly shaped by the lack of participation they experienced with the DWU. However, the knowledge and networks they gained, is helpful when mobilising other DWs and organisations. Collective identity is the women's motor to endure the restrictions they face when confronting the regime because the Alliance is to some degree my interviewees' source of power, enabling them to continue fighting

Experience, realisation and evaluation of the environment are tightly interlinked in the women's mobilisation process. Lahusen's definition of the political mobilisation process as organising the environment can be seen in the mobilisation process of the two members, where information and knowledge was and continuous to be crucial for resistance to evolve.¹⁸⁸ Experience adds on to information and knowledge, impacting the evaluation and leading to action. The open political activism of MDWs is one of those sanctioned topics. The members of the Alliance challenge the stigma of the passive, one-dimensional and dependent product, which the kafala system including its implementation by the security forces and Lebanese society intends to create, and lay open what should not be shown publicly: The possibility of MDWs organising themselves to end their exploitation. Shifting the image from victims to workers, the women took back the control to define their own image, their own rules and discourse, emancipating themselves from victimhood with their own means. However, this still happens in the private.

Nonetheless, MDWs are successfully organising for equal labour rights in other regions of the world, such as in Asia or South America. The collective of the Alliance is part of this development, adding a hopeful "yet" to the quote by Negri in the introduction to this thesis: "*The old dies but the new cannot be born [yet; Hoc]*".¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁸ Lahusen. P: 44.

¹⁸⁹ Klatzer.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Table 1. Organisations interviewed

Name of Organisation	Type of organisation	Location	Year of establishment	Focus group(s)	Goals and activities
ARM/ MMC Ms S. (Executive director)	Grassroot collective of Lebanese and migrant activists	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beirut • Saida, • Jounieh 	2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Migrant workers • MDWs 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of kafala system • Inclusion of domestic work in Code of Labour <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate a migrant community centre • Free educational classes • Organising demonstrations for the rights of migrant workers
DWU M; H; P; (General Secretary, Member of the Executive Board, Member)	Not officially registered trade union	Beirut	2015	DWs employed in Lebanon	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of kafala system • Implementation of C189 <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language classes in Arabic and English and computer courses • Support MDWs in hospitals • Reach out to MDWs outside Beirut
FENASOL Mr A. (President)	Federation of trade unions	Beirut	1905	All workers employed in Lebanon	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of kafala system • Inclusion of domestic work in Code of labour • Implementation of C189 <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational support of DWU • Conciliate between employer and worker

<p>IDWF Mrs. A. (regional coordinator for the Middle East)</p>	<p>International non-profit organisation for the rights of DWs</p>	<p>Hong Kong Regional office in Beirut</p>	<p>2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DWs worldwide • Organisations of DWs worldwide 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Linking DWs' organisation worldwide • Linking the struggle of DWs to the global labour movement <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing training for DWs' organisations • Raise awareness about the vulnerable position of DWs
<p>ILO Ms M. (Project coordinator)</p>	<p>International, tripartite organisation of the UN</p>	<p>Geneva Regional office in Beirut</p>	<p>1919</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments • Employers • Workers 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of C189 <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise Lebanese governments on the implementation of C189 • Financial and structural support of the DWU
<p>INSAN Ms. H. (International advocacy manager)</p>	<p>Human Rights non-profit organisation</p>	<p>Beirut</p>	<p>1998</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stateless persons • Migrant workers and their children 	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of the kafala system • Implementation of C189 • Inclusion of domestic work in the Code of Labour <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know-your-rights workshop for MDWs • Legal support for MDWs

<p>KAFA Ms J. (Co-founder)</p>	<p>Feminist non-profit organisation</p>	<p>Beirut</p>	<p>2005</p>	<p>Women and children, who are victims of gender-based violence and trafficking</p>	<p>Goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abolishment of the kafala system • Inclusion of domestic work in the Code of Labour or a special law for domestic work <p>Activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings to empower MDWs • Support centre providing psychological help
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Appendix 2: Interview guides

Appendix 2.1 Interview guide J.

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewee for her time and effort

Explaining to her:

that she can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question she does not want to answer, she does not have to and does not need to give reasons

She can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for her permission to use the information she gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Personal experiences in Lebanon

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself? How long have you been working in Lebanon? Have you always been working with the same sponsor? Why did you change and how? Does your current employer know about your activism?
- Since when are you an activist? Have you also been active before the Alliance, maybe in your home country? What NGOs do you work with and what kind of workshops do they offer? What is your opinion on these workshops?
- What makes you believe in the success of your activism? Could you describe how your activism has affected yourself?
- What are the positive sides of your life in Lebanon? (Racism, lack of access to political and legal rights)

2. Founding the Alliance

- Why did you and the other members of the Alliance decide to start the Alliance?
- When was the first official meeting of the Alliance and what did the members of the Alliance discuss during it? How many people were present? Only MDWs or also NGOs? Why did you choose the name "Alliance of DWs"?

- What did the Alliance do before the first meeting to start the Alliance? What happened after the first meeting? Why did it happen? How? Reactions from the government?
- How is the Alliance organised?
- What is the Alliance working on now?
- Who supports the Alliance apart from RLS? How do you finance the Alliance?
- Has the Alliance received any feedback by other MDWs, Lebanese and international NGOs, other migrant workers in Lebanon and Lebanese activists and employers of MDWs? Why this kind of feedback/ Why no feedback?

2.1 Collective Identity

- You are now considering a new logo. Can you describe the idea for the new logo if there is one and what does the logo symbolise? If not, what does the old logo symbolise?
- How do you try to raise awareness about the Alliance? How do you reach out to new members? Why do you use these measures? (Among other migrant DWs, among the Lebanese public, internationally)

Appendix 2.2 Interview guide T.

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewee for her time and effort

Explaining:

that she can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question she does not want to answer, she does not have to and does not need to give reasons

She can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for her permission to use the information she gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Personal experiences in Lebanon

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself? How long have you been working in Lebanon? Have you always been working with the same sponsor? Does your current employer know about your activism?

- Since when are you an activist? Have you also been active before the Alliance, maybe in your home country? What NGOs do you work with and what kind of workshops do they offer? What is your opinion on these workshops?

- What makes you believe in the success of your activism? Could you describe how your activism has affected yourself? What skills and knowledge did you gain and train? What experiences during your engagement have impacted your personal development? Can you use these skills in your work at the Alliance? How?

- Can you make out any changes in the talk about DWs? Why and How? What are the positive sides of your life in Lebanon? (Racism, lack of access to political and legal rights)

2. Founding the Alliance

- Why did you and the other members of the Alliance decide to start the Alliance?

- When was the first official meeting of the Alliance and what did the members of the Alliance discuss during it? How many people were present? Only MDWs or also NGOs? Why did you choose the name "Alliance of DWs"?

- What did the Alliance do before the first meeting to start the Alliance? What happened after the first meeting? Why did it happen? How? Reactions from the government?

- How is the Alliance organised?

- What is the Alliance working on now?
- Who supports the Alliance apart from RLS? How do you finance the Alliance?
- Has the Alliance received any feedback by other MDWs, Lebanese and international NGOs, other migrant workers in Lebanon and Lebanese activists and employers of MDWs? Why this kind of feedback/ Why no feedback?

2.1 Collective Identity

- You are now considering a new logo. Can you describe the idea for the new logo if there is one and what does the logo symbolise? If not, what does the old logo symbolise?
- How do you try to raise awareness about the Alliance? How do you reach out to new members? Why do you use these measures? (Among other migrant DWs, among the Lebanese public, internationally)

Appendix 2.3 Interview guide ARM/ MCC

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewee for her time and effort

Explaining to Ms S.:

that she can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question she does not want to answer, she does not have to and does not need to give reasons

She can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for her permission to use the information she gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Experience of the Lebanese regime

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself and the Anti-Racism Movement Lebanon (ARM)? (Position, tasks, aim, who the ARM works with, duration of engagement)

- Could you describe the current situation for migrant DWs in Lebanon?
[Alternative question: On your website it says that ARM wants to "... shift the positionality of migrant workers from beneficiaries and recipients of services to leaders and agents of social change in Lebanon." Could you tell me how exactly you implement this approach? Why do you think it is necessary? How do migrant workers become beneficiaries?] (situation inside the house, run-aways, sit-in maids, treatment of employer, impacts of the Lebanese laws on possibility to oppose the regime, procedure and practices of the Lebanese regime, risk of protest, sources of risk(s))
- How would you describe the working environment for an NGO in Lebanon? (challenges, reason for challenges, differences to international NGO, counter measures)
- What has the support of the ARM achieved so far for the migrant DWs? What aims has the ARM not been able to achieve? Why? (Alliance of Who established the Alliance? How and Why? Laws, practices of regime, relating aims to DWU and Alliance)

2. Mobilisation Process

2.1 Free Spaces and oppositional speech situations

- Could you tell me what kind of spaces, tools, resources and capacities does the ARM provide for the migrant DWs? (Migration Community Centre: How is it organised? Who is active? What problems did you face legally when setting up? space for oppositional speech)
- How do the spaces, activities, tools, capacities and resources help the migrant DWs to organise themselves politically? (content the ARM is trying to convey to the MDWs: How is this done? Challenges? Why? What kind of information/ knowledge? Why this information? Where does the ARM get their information from? How is information distributed?)
- How do you get in touch with the migrant DWs? (Channels of networking, distribution of information, knowledge, what does the ARM do to get in touch? Tools to communicate and distribute information/ raising awareness)

2.2 Collective identity

- How would you describe the atmosphere or relation to one another among the migrant DWs who are active in the DWU? How in the Alliance? (feeling of solidarity, empowerment etc. What creates this atmosphere? Why? How? Regime impact, does atmosphere create a advantages? Bonding, overcoming regime restrictions)
- How would you describe the atmosphere among the migrant DWs who come to the Migration Community Centre?
- On your website it says that ARM wants to “... shift[s] the positionality of migrant workers from beneficiaries and recipients of services to leaders and agents of social change in Lebanon.” Could you tell me how exactly you implement this approach? Why do you think it is necessary? How do migrant workers become beneficiaries?
- How did the deportation of the leaders from last year’s March on Worker’s day impact the motivation of the other migrant DWs to openly demonstrate for their rights?

Appendix 2.4 Interview guide IDWF

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewee for her time and effort

Explaining to Mrs A.:

that she can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question she does not want to answer, she does not have to and does not need to give reasons

She can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for her permission to use the information she gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Experience of the Lebanese regime

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself and the International Federation of DWs (IDWF)? (Position, tasks, aim, who IDWF works with, duration of engagement)

- Could you describe the current situation for migrant DWs in Lebanon? (impacts of the Lebanese laws on possibility to oppose the regime: meeting, awareness raising, risk of protest, sources of risk(s), situation of women living outside Beirut)
- How would you describe the working environment for an NGO in Lebanon? (challenges (when and why? (reason for challenges, difference to local NGO, counter measures)
- What has the support of the IDWF achieved so far for the migrant DWs? What aims has the IDWF not been able to achieve? Why? (making the MDW aware of them as being workers and as such claiming rights, strong membership organisations of MDWs, encourage unions to incorporate MDWs, enable unionisation of MDWs-> Please elaborate this approach concerning the Lebanese case)

2. Mobilisation Process

2.1 Free Spaces and oppositional speech situations

- Could you tell me what kind of space, tools, resources and capacity does the IDWF provide for migrant DWs? (capacity training, networking, exchange-> How is this organised? Who helps? Challenges?)
- How do the space, activities, tools and resources help the migrant DWs to organise themselves politically? (content IDWF is trying to convey to the MDWs: How is this done? Challenges? Why? What kind of information/ knowledge? Why this? Where does IDWF get their information from? Transnational and transregional experience: extension of space, process of the union establishment, PAR-approach, community leaders: Who are they? How do they work? How did they get engaged? Why did they decide to become engaged)?
- How do you get in touch with the migrant DWs? (Channels of networking, distribution of information, knowledge)

2.2 Collective identity

- How would you describe the atmosphere among the migrant DWs who are active in the DWs Union? (feeling of solidarity, empowerment etc. What creates this atmosphere? Why? How? Was it also due to your impact?)

- Why did you decide to raise awareness among the migrant DWs that they are workers, too?

Appendix 2.5 Interview guide DWU

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewees for their time and effort

Explaining to them:

that they can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question they do not want to answer, they do not have to and do not need to give reasons

They can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for their permissions to use the information they gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Experience of the Lebanese regime

- How long have you been working in Lebanon? Have you always been working with the same sponsor? Why did you change and how?
- Since when are you an activist? What makes you believe in the success of your activism?
- What are the problems and what are the positive sides of your life in Lebanon? (Racism, lack of access to political and legal rights)
- Why did you decide to found the DWU? What are the goals of the DWU? Why did you choose them?
 - How would you evaluate the work of the DWU? What has the DWU achieved and where has it failed?
 -

2. Mobilisation Process

2.1 Free Spaces and oppositional speech situations

- How did you get in touch with the other members of the DWU? How did you keep in touch after your first meeting?

- Who supported you to organise the DWU? How did you get in touch with them?

- What made you decide to become active for the rights of migrant DWs?

2.2 Collective Identity

- What activities does the union offer its members? What activities do you as members do together? What are you trying to achieve with these activities? (formation of identity through activities and exchange and communication,)

- How do you try to raise awareness of the DWU? (Among other migrant DWs, among the Lebanese public, internationally)

- Could you describe how your membership in the DWU has affected yourself? What skills and knowledge did you gain and train? What experiences during your engagement have impacted your personal development?

Appendix 2.6 Interview guide FENASOL

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewee for his time and effort

Explaining to Mr A.:

that he can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question he does not want to answer, he does not have to and does not need to give reasons

He can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for his permission to use the information he gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Experience of the Lebanese regime

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself and the National Federation of Worker and Employee Trade Unions (FENASOL) in Lebanon? (history of FENASOL, approach to include all workers→ Why and how, amendments of by-laws→ what was changed exactly?, Reaction by the government, aims and reasons for aims, which other unions are part of FENASOL, how many members, how many female members, how many male?)
- How would you describe the working environment for a trade union in Lebanon? (challenges, scope of influencing policy making, how to influence policy makers,
- Could you describe the current situation for migrant DWs in Lebanon? Why do you think the situation is this way? What do you do to change this? (kafala-system impact on their daily lives, means to overcome them, focus is on FENASOL´s interpretation of the situation)
- What has the support of FENASOL achieved so far for the migrant DWs? What aims has FENASOL been able to achieve and which aim not? Why? (current state of the union, motivation for joining the struggle)

2. Mobilisation Process

2.1 Free Spaces and oppositional speech situations

- Could you tell me what you did to include migrant DWs within the structure of FENASOL? Why did you do this? How successful was it? What feedback did you get by other members of FENASOL? (How the union structure of FENASOL supports the union, how the integration of the DWs union into FENASOL went, how effective this is, why is it effective/ non-effective? Has there been any changes in the activities offered? Why? How? reactions by the women, feedback)
- How do the space, activities, tools and resources help the migrant DWs to organise themselves politically/ independently?
- How does FENASOL get in touch with the migrant DWs? How does FENASOL reach out to the migrant DWs inside and outside Beirut?

2.2 Collective identity

- How would you describe the atmosphere among the migrant DWs who are active in the union? How is the exchange between the migrant and Lebanese workers in the union happening? How would you describe it? (does it exchange happen, how? Signs of opening of Lebanese workers, obstacles in communication, reaction by the women,

Appendix 2.7 Interview guide ILO

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewee for her time and effort

Explaining to Ms M.:

that she can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question she does not want to answer, she does not have to and does not need to give reasons

She can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for her permission to use the information she gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Experience of the Lebanese regime

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself and the work of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) in Lebanon? (aims, tasks, task audience, cooperation with other organisations/ government officials)
- How would you describe the working environment for an international organisation, such as the ILO in Lebanon?
- Could you describe the current situation for migrant DWs in Lebanon? What reactions by the government and the Lebanese society do migrant DWs face when they openly and together demand rights? (kafala-system impact on their daily lives, means to overcome them)
- What has the support of the ILO achieved so far for the migrant DWs? What aims has the ILO been able to achieve and which aims not? Why? How? (relation to the Lebanese government, evaluation of steps taken by the Lebanese government, embassies, Union, opening up Lebanese union, raising awareness)

2. Mobilisation Process

2.1 Free Spaces and oppositional speech situations

- Could you tell me what kind of space, tools, resources and capacity does the ILO provide for the migrant DWs?

- How do the space, activities, tools and resources help the migrant DWs to organise themselves politically/ independently?

- How do you get in touch with the migrant DWs?

2.2 Collective identity

- How would you describe the atmosphere among the migrant DWs who are active in the DWs Union?

- What would you say motivated them to become openly active themselves in the first place?

Appendix 2.8 Interview guide Insan

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research

Thanking interviewee for her time and effort

Explaining to Ms H.:

that she can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question she does not want to answer, she does not have to and does not need to give reasons

She can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for her permission to use the information she gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Experience of the Lebanese regime

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself and the work of Insan? (aims, tasks, task audience, cooperation with other organisations, involvement with MDWs when it started and why, donors)

- How would you describe the working environment for a NGO in Lebanon? (where is the limit of opposing the system? When does GS gets involved? Why and How? Why do you think this is the limit?)
- How do you think MDWs could challenge their legal, political exclusion themselves? What reactions by the government and the Lebanese society do migrant DWs face when they openly and together demand rights? Why do you think this is? How does Insan deal with these limitations? (kafala-system impact on their daily lives, means to overcome them)
- Could you describe the economic and social impacts of MWs in Lebanon?
- What has the support of the Insan achieved so far for the migrant DWs? Can you in general make out any improvements for MDWs in Lebanon? How did Insan support the self-organisation of MDWs? What aims has Insan been able to achieve and which aim not? Why? What did you learn?

2. Mobilisation Process

2.1 Free Spaces and oppositional speech situations

- Could you tell me what kind of space, tools, resources and capacity does the Insan provide for the migrant DWs?
- How do you get in touch with the migrant DWs? How do you reach out to them?
-

2.2 Collective identity

- How would you describe the atmosphere among the migrant DWs who are active in the union?
- What is your vision for the future of the live for MDWs in Lebanon?

Appendix 2.9 Interview guide KAFA

Introduction

Introduction of myself and my research
 Thanking interviewee for her time and effort
 Explaining to Ms J.:
 that she can ask any questions at any time

if there is a question she does not want to answer, she does not have to and does not need to give reasons

She can stop the interview at any time without having to give reason

Ask for her permission to use the information she gave me in the interview and that the interview will be recorded

Themes

1. Experience of the Lebanese regime

- Would you mind to briefly introduce yourself and the work of KAFA in Lebanon? (aims, tasks, task audience, cooperation with other organisations)

- How would you describe the working environment for an NGO in Lebanon? (What is the line to openly discuss things? Which things are critical to discuss? Who cannot say these things?)

- Could you describe the current situation for migrant DWs in Lebanon? What reactions by the government and the Lebanese society do migrant DWs face when they openly and together demand rights? (kafala-system impact on their daily lives, means to overcome them)

- What has the support of KAFA achieved so far for the migrant DWs? What aims has KAFA been able to achieve and which aim not? Why?

2. Mobilisation Process

2.1 Free Spaces and oppositional speech situations

- Could you tell me what kind of space, tools, resources and capacity does KAFA provide for the migrant DWs? (KAFA provides legal advice, shelter, capacity training etc. ; Nari: How did the formation of the group happen? Who initiated the group? How many members? Does Nari cooperate with other MDW political groups such as the Alliance or the DWs Union? How? Why do you think are there so many different groups forming now? Could they be united? If the goals of the organisations are all the same, why do they not jointly advocate for them?)

- How do the space, activities, tools and resources help the migrant DWs to organise themselves politically/ independently?

- How do you get in touch with the migrant DWs?

2.2 Collective identity

- How would you describe the atmosphere among the migrant DWs who are active in the union?

Appendix 3: Field notes

Appendix 3.1 College Protestant Francais / French protestant church, Snoubra, (East)Beirut, 27. May 2018

The Sunday service of the protestant community in Beirut.

I was about a quarter of an hour too late for the service. The community is mixed and consisted of migrant DWs from French-speaking African countries, French, two French students, who one is interning at a Lebanese NGO, one student in Social Work from Kongo, who is writing about group empowerment on migrant domestic worker in Lebanon as well and considers the problem could be solved by micro financing the groups of domestic worker to support their efforts. Another attendee was a man from Ruanda who works as a financial officer with doctors without borders.

During the service a group of Madagascans sang two songs in their native language. The songs were projected on the screen. The service was held in a French School in a rather wealthy Beiruti area. Apparently, J. has been bringing other people to the church before. Everybody seemed to know her and she was active in organizing a trip to the mountains, where I was immediately invited to. The cost is 5.000 LLP:

Interaction between the French and the DWs? I did not notice it but also no hostility. The priest is apparently involved in supporting the women.

Interesting and I never thought about: I witnessed a discussion between J. and the student of Social Work about how domestic work is also an economic problem and his idea, at least as far as I understood. This made me think that not only happens interaction and exchange between DWs but also between DWs and researchers which might then infuse discussions about future possibilities of change, action, an analysis of the current situation and how to order it etc.

They might have experience with previous researchers and maybe expect some questions and might prepare some answers.

Also the financial officer took J.'s number. She told me that everybody had her number.

The service took place in an open room (maybe if people come later the door does not need to be opened?)

There were also two children, a girl, maybe her mother is a domestic worker and a boy, who looked rather French-Lebanese.

The women were from different countries from East Africa and between end-twenties to mid-forties. Some can speak a bit English.

J. said: “I brought her. Not MCC: I always bring people. And I brought her and her and her.”. She was proud of her ability to make the community grow, of her popularity meaning that I knew her and she knew me and I made the effort to contact her due to her activism. She could thus see a result of her actions was in getting a new member to join for a cause that is highly important to her.

Appendix 3.2 Meeting of the Alliance at the Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation, Beirut, 03. June 2018

Topics discussed: - Cancellation of theater performance due to security concern

- Future actions

Attendees: - six founding members of the Alliance

- ca. 20 participants in the workshop (not clear who is a member and who is not, but no difference in participating in the discussion)
- two staff members of the Rosa-Luxemburg Foundation
- workshop trainer, affiliated to Zoukak-theatre
- two researchers (French and German)
- one French journalist who is writing an article about the Alliance for a French-Lebanese newspaper, L’Orient-Le Jour

Background: Last week the Alliance met to talk about the public performance of the theatre play. Not everybody knew about the stop of the play. Therefore, they meet to clarify and explain the situation with the participants and to discuss future of the project.

Before the discussion the Rosa-Luxemburg provides lunch for everybody. The atmosphere when I entered the room was vibrant, a lot of talk, laughter. Women usually sit with their co-nationals. But atmosphere among the women is relaxed. Apart from me also two other girls, who are neither members of the Alliance nor Zoukak or RLF affiliated are present. They are both French, around my age (mid/ end-twenties). One is doing a film project on DWs in Lebanon and the other writes an article about DWs’ activism for the French-Lebanese newspaper L’Orient-Le Jour. I so far only know J., S. and the French girl from church last Sunday. I feel immediately welcomed and am offered a plate to help myself at the buffet. J. introduces me to the other women of the Alliance. I sit next to T. and start to talk to her. She asks me where I am from and reports on another girl, who is half Pilipino, half German, and a strong activist and has previously conducted research on DWs and interviewed T. She tells me how long she has been working in Lebanon, and the difficulties she faces. During our conversation, I notice that T. remains very calm and observing. We are soon joined by M., who is from the same country as T. and both seem to know each other since a long time. M. asks me where I am from and is excited when she hears that I am from Germany because she will visit a friend of hers in Germany this August. She tells me that she works with a German family in Beirut and learns a bit of German with the kids. She also shows me photos of the children. I go to refill my plate and lose my seat next to T. I sit now next to a group of older women from Sri Lanka who have been in Lebanon for almost 30 years. They offer me a Sri

Lankan dish. I ask them about the changes they have noticed since they came here, and they laugh. Due to language barriers I cannot continue the conversation.

Now the meeting begins. Everybody is seated in a circle. The founding members are not all present in the circle. Some like T. and M. stand behind and watch. J. begins to explain the reason for the meeting (cancellation of performance, now clarification of reason why Alliance decided to do so).

J: Who would like to say something?

S: Answers in French.

J. (translates into English): We are waiting for an answer why you stopped the theatre and what will happen next?

J: There was a problem with General Security (GS). In the last minute when the event was on Facebook, GS asked the Zoukak theatre about the names of the actresses. They want permission but Zoukak has the permission. Maybe this was because of election. We decided to stop the performance because of fear of having members and participants deported.

Workshop trainer (WT): We have the right to do theatre together. But GS has the mandate to censorship, so the text has to be approved by GS. So GS is in charge of the play. But you do not need a different visa as GS requested you to have. Because this is a non-profit play and you are not employed by Zoukak theatre. You are legally fine but we know that in Lebanon rule of law is not existent, high level of corruption. So GS can deport people and migrant DWs. Legal papers do not protect you. So the evaluation of the action of GS is that this might be due to hypervisibility of the Alliance. This causes vulnerability to GS and maybe the title was too challenging (“Unjust deportation”). So we were wondering how to approach the security situation in the future. Sorry, I spoke a lot. But you are a very powerful group and you have huge political power. This is one of the reason GS is afraid of you. And you should know this. GS is afraid that you show how each migrant domestic worker is suppressed because GS knows it is not dealing justly. So we should not be afraid of them, we should continue on a long-term perspective and plan better. No social media, maybe mouth to mouth would be better. Maybe keep working in our (Zoukak?) safe spaces. What is your opinion.

Exchange of ideas

One participant of the workshop accuses the six founding members of behaving like a boss and deciding without consulting the participants.

J. disagrees: We can have it for a long time if you continue we are very happy, also if you continue with the Alliance.

She encourages all of the others to speak up: What do you all think? Everybody should speak up or send her opinion in the *What's-App*-group. We have been doing this workshop for six months. We are a group, we are a strong group but we need all of your help.

S.: Maybe meet every two months?

(Agreement from the women)

S (continues): Together we can solve it, as a single person we cannot help people. Develop workshop and do small steps to accomplish.

J. likes the idea.

One participant (J. translates): I am very sad it stopped and I liked theatre very much. Twice a month is totally too much. I do dance classes and am very busy. I will stay with the Alliance.

(my impression of the atmosphere during the discussion is that it is very open, no fear and a lot of laughter)

M: What happened to the member who left the Alliance?

One participant: She left to Sri Lanka.

One participant: The problem is the continuous coming. I will try to come regularly but it is difficult.

(apparently five to six participants of the theatre group are not present today)

WT: Which Sunday to start? 24. or 17.?

J: 17. We prepare for the march.

WT: On 17. There is Eid. Do you have a day off?

(Sri Lankan community discusses)

Sri Lankan community: No problem for us.

WT: But focus on march. On 17th there is a session for the Alliance for the march. Maybe two sessions in July? What do you all think?

(discussion among the attendees) two questions

One participant: How do you guarantee that we are all safe during the play? GS surprised us at the theatre.

WT: GS does not come if there is no public event. Not surprise means if it is public? There is no guarantee. Do we want to continue under the risk of deportation? There was a long break that none of you went to Zoukak. No problem at all.

T.(knows what is going on): Fear that every Sunday migrant DWs will show up there. This means that this is a threat to all your life if you go there. There is a limit, a risk. GS always surprises: You cannot guarantee and especially if you are outside of control despite legality. The lawyer RLF approached he can't promise and safety first. And first you should all understand about severity and then think about it what to do.

WT: We are all on the same page: Everybody needs to understand the situation. All of us will defend all of us. Because of all the time spent together, we will all protect the group as good as we can. So we all protect the group.

T: Ladies, please speak your opinion.

Some people speak (the girl from the beginning)

WT: From the legal perspective, there is 100% security, RLF and Zoukak are behind you. GS has no right to come to a private event. If it is a public one, they can come. That is a fact.

T: I am not trying to scare you. My main concern is safety. It is your free time. The Alliance is there for you, no matter what happens. The founding of RLF will continue. Please go on, I will be in line with what the majority wants.

Other founding member of the Alliance: If you come with us?

T. (enhances): Yes.

Other founding member of the Alliance: Together we are strong. At the same time maybe do another workshop. We are strong. We want to be strong. We are not afraid. Don't be afraid like before.

WT: Everybody should be aware of the risk. We are powerful, but we should also think how to approach security. Through legal support by a lawyer, other activist groups because we need to be part of bigger movement. We need connections to other groups in Lebanon. We need to continue.

N (founding member of the Alliance): There is no pressure to come.

Other member speaks in French

J. translates: The police cannot catch you if you don't do something wrong. We should continue in safe places.

Other participant: Maybe we should not show any pictures and videos on Facebook and pay more attention to what we publish. We should discuss what to publish. If GS comes to Zoukak, we can say that we are eating together, make something up. This country is a very big liar!

(big applause and laughter)

WT: I need to check with Zoukak when the space is available. (turns to staff member of RLF) What do you say? Does RLF fund other activities? Or two theatre sessions per month? Also we could go to the mountain or somewhere else, do a picnic in the Cedars.

(applause)

RLF staff member: RLF will provide lawyers but there are limits to lawyers. We need also strong allies, such as KAFA, ILO or Insan. Maybe you ladies (founding members of Alliance) can contact them and use your contacts? Because it is difficult if you are alone. The problem is that domestic work and migrant, so we cannot do anything. Also please fill in the attendance list for reimbursement of travel cost.

WT: GS aim is the censorship of the play. Different working visa, they require you to have an artist visa. All need to understand the situation. So, we ask two lawyers, what is the best support? And no photos on Facebook. Focus maybe on more local work. We should think about the limits to go and push? How far to go? When it is better to stay in a safe environment? It would be good if someone took minutes to follow up. So we start on 17th and see then what happens? The other workshop are postponed.

After the meeting everybody helps tidying up and deals with M. about the travel cost, RLF is reimbursing the women. I exchange numbers with T. and D. and with the two French researchers.

I got the impression that safety is a strong issue and that T. in particular. I find it remarkable that the founding members kept asking each woman present to speak her opinion and to encourage her to think. Also my previous feeling that the women are used to researchers was enhanced because of the reaction of T. and D. when I mentioned the reason I am here.

Appendix 3.3 Making the poster, RLF, Beirut, 23. June 2018

Attendees:

- T., J., and three other founding members plus three other members of the Alliance
- Two staff members of RLF, one intern

I met the Alliance to make posters with them for the march of DWs the next day. It was a Saturday evening. When I arrived T. and another member, B., were already there waiting for the staff members of RLF and the other members of the Alliance. I was invited by J. after having offered her over *What's App* and in person after our interview, my help in organising the march. While waiting, I talked to T. and B. Last night they went to Gemmayzeh (a district in Beirut) to hang up some posters for the march. Afterwards they went for a beer in a bar. Around the RLF there was no poster because at that weekend there was a street festival so the poster of the festival were put over the posters for the march. Also we talked about the incidence with the Kenyan women who were physically and verbally harassed by a Lebanese man. No one knows anything certain. There are speculations that she had an affair with the sister of the man who harassed her. The women were taken into police custody. Both T. and B. see this as an example for the treatment of DWs in Lebanon. The video of the women has been shared on Social Media and was also denounced in an official statement by MCC. One founding member (C.) and her friend arrive. C. has apparently not slept at her employer's house but in a feminist collective. Then J. comes and D., her daughter and a friend. At last the RLF staff arrives. We all go upstairs, prepare the table and sit down. One RLS staff member goes out to buy some drinks.

Again, the atmosphere is relaxed, the women talk and make jokes about and with one another. J. presents the T-Shirts for the march. They are white and "kafala is slavery" is written on the back and "C-189" on the front. The T-Shirt made the women very excited and each one wanted to try it on immediately. While making the poster, the following topics were discussed:

- Funding and proposal for future funds (this conversation was very interesting to me as I gained the impression that the women know where to get funds → they are aware of the finance system of NGOs, I wondered where they learned it? Maybe during their time in NGOs), RLF offers to help them in writing a proposal and report
- Security during the march: Some suggested to use a microphone but due to security concerns, the women decided against it.
No one is talking openly at the demonstration. They coordinated this with G., the founding member who was deported last year.
They all carried their posters in a bag back home and took off the T-Shirts due to fear of security authorities.
- Filipin ambassador for the MENA-region, who is very attentive to the struggles and hardships migrant workers experience in the region

- Despite my information on the Ethiopian consulate here in Beirut, the ambassador is very active and travels through the MENA-region to look at the situation of migrant workers
- D. considers traveling to Amsterdam with her daughter soon because the security situations for migrant DWs with children is tightening
- Skipping church for march tomorrow is a no-go
- C189 has impacted all of them positively. They demand the implementation on their posters
- Other demands are: Abolish Kafala-system, Get up, stand up for your rights, stop the criminalization of migrant workers, stand united
- Personal matters: B. has no time to be active at MCC any longer, M. has some problems with her employer because she wants to take holidays when the family is not on holidays.
- M. went to MCC to take part in the preparation meeting for the march tomorrow. She receives the minutes per E-Mail and will send them to the others tonight.
- Podcast the Alliance is doing with RLF

At the end of the meeting we all celebrated T.'s birthday for which the RLF bought a cake. Again, my impression is that the women are all very serious about their fight, they show high commitment, have been engaged for a long period of time, knowing the dynamics within the Lebanese NGO-scene.

Appendix 3.4 College Protestant Francais / French protestant church, Snoubra, and stay in D.'s flat (East-)Beirut, 24. June 2018

In my second participation of the service, I was slightly on time. It was the Sunday of the DWs March and less people than previous time were present. I did notice some familiar faces, like D. her daughter and her friend and the researcher from Kongo. The few amount of attendees might have been due to the start of school holidays.

The service proceeded as last time.

When the pastor announced the events for the coming week, he also encouraged everybody to go to the march today and support the struggle of migrant DWs.

After the service, some members of the community went to the German Protestant church as there was the farewell of the two pastors. Therefore, no coffee was served in the garden afterwards and I joined D., her daughter and her friend and the researcher from Kongo to go home with them.

Throughout the drive I mostly talked to D.'s daughter because she can speak English and is a very lively and engaging child. She told me about her school, that she visits regularly and her ballet classes. Out of her description I got the impression that she attends the Insan school since her stay in Lebanon is illegal and attending school would impose a threat for her mother. I also learned that she has a brother who also lives in Lebanon but whom I did not meet.

All three live together in a flat in a Christian neighborhood in South-Beirut. The neighborhood did not look run down, rather like a lower middle-class district of Beirut. Their flat was adequate for three people. We ate together and I watched cooking videos with D.'s daughter and talked to the researcher about his defense of his Master thesis the coming Thursday and his plan to pursue a doctor's degree afterwards. Even though we could not understand each other, again I felt very welcomed and especially the humor of D.'s friend was a bridge over communication deficits.

Due to my lack of French, I did not know what the two women were discussing. Shortly before the march, S. came and together we took a taxi to the march.

Appendix 3.5 DWs March, Beirut, 24 June 2018

I met the members of the Alliance in one of the main traffic squares in Beirut, from which the buses go to the North of Lebanon.

I came there with D., her daughter and her friends, whom I met at the church and when making the posters. When we arrived, there were already a lot of people gathering in front of the Byblos Bank. Most of them were Ethiopians. Those of them who belonged to a specific group were wearing the same T-Shirts with the name of their organization printed on them. Music was playing loudly, mostly music from Africa. It was striking that the demonstrators were not solely women migrant DWs but also male foreign labourers, young Lebanese activists of both sexes and according to their clothing and level of English from the upper middle and middle class. Also young foreigners, judging from their looks, Western countries attended the march. Throughout the march, I noticed quite a few journalists who filmed and interviewed participants. Approximately a few hundred demonstrated that Sunday.

Before the march, a lot of photos from the participants, and media were taken. The route differed from last year and went mostly through the area where a lot of migrant workers live. The police were already present and would accompany the demonstration until the final destiny in a park about 3km north. Even before the march started it drew a lot of attention from the bypassing cars and buses, in which many DWs were sitting, some watching with interest what is going on. I did not notice any woman who joined spontaneously.

Most DWs were standing according to their nationality, however, in the course of the march, this slightly changed. To ensure security, people were singled out to be responsible for case of emergency and to walk on the sides of the march.

Throughout the march, we chanted different slogans in English and Arabic, mostly calling for abolishing the kafala-system or raising awareness about the male treatment DWs experience especially from their madame and calling for action ("Yes, madame"- "No, madame", for example). In the beginning, everybody was chanting very loud, playing music and gaining so the attention of people living in the houses we passed by. Some waved at us and other simply

watched without showing any sign of emotions. The migrant workers we passed by all waved enthusiastically at us, again I did not notice any spontaneous action to join.

After roughly half an hour the march came to an abrupt stop when the police suddenly arrested two Ethiopian men. Nobody moved further, and we all sat down. Some workers, probably Ethiopian, started to hit the police car in which the men sat now. Some other tried to block the street to keep the car from driving away. All attempts were unsuccessful, and the men were taken away. We did not know why they were taken. I asked T. if she knew anything. She answered that she knew the two men and that his friend did not want the other to go alone to the police. Apparently, he also did not have regular papers. Afterwards it took about 15 minutes until the march continued but it was quieter than before. The atmosphere changed from open chanting, reminding me of a street celebration, to a gloomy walk of frustration. Only seldomly could I hear changings. Nobody seemed to know why the men were arrested. The act of the police might have reminded the demonstrators of the limit the police continuously imposes on their actions and the lack of sufficient and effective means on side of the migrants to successfully counter act. The former feeling of unity and chanting with one voice was slightly broking and the march scattered a bit along the way, with gaps between single groups.

When we went on to a high street, where the cars were passing directly next to us, many cars honked and people waved out of their cars. But still, the spirit from the beginning seemed to be lost. Maybe also because it was a very hot, sunny June day in Beirut and throughout the march we almost did not pass any shadowy place for long.

When we arrived in the park, the destination of the march, water was distributed, and a group was playing the drums. Here, I thought, that the spirit of the beginning was coming back, and people started to dance. The park was small and quite crowded. I also met two NGO-representative (MCC and KAFA) who I had interviewed previously. I did not see any member of the DWU nor FENASOL.

After some time, the speeches started. First in Arabic, then English and then French. They called on the Lebanese government to abolish the kafala-system, introduce decent work conditions and stop criminalizing and illegalizing migrant workers. Interesting was that especially the speech written by a representative of the Ethiopian community denounced his government and asked: "How can we receive protection if our own country does not care about us?". I asked T. if this has anything to do with the lack of protection the Ethiopian government grants its citizens abroad, which I have been hearing from various sources. She confirmed and added that this is why the Ethiopians are known among the migrant community for being very strong and united since they receive no other help, unlike the Filipino community, who even have their own ambassador.

I also noticed that some members of the Alliance mingled with the migrant workers from other communities and exchanged phone numbers.

Unlike in the previous years, none of the Alliance spoke publicly. All of them sat in the background, wearing the T-Shirts the RLF provided them with (C189 in the front and in the back Kafala is slavery). Throughout the march we all scattered out, sometimes walking united and sometimes only in small groups. T. and M. often joined their community, walking behind or next to the banner. The Alliance did not show any logo, banner or writing of their group. I also did not notice anybody asking for the reason.

Newspapers reporting on the march:

- Daily Star (English-speaking Lebanese newspaper). (2018): Hundreds protest Lebanon DWs laws. In: <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2018/Jun-24/454199-hundreds-protest-lebanon-domestic-worker-laws.ashx>. (Accessed: 13.08.2018).
- The new Arab (pan-Arab media outlet based in London) (2018): Abolish kafala. Lebanon DWs protest 'slave-loke' conditions. In: <https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/2018/6/25/abolish-kafala-lebanon-domestic-workers-protest-slave-like-conditions>. (Accessed: 13.08.2018).