

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

RACIST DISCOURSE IN LEBANON:
KAFALA SYSTEM, LAWS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

by
Elissar Kamal Hanna Gebrael Saad

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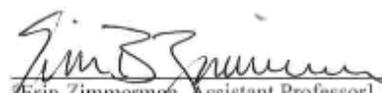
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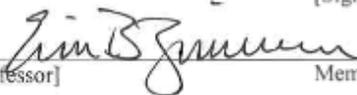
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I still remember my first semester as a graduate student, where I was appointed to work at AUB's writing center. This is the first time I met my amazing and inspirational thesis advisor. At the time, I was only Dr. Erin Zimmerman's General Assistant (GA) and had no idea that when the time came, she would be my thesis advisor. I have had the pleasure to have Dr. Erin as a professor, writing center director, mentor and mostly, a friend. Dr. Erin is far beyond your usual thesis advisors. She takes her time to understand who you are as a person, and makes it very clear, that no matter the obstacle, she will always be there to help. I remember having tears in my eyes, sitting in her office, confused about the next steps of my thesis. The moment she decided she would be onboard to be my thesis advisor, I felt safe and grounded. Without Dr. Erin's emotional and academic support, my thesis would not be what it is right now. Moreover, I would not have been able to learn and grow the way I have, by taking in all the advice and encouragement that Dr. Erin provided me with. Being a student, you lose your rational thinking at times, where your education leads you to constantly worry and doubt yourself. You encounter many academic bumps, that sometimes make you feel like you are not, and never will be enough. During my times working with Dr. Erin, she reminded me that she was once in my place and validated everything I was feeling at the time. When you know someone like Dr. Erin, you know that all you see is kindness, empowerment, compassion, intelligence and, honestly, all the positive adjectives you can think of. When someone like Dr. Erin tells you that she has felt the things you are feeling and has been through similar struggles in both her academic and personal life, it reminds you about something. I realized, that if someone as amazing as Dr. Erin, can relate to struggling student like myself, it empowers you. Dear Dr. Erin, you have inspired me beyond any text of words can ever express. I would like to say thank you, and that even 1000 times of saying thank you would never be enough.

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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The living conditions of domestic workers in Lebanon is a result of different social, political and cultural aspects by the state. One of the social aspects can be found on a Facebook page, known as “Lebanese Madams,” (LMF) which revolves around discourse that discusses topics revolving around domestic workers. The discourse on the LMF helped bring insights about the laws and the Kafala system, where my thesis focuses on the following research question: What insights can be obtained from a discourse analysis of LMF, especially with considerations about the laws and the Kafala system. For this reason, I analyzed the discourse of the LMF by using discourse analysis, as well as the racist discourse framework adopted by Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015), along with sub-categories that I created.

The analysis of the discourse of the LMF helped give insight into the general discourse towards domestic workers in Lebanon, as well as insights towards the laws and Kafala system. After going through the 100 pages of forum posts, the most common sub-categories were created. These sub-categories were compared to the main framework by Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) (Us vs Them, Inferior vs Superior and Them as a threat) and were put into the main categories they best fit

The first common theme found in the data was the dynamic of master-servant relationship, which defines the theme of Us vs Them with its subcategories (Denial of Racism and Communication). The inferior vs superior category is based on the creation and targeting cultural and non-racial race categories like “immigrants” while primarily discriminating against non-white people through their Othering and the idea of “whiteness,” with the subcategories (Imposition and Dehumanization of Domestic workers). Finally, Them as a threat (domestic workers) are a threat in terms of them being naturally violent and partaking in abuse, murder or stealing, with the subcategory Protection Measures taken.

The discourse of the LMF helped show the insights of the Madams towards domestic workers, and the different forms of racist tendencies, such as restriction of communication and dehumanization of domestic workers. These findings indicate that the

discourse in the LMF does have clear relationships to the ways Lebanese laws create a lack of accountability for employers of domestic workers and thus normalize the Kafala system.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	V
ABSTRACT	i
LIST OF TABLES	iii
Chapter	
<i>Introduction</i>	1
1.1 Background and Purpose	1
1.2 The Laws	5
<i>1.2.1 Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract</i>	5
<i>1.2.2 General Security's stipulations for Migrant Domestic workers</i>	6
1.3 The Kafala System	8
1.4 Leb Madam Facebook Group (LMF)	11
1.5 NGO's Fighting Against Racism in Lebanon	12
<i>1.5.1 Other forms of Racist Discourse in Lebanon</i>	14
1.6 Conclusion	15
LITERATURE REVIEW	16
2.1 Madam: Role and Expectations	17
2.2 Defining Domestic workers	17
2.3 Madam/Maid Hierarchy	17

2.4 Racist Discourse	18
2.5 Political Discourse	20
2.5.1 <i>Law</i>	22
2.6 Media Discourse: Online platforms	23
2.6.1 <i>Online Discourse in Lebanon</i>	24
2.7 Conclusion	25
METHODOLOGY	26
3.1 Data Collection	27
3.1.2 <i>LMF</i>	
3.2 Data Analysis	28
3.2.1 <i>LMF</i>	
3.3 Conclusion	32
RESULTS AND ANALYSIS	33
4.1 Introduction	34
4.2 Results and Analysis	34
4.2.1 <i>Us vs them</i>	34
<u>4.2.1.1 Sub-categories: Denial of Racism and Communication</u>	38

<u>4.2.1.1.1 Denial of Racism</u>	39
<u>4.2.1.1.2 Communication outside the household</u>	39
<i>4.2.2 Inferior vs superior</i>	40
<u>4.2.2.1 Sub-categories: Imposition and Dehumanization of Domestic workers</u>	40
<u>4.2.2.1.1 Imposition</u>	42
<u>4.2.2.1.2 Dehumanization of Domestic workers</u>	43
<i>4.2.3 Them as a Threat</i>	44
<u>4.2.3.1 Sub-category: Protection Measures taken</u>	48
<u>4.2.3.1.1 Protection measures</u>	50
	51
DISCUSSION	53
5.1 Subcategories	55
5.2 LMF	56
<i>5.2.1 Imposing restrictions</i>	56
<i>5.2.2 Imposing Beliefs</i>	59
<i>5.2.3 Imposing stereotypes</i>	59
5.3 Conclusion	61
	61
CONCLUSION	62
	63
6.1 Introduction	64
<i>6.1.2 Laws</i>	65

<u>6.1.2.1 Analysis Law #1: Lebanon’s Standard Unified Contract</u>	66
<u>6.1.2.1.1 Lack of resources, Proof and Abuse</u>	67
<u>6.1.2.2 Analysis Law #2: General Security’s stipulations for Domestic workers</u>	67
<u>6.1.2.2.1 Confinement</u>	68
6.2 Relationship between the Laws and LMF	69
6.2.1 <i>Normalization of Kafala</i>	71
6.2.2 <i>Lack of accountability</i>	72
6.3 Limitations	74
6.4 Future research	76
6.5 Conclusion	76
REFERENCES	77
	78

TABLES

Table		Page
1	Us vs. Them rhetoric or insights found on the LMF	41
2	Denial of Racism rhetoric or insights found in LMF	43
3	Communication outside the household rhetoric or insights found in LMF	45
4	Inferior vs superior found in LMF	49
5	Imposition rhetoric or insights found in LMF	52
6	Dehumanization of Domestic workers rhetoric or insights found in LMF	54
7	The Them is a threat attitude found in LMF	56
8	Protection Measures taken attitude found in the LMF.....	57

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Purpose

In 2019, Tigsit Adisi, an Ethiopian domestic worker in Lebanon, committed suicide by hanging from the balcony of her employer's home. Adisi, a 21-year-old who had worked for the family for over a year, told her friends that she was being abused, beaten and was not allowed to leave the house or contact her parents. Adisi's story is not unusual, where domestic workers in Lebanon are dying at a rate of two every week, as the rights of these workers continues to be dormant (Barel, 2019). According to a report by KAFA, an NGO that fights against the mistreatment of women in Lebanon, around 65% of domestic workers claim that they have experienced abuse, forced labor, servitude or slavery during their time in Lebanon. This is a result from a sponsorship system, known as the Kafala, where the legal residency of migrant workers is tied to their employer, which gives them total control over the employees' lives. The system has been described as modern-day slavery by campaigners that are pro-workers' rights.

Domestic workers are not part of the national labor laws or in the legal system, which considers them as not being real workers (Kanchana, 2018). In fact, the process where employers choose a domestic worker is based on a photograph of the workers, rather than their qualifications as an employee (Kanchana, 2018). Thus, although the domestic workers may have previous experience or qualities that make them suitable for the job, this

is not even taken into consideration. The Kafala system majorly contributes to the mistreatment of migrant workers and their exploitation. The system leads the domestic workers to be completely dependent on their employer and disregarded in the Lebanese society. Moreover, the employer can simply return her employee if she feels like she does not satisfy her. If a domestic worker is not satisfied with her current employer, she has the right to ask for the termination of her contract.

Lebanon has seven ratified international human right instruments which are relevant to the protections of domestic workers (Jureidini, 2019). Additionally, one of the bases of the Lebanese constitution is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNHR) which states the rights and obligations of the country towards domestic workers. Additionally, according to Jureidini (2019) the Lebanese constitution has signed seven of eight fundamental principles of the UNHR that are based on the conventions of forced labor, abolition of forced labor and discrimination (employment and occupation). The discourse used in these conventions entails that the host country has to protect and ensure the moral treatment of migrant workers. Since Lebanon has agreed to take part in these conventions, it is problematic to see that they are in fact ignored. Instead it follows a system that dehumanizes, as well as perpetrates the mistreatment of domestic workers. The lack of fulfilling the international contracts and instead following the state's legal work has resulted in the grim use of the Kafala system. This is why it is essential to look at the main laws that have led to this result. Several contracts concerning the human rights of domestic workers have been drafted to be applied internationally. Lebanon partakes in some of these contracts which is a vow to protect and provide the rights to immigrants and domestic

workers. However, despite being legally tied to the contracts, Lebanon instead follows their own drafted laws: Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract and General Security's stipulations for Migrant Domestic workers.

The state in Lebanon has violated the agreement by supporting the Kafala system, the lack of labor laws for domestic workers, as well as the lack of retribution of employers who are the abusers. The Kafala system is legitimized through a collection of laws that contribute to the creation of the Kafala system that determines the social and emotional conditions of domestic workers. In particular, two general laws in Lebanon known as Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract and the General Securities Rights and Obligations, both of which are constructed through ambiguous and double-edged discourse. For example, the General Securities rights and obligations subject the domestic workers to partake in obligations set by the employer that are not rational. These include unlimited work hours per day and forcing to adhere to subjective household practices. This leads to the legitimization of the Kafala system and gives the approval to the employer to possess their own form of power.

When referring to the employer, it is essential to understand who the employer is and what role they play towards the mistreatment of domestic workers in Lebanon. In the context of Lebanon, the employer is known as the "Madam," the woman of the household who officially sponsors the domestic worker. The Madam has complete control over the domestic worker, where the law does not insure protection or good treatment. For example, one of the laws states, "Not leaving her employer's house and without their prior approval or in accordance with the "work contract." The ambiguity and lack of comprehension that

arises from this law leads to the belief that the Madam can actually trap the domestic workers in the household. However, the law could also be interpreted in many different ways, which allows for the subjective application of the law that best suits the Madams' rhetoric or insights. The Kafala system reflects state's practices of control and exclusion of migrant labor, but it also gives the Madam a misguided sense of possessing the worker. Thus, the Kafala system, by making the domestic workers dependent on the Madam for her legal and economic existence in the country, creates the basis for much of the violations which go unpunished.

In order to further understand the Kafala system, it is first essential to understand how the ambiguity and lack of clarification of the laws contribute to the practice of such a system. Understanding the general rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers in Lebanon, will help bring insight towards the impact of the law and the general discourse it creates in the Lebanese society. For this reason, I analyzed the discourse on a Facebook page where woman employers of domestic workers in Lebanon discuss relevant topics surrounding domestic workers. Moreover, the discourse of the Leb Madam Facebook (LMF) page helped portray the racist tendencies and discourse towards domestic workers. Additionally, the discourse of the LMF helped understand the problematic aspects that the laws and the Kafala system might impose on the general rhetoric, and vice versa.

In my research paper, I aimed to answer the following question:

What insights can be obtained from a discourse analysis of LMF, especially with considerations about the laws and the Kafala system?

1.2 The Laws

Understanding the laws towards migrant workers in Lebanon is complex, due to the presence of many ratified conventions, as well as the sponsorship system and its laws and regulations. The official laws revolving around domestic workers include Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract and the General Securities rights and obligations. However, the Kafala system is a result of these laws and is not actually legally registered. Thus, the official drafted laws by the state allow for such a system to be adopted and practiced.

1.2.1 Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract

In Lebanon the Standard Unified Contract concerning domestic workers and their rights. The contract consists of ambiguous and misleading information, where it is near impossible for the domestic workers to obtain their rights in the first place. For example, for a domestic worker to gather proof of physical or sexual abuse, she has to get records from a physician. Due to the fact that she is not medically insured by her contract, she will need to pay a large amount for the physician. Thus, obtaining such an amount is near impossible. This leads to an increase in domestic workers who run away, due to the inability to remain and be abused by the employer and the lack of law that does not support her (Hamill, 2012). There are only a few specific situations that allow the domestic workers the approval for termination, which Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract does stipulate. They include:

- 1) nonpayment of wages for three consecutive months or more;
- 2) physical or sexual abuse if medically certified
- 3) employment in a capacity other than domestic work without consent.

Under a system that exploits workers and detains them from basic rights, the ability to actually obtain proof for these 3 categories is nearly impossible. There is a lack of accountability towards employers and recruitment agencies that are the basis of migrant workers employments. Since 2010 the United Nations Rights Council pressured the Lebanese government into reforming the sponsorship system, however, no changes have been made (Hamill, 2012). The UN council in Norway stated that the system should be replaced with laws that comply with international standards (Hamill, 2012).

1.2.2 General Security's stipulations for Migrant Domestic workers

The following law comes from the government's security forces who drafted a list of rights and obligations the domestic workers should follow. The list mentions the obligations that the domestic workers must comply with both in the household and in society. One of the problematic aspects about this is that each household can create their own rules, without being held accountable. I have included the General Security's stipulations for Migrant Domestic workers "rights and obligations" below:

1. Respect Lebanese laws and regulations
2. Respect the members of the family whom she is working for
3. Be committed to the nature of her work as a housemaid and protect the contents of the house she is working in and not expose family secrets
4. Adapt to the family and its way of living
5. Not leaving her employer's house and without their prior approval or in accordance with

the “work contract”

6. Signing the wage slip after the collection of her salary as receipt

7. Not to work outside of the employer’s house or in another domain other than that of a maid

8. Not to get married (to a Lebanese or a foreigner) during her stay in Lebanon (she has the right to get married after leaving Lebanon and return again according to the applicable laws of such case)

It is essential to analyze these policies since they are directed to the domestic workers and what they are obligated to follow. This helps give insight towards the effect of these policies and how their articulation leads to the validity and lack of accountability of the mistreatment. The ambiguity and lack of clarity of the laws concerning migrant workers in Lebanon leads to the legitimization of the Kafala system. The ambiguity found in the laws allow domestic workers employers whether intentional or not, to easily violate laws. Shuy & Roger (2005) claim that the content of linguistic communication determines the context of the law and thus, its effects on society. Abstract and vague standards in the law are linguistically designed to control certain aspects of a society. It is essential to note that there is no effort by the Lebanese government to articulate an official clear law that should be followed by all recruitment agencies and employers.

In the middle east, most of the governmental institutions do not consider imported labor force as migrants but rather as temporary contract workers. Thus, in most Middle Eastern countries, for example, Lebanon, the sponsorship system known as Kafala is facilitated. This system allows the country to financially benefit from the movement of workers into and out of the country. The Kafala system does not allow migrant workers to

settle in the host country and entails several laws that make the domestic workers subject to mistreatment and discrimination. The laws do not support or benefit the workers, but rather, diminishes their basic human rights and results to structural dependence between the local employer and the worker. The lack of governmental support towards domestic workers results in the lack of their protection and freedom. Domestic workers face significant impediments because of their status as foreigners and non-nationals of Lebanon, and in some cases as undocumented or illegal migrants.

1.3 The Kafala System

In a typical middle to upper class Lebanese household, you have the family members, as well as their employed domestic workers. The process of obtaining the domestic workers is often with minimal effort, as long as the employer can afford the financial fees included. At first, an employer who wants a domestic worker goes to a recruitment agency that specifically specializes in the employment of domestic workers. The agency has many files of different workers, including their information such as: religion, age, physical appearance and ethnicity. In Lebanon, the employer is ly known as the “Madam” who is the woman of the household. The Madam chooses what they prefer (religion, race and age) and pay a certain fee that confirms the applications of the domestic workers. The agency then personally contacts the applicant and offers the job opportunity. Fast forward a few weeks, and the domestic workers arrives to Lebanon. It is the Madam’s responsibility to pick up the domestic workers from a specific section in the airport, since by law, they are not able to be discharged without the employer. The Madam then has 3 months to decide whether they want to officially employ the domestic worker. This means

that for the first 3 months, the domestic worker is on a trial period, where they do not get paid.

This is all part of the Kafala system, a sponsorship system that leaves no room for the justice and rights of domestic workers, but rather the exploitation of an unjust system. The Kafala system constitutes the previously mentioned set of laws that govern migrant workers migration to the Middle East. Migrant workers are not included in official Lebanese law, which results in their lack of safety and freedom (Kanchana, 2018). They are not protected by minimum wage requirements and their basic rights are not considered (Hamill, 2012). Employers become operators of the Kafala system, which gives them the power and freedom to act negatively towards domestic workers. The master/servant relationship that is created by the Kafala system results with no accountability for employers to treat domestic workers with respect (Hamill, 2012).

Recruitment agencies are at the center of the Kafala system, and because they benefit financially, they aid in preventing the Kafala system from being removed from the society (Kanchana, 2018). Agencies potentially harm domestic workers by making them sign contracts in languages they do not understand (Kanchana, 2018). The system results in the domestic workers being at the mercy of their employer. The contracts that are signed in the homeland of the domestic workers are disregarded in Lebanon and new contracts are drafted by agencies (Kanchana, 2018). Due to the power status and legal discrimination, the employer usually holds identity papers and threatens the domestic workers, whether physically or verbally (Kanchana, 2018).

The International Human Rights contracts which provide protection and rights for migrant workers have been agreed on by the government in Lebanon. However, this law has not been executed and instead is completely ignored. However, Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract, and the General Securities Rights and Obligations which revolve around domestic workers are applied and contribute to the practice of the Kafala system. The Kafala system itself is not legitimized in the legal system, however, the normative discourse and practices surrounding domestic workers has led to the legitimization of such a system (Naufal, 2016). According to Kacahana (2018) the Kafala system has allowed for a series of domestic worker abuses including "withholding identification papers and wages, physical and sexual abuse, deception and false promises concerning conditions of work, denying food, debt bondage, verbal harassment and humiliation, overwork at an average of 100 hours a week, lack of overtime pay and of days off, lack of freedom to change employers, physical confinement and threat of deportation (Pg.13)" Additionally, since migrant workers are excluded from the Lebanese labor law, this ties their legal residency status to that of the employer. In cases of mistreatment, the worker loses their migration status, since their relationship with the employer is terminated. The domestic workers cannot change their employer without their consent which could lead to exploitative work conditions. The consequences of not getting the employers acceptance is detention or deportation.

Due to the laws and the validity of the Kafala system, there are major questions and concerns about the conditions of the domestic workers. It is important to examine the discourse of the laws and of real-life Madams as the basis of my research project because

they highlight the mistreatment and lack of rights towards domestic workers. This helped identify what the conditions are, what the perceptions of the conditions and the employees are, and potentially in the future help to channel that knowledge into solutions or improvements.

1.4 Leb Madam Facebook Group (LMF)

The rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers can be seen through the news media, as well as social media. In Lebanon, the social media platforms used are: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. These platforms are used for social interaction, as well as both local and international social discussions. The news and social media contribute to the legitimization of the Kafala system by focusing on the coverage surrounding domestic workers with expressions like: stealing, running away, committing suicide, forbidden romantic relationships and diseases. Additionally, there is a lack of coverage in national news outlets of the cases of abuse and mistreatment to domestic workers that are only shared by local NGO news sources.

In many cases, social media outlets are used by Lebanese citizens to express their rhetoric or insights towards certain events surrounding migrant domestic workers in Lebanon. For this reason, I have chosen to analyze a Facebook page that revolves around the discussion of domestic workers in Lebanon. The Leb Madam Facebook Page (LMF) is a social media page that consists of Lebanese women who are the employers of domestic workers in their household, known as Madams. The group was created by a single moderator who is an owner of a domestic workers in Lebanon. The purpose of the group is

described as a platform that is used to discuss and solve issues revolving around domestic workers. The group discourse revolves around topics such as, cleanness, knowledge, rights and behaviors of the domestic workers in their household or in general. Moreover, the Madams share personal stories, as well as their opinions towards certain topics revolving around domestic workers.

It is an ideal site for studying the discourse used by Lebanese individuals to discuss domestic workers because in most cases in Lebanon, the Madams spend most of their time with the domestic workers. Moreover, since the Madams are posting in LMF about real questions and concerns they have to an audience of individuals with similar mindsets, the language they use is honest, which allowed me to glean their true rhetoric or insights. The platform consists of many discussions by the Madams that surrounds domestic workers and thus, analyzing the discourse helped bring an objective understanding of the rhetoric or insights and rhetoric or insights.

1.5 NGO's Fighting Against Racism in Lebanon

Although acts of injustice may be apparent in society, it is also important to recognize the acts of justice that aim to fight towards positive change. In the case of Lebanon, the many cases of abuse and mistreatment towards domestic workers is present, however, there are several NGO's that aim to aid domestic workers and raise awareness on the mistreatment. The Anti-Racism Movement (ARM) is an NGO that was launched in 2010 after a racist incident took place on one of Beirut's most well-known private beaches (Abdallah, 2015). The ARM activists aim to fight discrimination and abuse in Lebanon.

Additionally, the Migrant Community Centers (MCC's) is present in three major cities in Lebanon and provides an education space. The MCCs are free and safe spaces tailored to migrant workers and evolving according to their needs, where they can meet, learn new skills, work together, and access information, resources and assistance (Abdallah, 2015).

For years, local and international organizations have been raising awareness to apply pressure on the Lebanese government to stop the systematic abuse of migrant domestic workers. In 2016, Amnesty International released a report calling on the new Lebanese government to end an “inherently abusive migration sponsorship system, which increases [migrant workers’] risk of suffering labor exploitation, forced labor and trafficking”(Saavedra, 2016). Other than NGO's, domestic workers have also managed to organize and take part in several marches against the Kafala system. Since domestic workers do not have any rights in Lebanon, an NGO known as Legal Agenda aims to help domestic workers in court. However, they claim that “most such workers with pending legal cases are deported from the country before they are able to represent themselves in court, thus making the task of accessing justice impossible.” Several NGO's continue to fight against the injustice of domestic workers, however, as seen in many cases, it is hard to achieve justice when the law itself does not even give the trial of a fight a chance. This is why it is essential to explore the factors that contribute to the mistreatment and perhaps show how to aid towards positive change.

1.5.1 Other forms of Racist Discourse in Lebanon

It is important to explore the different racist discourse practices that take place in Lebanon on various platforms. This helps bring insight into how racist discourse in

Lebanon takes place in many forms, and how this discourse can lead to the perpetration of negative ideologies towards minorities. Lebanon's MTV channel received backlash after airing a "blackface" comedy sketch that made fun of domestic workers in Lebanon (Firmo-Fontan, 2014). The sketch depicted a domestic worker by a Lebanese actor who wore a housekeeper uniform, a black face and a dreadlocks wig. The language of the sketch consisted of mockery, where the domestic workers is scolded by the Madam, as well as making fun of their speech in Arabic.

Despite racist discourse being present on Lebanon's media, it is also found in certain documents. For example, a document circulated online where a sports club had a policy that explained what a domestic worker should wear in order to be allowed entry. Additionally, an animated cartoon published by the Free Patriotic Movement's OTV channel, which took aim at refugees and other non-Lebanese students attending Lebanese schools, drew accusations of racism over both its message and its use of a racial slur (Firmo-Fontan, 2014). The caricature was a response to a statement by Education Minister Akram Chehayeb supporting the right of non-Lebanese students to enroll in school. Another caricature that was presented by OTV consisted of the term "zunji," which was historically a term for African tribes in eastern South Africa but has been used in the "Arabic cultural language" as a racial slur.

Lebanese politicians have incited racism and xenophobia through hate speech in efforts to curry support for return campaigns by scapegoating Syrians and Palestinians for national problems. The president used Twitter to express his thoughts on refugees and how they should "go back home." The use of racist discourse through different platforms is apparent in Lebanon, and for this reason, analyzing the discourse can help bring an

understanding of the cultural rhetoric or insights that surround certain individuals or groups.

1.6 Conclusion

In order to further understand how the laws and the Kafala systems operate, it is important to identify the racist discourse or tendencies of the individuals who employ migrant workers. In the case of Lebanon, the Madams are the main employer of the domestic workers and analyzing the discourse helped bring insight into their rhetoric or insights. This served as a way to comprehend how the laws might manifest or affect the rhetoric or insights of the Lebanese society towards domestic workers, or vice versa.

The following chapters will discuss the needed information in the literature review, the methods used, the analysis of the LMF, the discussion of the insights in the LMF in relation to the laws and Kafala system and the conclusion section.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

It is essential to define and explore the role of both the Madams' and the domestic workers in general in the Lebanese context. The Madams practice the laws and the Kafala

system, as well as take part in the discourse surrounding domestic workers. While domestic workers are subject to the laws and the Kafala system, as well as between the discussions of the Madams. Understanding who these individuals are gives context to this study and helps understand the perpetrator of racist discourse, as well as the receiver of such discourse. The discourse related to domestic workers, both on social media platforms and the laws were essential to analyze and explore, since it brought a good understanding on their effects and results.

For this reason, in this literature review, I will discuss in general and in the context of Lebanon: Madams, Domestic workers, Racist Discourse, Political Discourse and Media Discourse.

There are about 240,000 domestic workers that are employed in Lebanon, most of which are women (Barel, 2019). The living conditions of domestic workers in Lebanon is based on the rhetoric or insights and practices of the employers and their lack of accountability by the state (Abdulrahim, 2010). The inability for domestic workers to communicate with the outside world and form communities is a major restriction on their identity (Abdulrahim, 2010). Domestic workers are subject to long working hours, verbal and physical abuse and the expectations of taking part in tasks that are out of their work domain. Moreover, many domestic workers are not able to form a community, due to the long working hours, as well as the employer's restrictions and rules.

2.1 Madam: Role and Expectations

Hiring domestic workers in Lebanon is among middle and upper-middle class households. The domestic workers are ly employed by the woman of the household, that determines the rules, tasks and obligations to be fulfilled. In this study, I will refer to the women as the “Madam,” since it is a title amongst Lebanese women. For this reason, it is essential to define who the Madam is, as well as her role and expectations in the household and society. In Lebanon, certain agencies bring domestic workers in order to employ them as a housekeeper, cook, babysitter, dog walker shopping for food and other household errands with a specific employer. The primary employer is ly the woman of the household and controls the rules, regulations and tasks that should take place. She becomes the “Madam” of the domestic workers, a term used to refer to a “respectful woman” (Moukarbel, 2009).

Although culture and ideologies have changed over the years, in many ways, women in Lebanon are expected to be polite, soft, caring and to have the qualities of a perfect housewife. The term “Madam” is a title of pleasure to Lebanese women and in some way, is validation that they have executed their expected role well. In the case of the Madam and the domestic worker, being called Madam extends beyond their respectful title, but more into the dominant hierarchical ideology (Bizri, 2014). As a matter of fact, the Madam becomes involved in the domestic work of her own household only as a supervisor; one that manages without participating in the physical dirtying chores.

Moukarbel (2009) conducted a study about female employers in Lebanon who hired domestic workers and deduced that the majority of the Madams were not employed. It is critical since the domestic worker spends the majority of their time with their employer,

which naturally creates a relationship between the two individuals. Analyzing the general discourse between different Madams helped understand the overall rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers. Additionally, it is important to outlay a clear definition of a domestic workers, especially in the Lebanese context. In the following section, I will use several definitions that will be used to construct the definition of a migrant worker in Lebanon.

2.2 Defining Domestic workers

The term domestic worker has been defined by many scholars throughout literature, for this reason it is important to outlay several definitions and explain how they contribute to defining the domestic worker in the Lebanese context. I will present two different definitions that will help contribute to defining a domestic worker in general, as well as in Lebanon:

1. Diffy (2011) defines care work as those whose sole “work” is to care (like nurses, doctors, teachers, child-care workers, social workers, etc.) but also workers whose occupation revolves around care (like domestic workers, school cafeteria workers, building cleaners, etc.) Thus, domestic work is considered to be a single part of the realm of care work.

2. Fernandez (2012) defines a domestic worker as “any person engaged in domestic work within an employment relationship.” The domestic workers perform different tasks such as cooking, cleaning the house, washing and ironing the laundry, general housework, looking

after children, the elderly or persons with disabilities, as well as maintaining the garden, guarding the house premises, and driving the family car.

A domestic worker in Lebanon embodies all the described roles and definitions. For this reason, I will use the two definitions together, where the domestic worker takes the role of many aspects of the household, as well as other tasks depending on the employer's requests. The domestic workers role in Lebanon is hard to concretely define, as the laws allow each employer to impose their own definitions and tasks that come with it. Moreover, it is essential to further discuss the role of the domestic workers specifically in the Lebanese household, as well as their relation to the employer. Domestic workers work alone in the household, unlike many other occupations where employees have co-workers. It is important to understand that the domestic workers do not work alongside other co-workers, but in isolation behind closed doors (Moukarbel, 2009).

According to the Universal Periodic Review which was conducted in Lebanon, the country's "protection regulations for migrant domestic workers are nearly non-existent and there has been no progress on many recommendations, including extending labor law protection to migrant domestic workers in consistence with international standards" (O'Regan, 2017). For example, domestic workers in Lebanon are excluded from the labor law and are not granted the following laws that Lebanese citizens are granted: daily and weekly rest hours, overtime compensation and annual, maternity and sick leave. Due to the lack of rights and protection towards domestic workers it is vital to understand how this contributes to the Madam/Maid hierarchy present in the household. Now that both the domestic worker and the Madam's have been discussed, it is essential to understand the

hierarchy that exists between them. This helps give insight into the hierarchy in the household and its effect on the mistreatment of domestic workers.

2.3 Madam/Maid Hierarchy

Although domestic workers in Lebanon work in a household among individuals, in many cases, they still feel alone (Abdulrahim, 2010). This is due to the hierarchy that is present in the household, where the Madam holds the power and control the life of the domestic workers. For example, the Madam controls the expected chores and duties, as well as the relationships and interactions the domestic worker has inside and outside the household. A definition that best defines the domestic workers in this hierarchy is by Chen (2011) who describes domestic workers by establishing a clear difference between the cleanness of the lady of the house and the dirtiness of the servant. Such difference leads to the delineation of a stronger hierarchy within the household; where the inferiority of the domestic workers is due to her physicality and the superiority of the female employer to her status and skills (Chen, 2011).

The power the Madam holds starts before the employment, where she chooses the ethnicity, age, physical appearance and religion of the domestic worker. Many employees prefer certain domestic workers over others on the basis of their ethnicity. It is more prestigious to have a worker from the Philippines, as this indicates upper class. Another criterion that Madam employers look into is the religion of their employee (Abdulrahim, 2010). They believe that since the worker will be with their children, they prefer them to have the same beliefs as they do (Abdulrahim, 2010). The lack of communication and

understanding may play a role towards the power dynamic between the Madam and the domestic worker. Due to the very limited linguistics resources, the lack of understanding is a negative factor towards domestic workers, since this leads to humiliation, talk down and comments.

A study conducted by Haraty, Oueini, & Bahous (2007) indicated that most conversations revolved around household chores. Moreover, when interviewing domestic workers, the researchers found that if the questions were outside the realm of her day to day madam conversations, she did not understand (Haraty, Oueini, & Bahous, 2007). For example, domestic workers were only familiar with the questions that related to their daily tasks, as well as the expectations the Madam had for them in the household. The more the rhetoric or insights of the madams towards their helpers was analyzed, the more it showed that both domestic workers and the madams did not share the same definition of what a member of a household is (Haraty, Oueini, & Bahous, 2007). This is problematic, since the domestic workers viewed their role as someone who is employed in the household. However, the madams expect their domestic workers to obey and not question their duties. Additionally, they expect the domestic workers to adapt to their culture, norms and expectations. Moreover, Haraty, Oueini, & Bahous (2007) claim that the madams changed the nature of how they communicate when speaking with the domestic workers. Thus, the employers possess a language of command where they exert their power over the domestic workers. One's identity is not only obtained from the self, but also from others around them, and in this case, the domestic workers are alone (Abdulrahim, 2010).

Identifying the racist discourse that takes part in the rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers as well as the laws is essential. Racist discourse can be found in both the laws and social media platforms, thus understanding it in general will help identify how it is presented.

2.4 Racist Discourse

Orrù (2015) mentions that the concept of racism evolved during the 20th century, where although biological features do play an essential role, a new form of exploitation takes place. In- group and outgroup identities are largely affected by the stereotyping and standardization of minorities. In social identity theory, individuals categorize themselves on the basis of having the same norms, practices and biological traits of a certain group (Orrù, 2015). Thus, the difference between groups is emphasized, where it is to label outgroups with negative prejudicial traits.

Racist discourse creates and targets cultural and non-racial race categories like “immigrants” while primarily discriminating against non-white people through their Othering and the idea of “whiteness”: the multi-dimensional and structural conditions that elevate white people over others through their racialization (DiAngelo, 2011; Valluvan, 2016). Wodak and Reisigl (2001)). These relate to the manner by which in- and outgroups are discursively produced, more or less intentionally, in pursuit of different social, political, psychological or linguistic goals. They include nomination or referential strategies that construct and label in- and outgroup members. Overlapping with these, predication strategies present in-groups positively and out-groups, negatively. These strategies are

justified by argumentation strategies, while perspectivation strategies allow the producer of the discourse to position themselves in relation to the discourse and frame their points of view.

2.5 Political Discourse

Political discourse is used to express power over minority groups, by using ideology as a tool to shame outgroups. For this reason, it is essential to understand the concept of ideology and how it plays a role in the discourse of politics and its laws. Ideology is a certain lens that allows individuals to experience the world in different ways. Thus, discourse reflects the ideologies of different groups and defines social identity. The articulation of certain ideologies is used by power agents, such as political discourse, that aims to imbed them into the cultural norm (Mohammadi & Javadi, 2017). This can allow for the strategic ideological organization of messages that manufacture a specific reality for the audience.

A way of political discourse is the categorizing of in groups and out groups with the theme of us vs them (Hamil, 2011). Ideological political discourse consists of shaming and negatively identifying out groups, who are usually of certain ethnicities. Moreover, political discourse is expressed through the positive self- representation and the negative other representation (Mohammadi & Javadi, 2017). The use of language is essential in any legal system, where lawmakers use language to construct law and the effect of the use of that language takes place (Mellinkoff, 2004). Shuy & Roger (2005) analyze the relationship between language and the law, by focusing on the effects of the law itself. The law is based

on a formation of words that determine the content of a legal system. When analyzing the language of the law the term ambiguity should be discussed, since lawmakers use this strategy to cause misunderstanding (Mellinkoff, 2004). A word can have multiple meanings and when used with no concrete context, it can be misleading (Mellinkoff, 2004). In linguistics, ambiguity refers to the unclear or uncertain meanings of a word. The laws present include many forms of ambiguous meanings, since there is an in-depth meaning that is problematic when analyzing that content of the law.

2.5.1 Law

The laws in Lebanon regarding domestic workers are part of the practices known as the law. Law is based on the practices of the country that are taking into account when making decisions (Llewellyn, 2016). In a community, there are rules of behavior that develop without intentionally being invented. There are two types of customs of the law: general and local. Historically, the basis of the law was known to be the general customs. These customs were developed by people in power, which then also became part of the law (Milsom, 2014). In any event, it is accepted that general customs have long since been absorbed into legislation or case law and are no longer a creative source of law. In the case of Lebanon, these customs can be considered the laws regarding domestic workers and other immigrant's laws. Local customs are used where a person claims that he is entitled to some local right, such as a right of way or a right to use land in a particular way, because this what has always happened locally (Llewellyn, 2016). Such customs are in exception to the general law of the land and will only operate in that particular area (Milsom, 2014). Although customs may develop, they are not part of the law until recognized by the courts;

it is the judges who decide which customs will be recognized as enforceable at law. This is problematic in the case of domestic workers, since they do not have laws that support their rights, since they are not considered to be part of Lebanon, thus, they do not have any “local” rights. Additionally, the custom laws of the Kafala system has been ingrained into the society, where it is difficult to seek justice or hold anyone accountable.

2.6 Media Discourse: Online platforms

The internet is powerful for dominant groups by creating new identities, communities and reinforcing stereotypes. The online social platforms play a role towards forming public opinion and shaping ideologies (Orrù, 2018). Social media platforms have many users that are able to publicly share their thoughts and rhetoric or insights towards certain events, communities and other social aspects. Since individuals express their rhetoric or insights, analyzing the data on social media platforms can help analyze a large sample of data on a specific topic. This allows a researcher to analyze the discourse and then understand the rhetoric or insights of the chosen variables towards that minority group.

According to Hughey & Daniels (2013) racism is on online platforms, where the internet has led to many scholars to analyze the relationship between racism and discourse. Racist discourse on social platforms is more prevalent with the online spaces allowing a place for race talk. Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) mention racist discourse as a discriminatory social practice that is expressed through text, talk and communication. The legitimization and normalization of racist ideologies is seen through the expansion of such

discourse. Rogers (2013) views the internet as a source of cultural and social information that needs specific methods to analyze and study its specificity as a medium. The dialogic exchanges that take part in social media enable such discourse actions as relationship building, social situation development and power imbalances that can potentially affect or be catalysts to social issues. Facebook is considered a social media space where users express their personal ideologies and make sense of the reality around them (Montali et al. 2013). Both the visual and textual contents on Facebook pages play a crucial role in the communicative processes of users (Montali et al. 2013). Moreover, page administrators create certain groups based on a specific purpose, where they use several strategies to guide the content of the page. Thus, online data between users has been shown to be deeply influenced by mainstream political and media discourse present in society. (Montali et al. 2013).

There is a lack of studies that revolve around the discourse of domestic workers in Lebanon on social media platforms. For this reason, I will discuss the online discourse discussed towards minority groups such as Syrian and Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

2.6.1 Online Discourse in Lebanon

The presence of social media platforms in Lebanon has been prominent since 2011, with an increased rate of users since 2017. Radcliff (2018) mentions that Facebook continues to dominate social media use across the country. Additionally, Lebanon has one of the highest percentage of individuals (72%) using social media in the world (Radcliff, 2018). Due to the increase use of Facebook, a large amount of data can be collected and

analyzed when wanting to depict the rhetoric or insights of a social concept. For example, Rahman (2017) and Gagne (2014) each studied perspectives of refugees in Lebanon in social media spaces. Their respective studies found that the general discourse used for describing the refugees was related to the themes fear, the stranger and enemy. I have included these particular studies, since they focus on the discourse that revolves around a minority group in Lebanon. Identifying the rhetoric or insights and perceptions revolving around these groups can help raise awareness on the importance of discourse. Changing the discourse and the online content of these groups, could lead to a change of attitude.

Rahman (2017) explored the discourse of a large sample of surveyed social media material in Lebanon. The content was based on the commentary about Syrian and Palestinian refugees individually, as well as when discussed together. The main concept of the discussions is based on the growing numbers of the displaced refugees in Lebanon. The results of the study indicated that Syrian and Palestinian refugees were labeled as the “stranger,” where the discourse revolved around the refugees seen as the cause behind terrorism (Rahman, 2017). Moreover, fear mongering to create maximum citizen mobilization in discourse with the use of the superlative, for example writing “and we fear the worse”, “the biggest problem Lebanon faces is Syrian displacement”, aims to transform approval of this discourse into an unwitting reaction (Rahman, 2017).

Gagne (2014) conducted a study based on the crisis of Syrian refugees in Lebanon that is discussed on social media platforms. The results deduced that representation as the refugees as the “enemy” was achieved through the discourse of representing the other into a group that conflicts with the values of the state (Gagne, 2014). The content showed that the

other is rejected and perceived as the enemy since they threaten and do not line with the objectives and rhetoric or insights of Lebanon. The discourse played a major role towards legitimizing the fear of the enemy, while continuing to marginalize that group.

2.7 Conclusion

Racist discourse is expressed through several outlets such as political laws and social media platforms. Additionally, racist discourse takes place in many forms such as images, words, texts and videos that aims to produce a certain image of groups in the world. Understanding the components of racist discourse, helps identify how it is present in the laws, as well as social media in Lebanon. For example, racist discourse can be found in the media discourse surrounding domestic workers and refugees, where they are represented as a stranger and a problem; rather than being an essential part of the hosting community. Another way that racist discourse is expressed in Lebanon is through the discourse of the laws concerning domestic workers. The discourse of the laws leaves many gaps and misunderstandings. This leads to the lack of accountability and responsibility of both the state and the employer towards the treatment of domestic workers.

Examining the online discourse in Lebanon towards another minority groups such as domestic workers, helped give other forms of racist discourse towards another minority group, such as domestic workers. Identifying these perceptions and rhetoric or insights can help raise awareness on the need to change the general discourse, possibly through the alteration of the laws discourse. Additionally, the change can start by raising awareness

about the reality of domestic workers in Lebanon, and perhaps altering the negative perception towards domestic workers, which might alter the laws.

Now that the main themes that will be explored in the methodology, let's view what my research paper aims to answer:

What insights can be obtained from a discourse analysis of LMF, especially with considerations about the laws and the Kafala system?

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The following study uses discourse analysis and grounded theory to analyze the data extracted from the LMF page where the majority of the participants have a domestic worker present in their homes. The study also aims to understand racist discourse, in order to analyze and interpret the forms of racist discourse found in the LMF. Racism occurs when beliefs are imposed on a group because of their race. The concept of everyday racism takes place in social practices where minorities do not have access to the same materials and

opportunities than the dominant race (Orrù, 2015). The discriminatory practices are part of the social ideologies of a group that reinforces and normalizes racism. Racist discourse is one of the main instruments where the social differences are expressed towards the outgroups (Orrù, 2015). There is a constant relationship between language and social matters, where they are socially shaped or shaping (Orrù, 2015).

For this reason, I have chosen to analyze the racist discourse from the Leb Madam's Facebook (LMF) page because they show us the significance of how language can be used to understand the rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers in Lebanon. Additionally, the discussion will include how the language of the two laws (Lebanon's Stratified Unified Contract and General Securities Rules and Obligations) might manifest into the rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers, or vice versa. This study aims to raise awareness and give insight into the ingrained ideological views represented in the language of the LMF community.

The methodological approach is guided by the use of discourse analysis, as well as the framework provided by Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015). Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) claim that there are two forms of racist discourse, either directed at or about other ethnicities. The first form is based on how other ethnicities are expressed by dominant groups towards minority groups (refugee, domestic workers). This form of discourse is expressed by using insults, slurs, impoliteness, and other ways that show a lack of respect. The second form of racist discourse, known as about other ethnicities, is seen in the mass media (Saridakis & Fotopoulou, 2015). This form is expressed through a negative portrayal of a certain group, a creation of Us vs Them and the spread of negative stereotypes. The

two forms of racist discourse can be seen in the news, social media, political laws and all forms of the mass media. Understanding how racist discourse takes place in political and online discourse will further help understand its effect and how it plays a role in both the laws and the general discourse towards domestic workers. The framework helps group the discourse provided on the LMF by categories, as well as a base that helped create new subcategories. The analysis process is separated in different chapters, such as:

Ch.4 Analyze discourse of LMF. (Using discourse analysis, grounded theory and Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) framework)

Ch.5 Discussion of LMF in relation to the laws and the Kafala system

Ch.6 Brief analysis and Discussion of Parts of the Law in relation to LMF and Kafala System

3.1 Data Collection

3.1.2 LMF

I was given access to the LMF by members of an NGO known as This is Lebanon which was founded on May 1, 2017, by Dipendra Uprety and Priya Subedi, who were former migrant workers in Lebanon. This is Lebanon is an NGO that gives a voice and fights for the rights of domestic workers. The co-founder of the anti-racism movement in Lebanon mentioned that “This Is Lebanon has succeeded in raising the visibility and voice

of migrant domestic workers more in one year than all other NGOs have in 10 years” (Azhari, 2019). For this reason, I chose to use the data gathered by the NGO, since it shows a different perspective on the subject of domestic workers. This perspective comes from the agents of the Kafala system, known as the Madams who are the owners of the domestic workers.

The LMF page consists of the threads, comments, images and everything shared during the interactions, in other words the discourse that the employers use, and this is essential towards identifying the rhetoric or insights that are expressed through the language. Access to the page is made very easy once an individual joins the group. This indicates that the users and page administrators are fully aware that the contents are of the public domain. The data was 90% in English, however when Arabic was the language used, it was translated from Arabizi to English by several volunteers, including myself. Moreover, along with the task of translating the data, it was a priority to also check if the data of other volunteers was accurate. Volunteers who were bilingual and experts of translation, proofread and made sure the translation was correct.

The discourse context of the Facebook page chosen is based on purposive rather than random sampling. It consists of comments, shared content, images, or statuses, as long as the overall content is directed towards domestic workers. The corpus comprises about 100 pages (around 10 main threads) of collected data of posts and comments on the Facebook page and represents only a portion of a wider set of data. Since the amount of data existed on 700 pages of a Word document, there would be a wide amount of racist discourse to analyse. For this reason, I decided to only include the first 100 pages, in order

to have an in-depth analysis of the data on the 100 pages. Choosing less data does not mean it is easier to analyse, but gives the focus and dedication needed when analysing racist discourse.

The reason behind choosing this sample was that I selected full threads and didn't just pick individual comments but looked at full subject matters in context. Since it is a page that functions on the basis of posting a thread and then commenting on the specific thread, choosing random comments would disrupt the essential outline of the data. The threads helped organize these different types of insights and perspectives, by having a thread (do you allow your domestic worker to communicate with anyone outside the household?) with comments that follow (beliefs and insights of the Madams who are answering this specific topic). Although all threads have comments, the reason why threads are so important on social media, is that the comments and discussion of a particular thread, will vastly differ from comments or discussion on another thread. Each thread discussed a certain theme, which followed comments specific to this theme. It would not have been beneficial to choose the thread on a certain page, but analyze it with the comments on another page. For example, I looked for discourse that identifies several categories and interests of a group that are used to self-evaluate and self-define: identity/membership, tasks/activities, goals, norms/values, position (in relation to other groups), which creates positive self-representation and negative other-representation.

The 100 pages itself led to my creation of new sub-categories, with an immense amount of data that showed the insights and rhetoric of the Madams towards different

topics. Thus, it could be considered as a pilot study for a more vast and ongoing investigation on the issue.

3.2 Data Analysis

3.2.1 LMF

Discourse analysis gives insight into the idea that knowledge is discursively determined within a social and cultural context, where it is produced and reproduced through discourse (Van Dijk, 2003). Since individuals express their rhetoric or insights and opinions through their language, analyzing the discourse helps analyze the expressed ideologies. Examining how the media and the law represents social inequalities through discourse is essential to reaffirm the legitimacy of particular truths (KhosraviNik, 2010).

According to Fairclough and Wodak (2000), discourse analysis is the analysis of the patterns ‘people’s utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life.’ Thus, it is a tool that is used to explore the language itself and the social practices that surround it. Social media constructs discursive truths that could, to some extent, affect an individual’s perceptions and actions (Fairclough and Wodak, 2000). Discourse analysis helps give insight into the author’s purpose or ideological rhetoric or insights based on how they choose to express them.

Discourse analysis is a qualitative methodology where researchers identify the meaning of texts in relation to the underlying power systems (Holy 1999). The aim of using discourse analysis is to identify how the use and meaning of words create social reality. It is an essential research method when aiming to explore how ideas and individuals constitute social realities (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw 2011). This method helps analyze the racist language in order to further understand the underlying assumptions and power dynamics that were involved in the production of the text on the LMF page, where a more contextualized interpretation is provided.

The LMF page was analyzed using discourse analysis, where the main framework used by Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) determined the 3 main themes. The framework was chosen, since the categories of Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) were used to analyze racist discourse on Facebook. For this reason, I used this framework as a base that helped start and focus my project, and eventually helped me create subcategories that emerged from my own data. Subcategories were then created when analyzing the data. Each main category has its own definition defined by the authors, as well as samples of their racist discourse data that relates to each category. This helped me look for certain purposes of the writer, as well as specific statements and terms, which helped separate my data into these separate categories. The Madams shared individual and socially imparted insights, perspectives, and belief systems through the discourse on the LMF.

The first review of my data was to color code each segment I believed belonged to one of the three main categories. This was done by reviewing the racist discourse on the LMF and comparing it to Saridakis & Fotopoulou's (2015) definition and examples of each

category. For example, when looking for data that belongs to the Them as a threat, I looked for the use of implicit language and connotations to present the domestic workers (Them) as evil, dangerous and a threat.

Once this analysis was done, I reviewed my data to see if within the main categories, there were subcategories I could create. The subcategories were created when I realized they were wholly incorporated within a category, however, they are more specific than the broad categories taken from Saridakis and Fotopoulou's work. Although the subcategories that I created are related to racist discourse in the context of the discussion of domestic workers in Lebanon, these new categories can also be used to analyze racist discourse on online platforms in general. Using the same process that I did for the categories, I searched for implicit language and connotations for the six subcategories that I created. They will be discussed in full in the Results chapter. The categories and subcategories were essential to my project since it helped group the coded segments, in order to reduce the number of different pieces of data in my analysis.

For example, the theme of Us vs Them can take place through creating stereotypes for the them group or by using certain slurs or derogatory words towards domestic workers. However, within the Us vs Them theme, the data helped create denial of racism and communication as three subcategories of this theme. In the context of the data of the LMF page, the discourse analyzed helped give insight to the fact that several of the Madams denied that racism existed in Lebanon. This was seen through the form of blaming domestic workers to instinctively be evil (labelling the "Them" group), which is a form of the Us vs Them category. However, it is a sub-category that is incorporated within the Us vs Them

category but is distinctive since it is where the Us group denies and justifies their actions towards the Them group.

The sub-categories that I created from the Inferior vs Superior category, depicts racist discourse that is incorporated in the general idea of expecting the inferior group to follow the rhetoric or insights and practices of the superior group. However, it is distinctive in the sense that it is found in the practices and rhetoric or insights of the Madams that are forced onto the domestic workers, or rather, viewing the domestic workers (inferior group) as a replaceable object. The categories show how this belief of the Madams being more superior than the domestic workers, leads to the forceful imposition of the Madams rhetoric or insights and practices, as well as ignoring the domestic workers identity and rather replacing them with the belief that they are replaceable objects.

Protection Measures taken is the sub-category I created for the Them as a Threat category and is incorporated in the Them as a Threat category. However, it is distinctive in the sense that the Madam views the domestic workers as a threat, since they believe domestic workers murder, steal and are generally criminals. However, the category of the Protection Measure Taken shows how they use these rhetoric or insights to create certain measures that will protect their household and the lives of those in the household. The subcategory helps show the actions taken from their rhetoric or insights of domestic workers as a threat, and how they can protect themselves from that threat. The subcategories show the distinctive forms of racist discourse the differ from the main categories, this is essential since the different forms of racist discourse, showed the different insights and racist tendencies, which in result could be one of the factors behind the legitimization of the Kafala system, as well as the lack of accountability.

3.3 Conclusion

Social media has become an essential part of many people's lives with platforms such as Facebook that holds the most amount of users. This is changing the way people communicate, how they acquire information, and how they form racist rhetoric or insights. Van Alstyne and Brynjolfsson (2005), and Pariser (2011) argue that social media and the Internet in general allow people to mostly communicate with similar individuals, which would expose these people to only certain kinds of information and may lead to increased segregation and polarization. Such results are intensified and exacerbated by media networks such as Facebook's data. Around the same time, the social network makes it easier to communicate with individuals and allow them to argue longer (or even forever) with specific people. This can contribute to heightened friction in various areas of an organization and discourage people from learning. Online platforms have the ability to affect human rhetoric, behaviors and ideologies. For this reason, chapter 4 will discuss the results and analysis of the discourse and insights found on the LMF page.

CHAPTER 4

LEBANESE MADAM FACEBOOK PAGE (LMF): RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

In the context of this study, the chosen Facebook page is used by local Lebanese women that hold discussions about domestic workers. The Lebanese Madam Facebook page is one of the online platform spaces where the members are likeminded. The data on the Facebook page is essential, since it includes user's rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers, as well as an overview of how the dominant group of Madams interact with each other. The discussions on the social media page will be examined through a racist discourse lens, in order to analyze and interpret the data. This chapter focuses on the data extracted from the LMF page. The data will be presented and analyzed through the use of the main framework by Saradiki and Foutoloupus, as well as the sub-categories that emerged throughout the analysis. In order to understand the analysis of the data. It is essential to re-visit the main categories and their relevant meanings.

4.2 Results and Analysis

After going through the 100 pages of forum posts, the most sub-categories were created. These sub-categories were compared to the main framework by Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) and were put into the main categories they best fit. I delve more deeply into the themes and refer to the data to show how the results fit into the categories.

4.2.1 Us vs them

The first theme found in the data was the dynamic of master-servant relationship, which defines the theme of Us vs Them. Saridakis & Fotopoulou (2015) claim that there are two forms of racist discourse, either directed at or about other ethnicities. The first

form is based on how other ethnicities are expressed by dominant groups towards minority groups. This form of discourse is expressed by using insults, slurs, impoliteness, and other ways that show a lack of respect. The second form of racist discourse is expressed through a negative portrayal of a certain group, a creation of Us vs Them and the spread of negative stereotypes (Saridakis & Fotopoulou, 2015).

The two forms of racist discourse can be seen in the news, social media, political laws and all forms of the mass media. Both the characteristics that are part of the Us vs Them category will be discussed and analyzed. The data that relates to Us vs Them is based on the language that is categorizing domestic workers as evil, unappreciative, malicious and liars. The discourse of Us vs Them in Lebanon has been part of the media, specifically in reference to refugees by Lebanese employers who view this minority group as a threat: They come to their country to steal, take jobs, outnumber them, etc. The theme of Us vs Them reflects how differences translate into cultural superiority and ideological dominance. The servant's role is important towards continuing the propagation of cultural stereotypes. Servants are expressed as the central function of the household, however, are at the same time regarded as marginal individuals (Srinivas, 2000). The servant, in this case, the domestic worker is constantly in a fragility position, where they are at the mercy of their Madam masters. The discourse in the LMF shows similar references when discussing domestic workers. The theme of Us vs Them can clearly be seen in table 1, where the discussion about rights, slavery, intelligence and nationalism is discussed.

Table #1: Us vs. Them rhetoric or insights found on the LMF

A. We hear so much about their rights and their rights and their rights. What about our rights??? How many Lebanese are treated badly when they travel to Saudi Arabia and Dubai and Africa???? And their rights???
B. There are people who feel for the foreign workers but not for the Lebanese.
C. The one I had didn't have a 0 IQ but she did everything intentionally to piss me off and annoy me...if she saw that I was asleep she'd come in and wake me up, for example, to ask me if she should put the pizza in the fridge. Imagine! All of it was on purpose;; usually she didn't ask me anything
D. Now Lebanon has become a country of slavery????!!! Us????!!! Oh my goodness! I don't believe it, dear. If you want to defend someone, go ahead, but not at our expense. \$200 in Ethiopia is worth a lot.
E. Those who are talking and defending that they are humans and feel for them, definitely don't have an Ethiopian in their home and have never brought one. They have no idea how much they lie, how much they act up and how dirty they are.
F. Don't come and defend them in a country where they are receiving what they don't even dream of in their own country and they're not even satisfied.

The discussion of creating an evil image of domestic workers can be seen in C and E, where the Madams claim that the domestic workers purposefully create situations for the sake of being malicious. Moreover, domestic workers are categorized into stereotypes of being “dirty, liars and troublemakers.” The barrier between the Lebanese society (Us) and the domestic workers (Them) takes part in the form of categorizing domestic workers as evil, unappreciative, malicious and liars as seen in E, “They have no idea how much they lie, how much they act up and how dirty they are.”

A barrier is drawn to show why domestic workers should not have any reason to ask for their rights since their employers are so great and they've “saved” them from a worse fate in their home countries. The Madams feel threatened (even though outsiders might see their feelings as ridiculous or unwarranted). This can be seen in the LMF data, where the discussion by the Madams revolves around a general discourse, “what about us?”

as seen in A, “We hear so much about their rights and their rights and their rights. What about our rights???.“The Madams claim that the rights of Lebanese are not even fought for like the rights of domestic workers, where the Madam’s rights are more important and essential than the domestic workers. The comparison of the Lebanese culture in reference to the freedom domestic workers have is also part of the discourse. This relates to the Us vs Them categories, because the Madams create a distinction between them and the domestic workers, when it comes to the subject of rights. This can be seen in E, where a Madam mentions, “Those who are talking and defending that they are humans and feel for them, definitely don’t have an Ethiopian in their home and have never brought one. They have no idea how much they lie, how much they act up and how dirty they are, “It is not essentially that the domestic workers are stealing their rights, but rather, that the Madams create a sphere of their rights vs domestic workers rights.

4.2.1.1 Sub-categories: Denial of Racism and Communication

The Us vs Them category needs to be explored deeply, in specific to the LMF data, since it helps clarify the outcome of the Kafala system. The category of Us vs Them includes sub-categories of Denial of Racism and Communication. Additionally, it shows how both the discourse, as well as real life practices are based on the Madams (Us) vs Domestic workers (Them). Although the Us vs Them discourse can be found in many different forms across the world, each country and culture have the underlying social, cultural and political aspects that are part of the problem. Moreover, the Us vs Them racist discourse can take place in different forms and expressions, which can be seen in the LMF Facebook page. These categories include an Us vs Them discourse that explores the idea of

the domestic workers claiming things against the Madams or Lebanese citizens in general.

The sub-categories will be explored more in-depth in the following sections.

4.2.1.1.1 Denial of Racism

Even though there exists an amount of social constraints towards blatant forms of prejudice and discrimination; most blatant discourse includes denials of racism (Dijk, 1992). Interestingly, Dijk (1992) found that precisely the more racist discourse tends to have disclaimers and other denials. This suggests that language users who say negative things about minorities are well aware of the fact that they may be understood as breaking the social norm of tolerance or acceptance. Denial of racism, and similar forms of positive self-presentation, have both an individual and a social dimension. Not only do most privileged speakers individually resent being perceived as racists, also, and even more importantly, such strategies may at the same time aim at defending the in-group as a whole: 'We are not racists', 'We are not a racist society' (Stevenson, 2006). The denial of racism takes place as the Madams (Us group) blaming the domestic workers (Them group) for negative actions, as a means of denial, which is found in the LMF data.

Table 2 illustrates that the denial of racism was ly found in the discourse in the LMF page, where the general attitude is that it is not racism, because it justifies a certain belief. For example, the Lebanese people “are not monsters” but they have to hold “the responsibility of the craziness” of the domestic workers. In an Us vs Them situation, it is clear that the denial of racism exists by justifying the racist acts that take place. The denial of racism can be seen by disregarding it of racism and comparing it to another country that holds power. The Madams claim that it is only an issue of racism because they are domestic

workers, rather than understanding the present issue of mistreatment in Lebanon.

Comparing the situation of domestic workers employment in Lebanon, to a Lebanese citizens employment in Saudi Arabia is denial that can be seen by an underlying view of privilege that is used to disregard racist acts. By comparing different cultures, this implies the “exaggeration” that the Madams believe takes place when discussing the issue of racism towards domestic workers.

Table #2: Denial of Racism rhetoric or insights found in LMF

A. It’s not racism;; it’s just how it works.
B. In my opinion, the only person who is seeing this as racism is the one who is thinking about racism and using it against people. The issue is very simple. For example, if a Lebanese was saying such things about their employer in Saudi Arabia, would they have opened their mouths and talked about racism?
C. We are not monsters but, believe me, they really piss you off and you don’t know how to behave with them. We have to carry the responsibility for their craziness and ignorance so, please, forgive me - this is not racism it is just too much
D. Believe me, people we’re not against them; we have nothing against them and we don’t hate them or anything but it has become very difficult to deal with them. If I start telling you what they do to me, I’ll never finish.

Additionally, the denial takes place by describing the domestic workers to be the cause of the negative situations which is a result of why certain things have to happen. For example, in C “We are not monsters but, believe me, they really piss you off and you don’t know how to behave with them. We have to carry the responsibility for their craziness and ignorance so, please, forgive me - this is not racism it is just too much.” Minorities that have a stereotype are viewed to be the “Them” that purposefully practices this

stereotypical behavior. Thus, the Madams believe it is not racist, since they are merely the “*victims*” who have to react towards certain behavior. The belief of justification for certain actions can be seen in the discourse by clarifying that it is not racism.

4.2.1.1.2 Communication outside the household

Fears related to domestic workers communicating with people outside the employer’s household is a recurring theme in the data. There is a general fear among the LMF data that relates to domestic workers outside the household that will teach the employers’ domestic workers how to lie, steal, have more demands and fall in love. This theme explores the ideologies and actions Lebanese citizens take part in to control the domestic workers’ communication with the outside world, as well as their community. Thus, restrictions to outside communication is altered in order to avoid domestic workers taking part in negative behavior. This sub-category fits within the Us vs Them theme since it depicts the domestic workers as a group that will become harmful if given liberties of communication. The domestic worker is categorized into a group that deserves to be treated a certain way, because “they” are not easy to deal with. As seen in C, “We have to carry the responsibility for their craziness and ignorance so, please, forgive me - this is not racism it is just too much.”

In Table 3, discourse towards the fear of communication with the outside world in specific to the other domestic workers in Lebanon. First Madams fear about domestic workers’ communication outside the household. For example, as seen in A, “My last helper was from Kenya and I got her a telephone because she was super good and polite (I had a complex from the one before her because she was sending nudes to men around the world). Now she’s in love with a man and she wants to go home and get married.” Without liberties

to communicate with the outside world, domestic workers cannot form their own communities. This also relates to categorization and the assumptions of Them (domestic workers) as malicious, and thus cutting out communication to stop them from being malicious together.

What seems to drive that feel of domestic workers communicating with the outside world is falling in love and running away or leaving. The domestic workers usage of telephones was often seen as threatening because it could lead the domestic workers to learn too much about their surroundings, thereby facilitating them to leave the workplace ('running away'); employers felt unease with the domestic workers talking in their own language as they cannot understand what they are saying. This relates to the theme of communication, since these are the reasons Madams believe domestic workers should not have external sources of communication.

The discourse is also supported by personal stories of their domestic workers and the reason behind the domestic workers taking part in such an action was because of their interaction with domestic workers from outside the household. For example, a Madam shows her rhetoric or insights through the discourse found in E, "Yes, I am against her talking with anyone she doesn't know. Everyone has their own way, but I don't like it because the woman I have has started wanting a telephone and wanting \$200? There is no discourse towards the fear of domestic workers connecting with Lebanese citizens, where communication to the outside world is only fearful when the individual on the other side is a domestic worker. Another interesting finding that falls within the subcategory of Communication is how Domestic workers and Madams communicate to one another. What is found is that the language used centers around a contractual relationship.

Table #3: Communication outside the household rhetoric or insights found in LMF

<p>A. And don't give me childish details - they didn't give her food and didn't get her a telephone and didn't let her go out. My last helper was from Kenya and I got her a telephone because she was super good and polite (I had a complex from the one before her because she was sending nudes to men around the world). Now she's in love with a man and she wants to go home and get married</p>
<p>B. Ok, it's her life but there's a year of the contract left and she no longer wants to stay. Now she will be replaced by a new one and God knows what she will be like and I'm not around.</p>
<p>C. From my experience it's not a humiliation e.g. every time the one I have sees someone she learns from her something, even if it's something little. One time she wants a telephone...then cream...then hair oil. I'm afraid of them!! So, I don't want the headache. Look, when I remit her money they all start to And want to make sure if I'm remitting correctly so for what? Headache!</p>
<p>D. E. 100%. What happened with me once - she came and told me the helper who is next to us gets \$300 per month. I said, "She told you?" She said, "Yes, she told me." I told her I will ask the madam and if it turns out that you are lying to me, I will call the office and take you back.</p>
<p>F. Yes, I am against her talking with anyone she doesn't know. Everyone has their own way but I don't like it because the woman I have has started wanting a telephone and wanting \$200. After she'd been with me a few months someone saw her and told her that when she knew Arabic she'd get \$200.</p>

The data revealed various recurring themes regarding the extent to which the relationship between employers and domestic workers is perceived as a contractual employment relationship. This discourse was repeatedly employed to justify limitations on the mobility of domestic workers and not giving them a weekly day of leave or rest. If given extra liberties, the domestic workers were expected to give back in return and show appreciation. For example, in C, a Madam mentions, “every time the one I have sees someone she learns from her something, even if it's something little. One time she wants a telephone...then cream...then hair oil.” The discussion about money, love and extra liberties

is found in the data, where communication with the outside world led the domestic workers to ask for more liberties or have a negative change in behavior. Falling in “love” is seen to be one of the many disadvantages of domestic workers having access to the external world. Even in the case of falling in love, the opponent is as well a domestic worker. It is a situation where if they get to communicate, they will ask more from the Us (Madam) group.

4.2.2 Inferior vs superior

The inferior vs superior category is based on the creation and targeting cultural and non-racial race categories like “immigrants” while primarily discriminating against non-white people through their Othering and the idea of “whiteness”: the multi-dimensional and structural conditions that elevate white people over others through their racialization (Valluvan, 2016). There is a clear distinction in the discourse that depicts the domestic workers as the inferior group, that needs “guidance” due to their degrading background. They include nomination or referential strategies that construct and label in- and outgroup members. Overlapping with these, predication strategies present in-groups positively and out-groups, negatively. These strategies are justified by argumentation strategies, while perspectivation strategies allow the producer of the discourse to position themselves in relation to the discourse and frame their points of view. Us vs them is based on how the Madam’s rhetoric or insights impact/relates to their language, while superior vs inferior is more about how the Madam’s rhetoric or insights impact/relates to their action: allowing something to occur or stepping in to adjust something.

The discourse of inferior vs superior takes place in the data where the Madam’s hold the power to believe what the domestic workers should be appreciative and accepting of (see Table 4). The form of power from the superior Madam is shadowed by claiming that the domestic worker does not know better. Since the Madam knows better, she believes that where the domestic workers sleep or how they are treated are up to her. The assumption and control over the domestic worker’s voice and rhetoric or insights is present, which leads to the justification of punishment. For example, as seen in F, “You should punish her when she makes a mistake...dunno... but the one you have is too much...by God, I don’t know how you’re able to put up with her.” This direct inferior role is forced onto the domestic workers and the comparison of how the Madams think needs to be accepted or adopted.

Table #4: Inferior vs superior found in LMF

A. I’m honestly against the people who think about human rights and who knows what if we say kitchen or something like that, because they think too much about the details of everything concerning the helper.
B. Let’s be logical, they come from very poor countries so they don’t mind sleeping anywhere whether it’s balcony, kitchen, living room etc... As long as they have a bed and a cover they are happy and thankful. Again, note that the helper in my mom’s house sleeps in my room.
C. Mine at first was by the dining table then after trust grew, we moved her to my kids bedroom
D. If the helper doesn't mind then there is no human rights issue here, right?
E. They have to compromise not having a free-will of their own during the contract period...so, back to kafala system, trust me it is no different than what all of us face in our work

F. You should punish her when she makes a mistake...dunno... but the one you have is too much...by God, I don't know how you're able to put up with her.

G. I understand but it's not like they had privacy back there in their country and we are ripping it from them... they are not accustomed to the privacy! My helper in her first month used to keep the bathroom door open while using it, literally open! Until one day i said i would cut out from ur salary if I see this again!

4.2.2.1 Sub-categories: Imposition and Dehumanization of Domestic workers

The category of Inferior vs Superior includes sub-categories of Imposition and Dehumanization of Domestic workers. These categories include an Inferior vs Superior discourse that explores the idea of Madams using their power towards the inferior group which are the domestic workers. The sub-categories will be explored more in-depth in the following sections. These subcategories are part of the Inferior vs Superior theme, since the theme takes place in these two forms. Imposition takes place by the superior group (Madams) who impose their belief or practices on the inferior group (domestic workers). Moreover, the dehumanization of domestic workers relates to the superior group (Madams) categorizing the inferior group (domestic workers) as replaceable and part of their ownership. The subcategories help give distinct information about the perceptions of the Madams towards domestic workers, and the different ways the theme of Inferior vs Superior takes place.

4.2.2.1.1 Imposition

The influx of refugees from countries that lack power to host countries has led to dominant cultures to enforce and impose social, cultural and political stances on minorities

(Vanderburg, 2001). This is with dominant countries and how they seek to impose their identity on minor groups with whom they share a territory. However, despite these issues, aiming to preserve the identities of minorities causes and increase in intolerance towards these ethnicities (Vanderburg, 2001). The Lebanese standards of how it is a progressive culture is seen by stating that the countries of domestic workers are regressive the lack cleanliness as well as the social cues of the Lebanese society. Table #6 includes data from the LMF page that is part of the imposition category.

The cultural expectations of Lebanese women and the culture itself is a discourse found in the LMF. Since madams have been trained within cultural expectations of what a housewife should be, they want to make sure their domestic worker lives up to these expectations so that they (the Madam) appear to be the good housewife. It is mainly about how others perceive the Madam as a good housewife, whether she's the one doing the work, or the domestic worker is. The expectation of what a Lebanese housewife should be and have are seen to be shadowed onto the domestic workers. These expectations can be seen in the form of the "correct" way: to clean the house, of physical presentation and verbal communications. A discourse found was that the Madam's expected domestic workers to take part in their rhetoric or insights. The discourse of teaching them how to clean, dress, shower and act the "proper" way. Domestic workers are automatically categorized into another group who are not clean, do not know the right way of working in the house, lazy and unappreciative. For example, as seen in C," The one I have folds my clothes on the kitchen floor." Additionally, the idea of domestic workers as not clean can be seen in G, "Imagine! I'm running after her to clean herself and eat with a knife and fork,

and look when she crosses the road so a car doesn't send her flying, and begging her to tell me what she wants to eat and drink so I can get it for her."

Mockery towards domestic workers and their beliefs, for example fasting multiple times a year, was regarded as a joke, where the domestic workers rhetoric or insights were disregarded. As seen in B, "Once I came home at 1 pm pregnant and sick and I found her not working or anything. My Nescafe cup, and sitting eating and salad and potatoooo because she is fasting." Discussions towards their culture as well as what they should be appreciative towards is expressed. The comparison happens with how the Lebanese citizen has certain positive qualities that domestic workers do not have, since they do not adhere to the expected Lebanese qualities.

Table #5: Imposition rhetoric or insights found in LMF

A. I'm seriously thinking of working as a maid. The nerves of every one of you are rattled by the owner and if they say anything. WE also have left our families and our homes and children and work with people and it's the same but some people like to philosophize.
B. Mine wore them and took pics and made friends with the whole street. Once I came home at 1 pm pregnant and sick and I found her not working or anything. My Nescafe cup, and sitting eating and salad and potatoooo because she is fasting.
C. The one I have folds my clothes on the kitchen floor.
D. God help you, God help you, because they're against cleanliness...she only understood she needs to wash her hands after going to the toilet because she got sick one time...it was really tonsillitis but I told her it was because she didn't wash her hands to scare her...I swear last year I hated my own house....I was too disgusted to eat there...it's very difficult to have someone unclean in your house.
E. Plus the \$200 in their countries does more than 4 of their salaries! Whereas in Lebanon, my salary is barely enough to be able to eat and drink!
F. These people's lives are like this. They don't have limits. They don't have ethics. We can't deny that they are a barbaric people and their governments acknowledge this.

G. Imagine! I'm running after her to clean herself and eat with a knife and fork, and look when she crosses the road so a car doesn't send her flying, and begging her to tell me what she wants to eat and drink so I can get it for her.

H. Their countries are backward people who don't accept civilization and are coming here for us to raise them.

The reality of Lebanese women and how they wish and are expected to be perceived is imposed onto the domestic workers, neglecting the domestic workers past or lack of privileged experience. For example, a domestic worker might be culturally used to folding clothes on the floor or shows cleanliness in other ways, however, these efforts are disregarded and labeled as wrong. The Madams impose the Domestic workers to change their behavior toward a Lebanese way (or more specifically the Madam's way) of doing it.

4.2.2.1.2 Dehumanization of Domestic workers

Discourse that is used to dehumanize domestic workers through racist rhetoric or insights and stereotypes relates to the category of Inferior vs Superior. Domestic workers were described to come from a low-level background and backwards culture. The description of domestic workers using language that is usually used to describe objects rather than people feeds into dehumanizing discourse about domestic workers. Moreover, ownership of the Madams results to the reference of domestic workers as "mine". The discourse related to this following subcategory can be found in table #7.

Domestic workers in the discourse are objectified in the sense that they have no real value and are replaceable. They are necessarily subjected to physical action since they do not have the necessary values or skills that would justify against abuse. The domestic workers are described to be part of something the Madam owns and is happy to let go off. For examples as seen in B, "God help us... Mine is flying out in a couple of days... I can't

do it any longer.” Additionally, not only do Madams claim domestic workers as theirs in their discourse, but also justify how certain punishments towards domestic workers is necessary. As seen in C, “What’s thissssss. Thank God the one I have is ok. But of course every once in a while an ear pulling is necessary (some physicalness).” The discussion of domestic workers being easily bought and given away, and the justification of physical abuse is present in the conversations on the LMF (see Table 6). The dehumanization is seen when the domestic workers is said to easily be replaced or thrown out. For example, as seen in D, “Why didn’t you think about exchanging her. She seems a bit stupid and she doesn't want to work and doesn’t know the difference between oil and water. “

Table #6:: Dehumanization of Domestic workers rhetoric or insights found in LMF

A. My goodness! It’s good you didn’t throw her from the kitchen window.
B. God help us... Mine is flying out in a couple of days... I can’t do it any longer.
C. What’s thissssss. Thank God the one I have is ok. But of course every once in a while an ear pulling is necessary (some physicalness).
D. Why didn’t you think about exchanging her. She seems a bit stupid and she doesn't want to work and doesn’t know the difference between oil and water.
E. You reminded me of what happened to me a while ago. I brought a number of girls to help me and not one worked out. One stayed from one night to the next morning and then I sent her back because she drove me crazy.
F. Please don’t forget about the issue of the lies. It’s in their bloodddd, in their bloodddd. I swear the one who my family had before this one, not once in my life did I see her smiling. She pouted for two years. Whenever I left and came back I’d find her pouting lol

4.2.3 Them as a Threat

Hall (1992) mentions that the concept of Otherness is expressed in terms of naturalizing and constructing a norm system based on power. The Other is not naturalized

and is what is different than the norm. This is known as a colonizing discourse that takes advantage of several discursive strategies in constructing the field of representation. The Other is the ethnic group, and the change of this concept must come through the change in society. The Other is held and constructed by members of the dominant culture where they have the power to represent. The other (domestic workers) is a threat in terms of them being naturally violent and partaking in abuse, murder or stealing.

The discourse of the other is a threat is seen by describing how Lebanese people are the victims and in fact, it is in the nature of domestic workers to be violent. Domestic workers are described to be a threat towards the family in the household, where they could commit murder or molestation. For example, as seen in B, “Maybe she will molest the kid at night.” Moreover, the topic of stealing here is not as major as how domestic workers are a major reason why people do not feel safe in their household. As seen in C, “All the fault is the maid’s and she is a criminal of the worst kind.” Domestic workers are categorized into the other group that is a threat to the Lebanese.

Table #7: The other is a threat attitude found in LMF

A. We are being abused, not them.
B. There are people who have her sleep with their children. How can this be? We now are afraid for kids from the closest people to him so how much more so from someone... (I’m kidding). But seriously, it’s not right. Maybe she will molest the kid at night
C. I don’t leave just any strange person in my house, especially if the kids are alone with them. She lives with us but remains a stranger.
D. We can’t let her go near the kids or the food from the first day, and we can’t leave her alone at home. There are terrible stories.
E. I lock my room when I leave her in the house. In her room she’s getting dressed in her dresses and putting on makeup.

- | |
|--|
| F. I am against those who have just arrived and take things out on us at our expense because of their life circumstances, against those who kill pregnant women, against those who kill old people who can't move and rob them then run away, against those who abuse our children. |
| G. All the fault is the maid's and she is a criminal of the worst kind. |

4.2.3.1 Sub-category: Protection Measures taken

The category of the Them as a threat includes a sub-category which is Protection Measures taken towards loses and fear of getting hurt. This category includes Them as a threat discourse that explores the idea that domestic workers are a threat towards the household and the safety of the members of the household. The sub-category will be explored more in-depth in the following sections. This subcategory helps give insight into how the domestic workers are labeled as a threat. Exploring this category shows us a different perspective of how the discourse of the domestic workers as a threat takes place in the form of how the Madams protect themselves from this threat and why it is justified to do so.

4.2.3.1.1 Protection measures

There was a familiar ideology in the Madams' reaction to the fear of domestic workers as a threat leads them to take on protection measures, which in essence is them limiting domestic workers rights often involving violations of the worker's rights. A discourse that employers' behavior towards domestic workers was often motivated by taking certain measure for protection. Discussions towards where the helper sleeps to secure safety towards the household is mentioned. For example, as seen in A, "My helper

sleeps in kitchen and I refuse to make her sleep in my kids room, and I refuse that she deals with kids.”

Discourse in the LMF, shown in Table 8, illustrates the certain measures employers took to protect themselves and the household. For example, in E, “I lock my room when I leave her in the house.” The discourse of locking rooms and protection mostly towards the children of the household. Discourse in support of this category was by confirming that other domestic workers have taken part in running away, stealing or physical harm towards others, thus this belief is justified. For examples as seen in E, “There is something else. Please, no longer bring those who work by the hour. How can you trust them when they have run away and stolen.” This discourse is particularly interesting since even in the domestic workers world, which is the household in Lebanon, they are even restricted to gain full access or trust.

Table #8: Protection Measures taken attitude found in the LMF

A. My helper sleeps in kitchen and I refuse to make her sleep in my kids room, and I refuse that she deals with kids even because this is not her scope, partly for the trust issue and most importantly because when she decides that she made enough money and she leaves, my kids will suffer separation, so I definitely don't accept!
B. If she tries to open it and go in, she won't find anything valuable lol. But I lock my room because of my clothes.
C. I lock my room even though there's nothing valuable in it.
D. She should feel that there is privacy and she is forbidden to enter my room in my absence. Anyway, I very rarely leave her in the house on her own. I have a young child and wherever I go, I take her with me.
E. There is something else. Please, no longer bring those who work by the hour. How can you trust them when they have run away and stolen.

This chapter focused on the data extracted from the LMF page. The results and analysis of the data was presented and analyzed through the use of the main framework by Saradiki and Foutoloupus, as well as the sub-categories that emerged throughout the analysis. The next chapter includes the discussion of the LMF page.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The following chapter explores the discussion of the LMF page by using the results and analysis of the previous chapter.

5.1 Subcategories

This study is based on Saradakis and Foutoupolo's (2015) three main categories: Us vs Them, Inferior vs Superior and the Them as a threat, all of which were found in the LMF data. Although the LMF data contains racist discourse in the form of these categories, it also contains different forms of racist discourse that led to the creation of sub-categories. While observing the data from the LMF page, I focused on the discourse that was specific to each of the three main categories. More categories of racist discourse needed to be created, in order to show the different forms of racist discourse I found in the data.

The discourse I am examining is that of a small group of employers of domestic workers in Lebanon in a very particular online space, the LMF. Due to the complex issue of the Kafala system and the rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers in Lebanon, I created subcategories that are specific to racist discourse in Lebanon. Racism, specifically racist discourse can be found on many social media platforms. However, when studying racist discourse that takes place in a particular society, there are certain distinctive characteristics that take place. For example, the Kafala system is a complex form of racist system that is present in the Middle East, however, it is practiced differently in each country. Thus, in Saudi Arabia, if there was a Madam page that revolved around the discussion of domestic workers, the sub-categories might have been different. This is due to the social, political and cultural values that are the underlying foundation towards racist discourse. My methods for creating subcategories might be applied by future researchers to

create their own subcategories of racist discourse, and perhaps future researchers might find that my subcategories could be adapted or even directly applied to similar analyses.

Every study conducted around a certain objective or aim, will have its own characteristics that vary from previous research. For example, a certain methodology that is previously used can be adopted in certain studies, however, each study will have its own tweaks or adjustments that are ideal to the study. In my study for instance, I used the three main categories that Saradakis & Foutopoulou (2015) created while analyzing racist discourse online. However, since my study took place on a specific platform with certain individuals' creators of the data I used, I created sub-categories that gave a more in-depth analysis of my data. This helps reveal the essential themes that emerged through my analysis of racist discourse, in specific to the discourse surrounding domestic workers in Lebanon. My sub-categories can be used by future researchers who are analyzing racist discourse and can be adopted towards their own context.

For example, the different forms of imposition taken by varying superior and inferior groups. Additionally, it can help reveal how the superior group views the inferior group as a threat, and the specific measures the superior group takes to protect themselves. Although the same themes may exist in my research and another research of racist discourse, the data, as well as the different actions taken will differ. The most essential theme that I created from the LMF data is the sub-theme imposition. This theme shows reality of the general rhetoric or insights towards domestic workers in Lebanon and the different actions taken because of these rhetoric or insights.

5.2 LMF

The discussion of racism can be applied to many topics of mistreatment and ideologies that take place around the world. There are many minorities that deal with the outcome of racism, due to the powerful emergence of dominant groups. When discussing racism in Lebanon, it is extremely complex, due to the many different religious and political groups that are present. Racism takes place in different ways, however, one of the most accessible ways to determine racism is to analyze the discourse that takes place. As discussed in this chapter, Facebook includes a wide range of data where users express their rhetoric or insights towards certain issues. In the LMF page, we could see that racism took part in the form of the Madams imposing restrictions, rhetoric or insights on domestic workers and stereotypes about domestic workers.

5.2.1 Imposing restrictions

We can see imposing restrictions taking part through racist discourse in the LMF page, where the Madams impose certain restrictions on domestic workers. This can be seen through the selected examples from the data: imposing restrictions, imposition rhetoric or insights and setting stereotypes.

First, we see that Madams impose restrictions on their Domestic workers:

“every time the one I have sees someone she learns from her something, even if it’s something little. One time she wants a telephone...then cream...then hair oil. I’m afraid of them!! So, I don’t want the headache. Look, when I remit her money they all start to And want to make sure if I’m remitting correctly so for what? Headache!”

Since the Madam fears what the domestic workers will learn or want if she is communicating with her own community, they justify their reason to restricting communication outside the household. This implies that if a domestic worker is

communicating with her own community, it causes domestic workers will ask for a bigger allowance, learn how to run away, learn to steal or ask for better compensations.

Imposing restrictions on domestic workers, specifically with communicating with the outside world, denies them from creating their own communities' in a country where they already do not have any rights or liberties. Moreover, this normalizes the Kafala system and the understanding that the employer "owns" the domestic workers. With practices such as employers taking away official documentation and eliminating means of communications, domestic workers are prisoned in their own workplace. It is also essential to mention that a lack of communication with the outside world, such as not having a cellphone, may severely alter the domestic workers's ability to communicate with her family and friends in her country. Not only is the domestic worker a prisoner in her household, but also she is a prisoner who does not have any rights to contact her family as she pleases. This is part of racist discourse because it depicts the reality of how superior groups, with a Us vs Them ideology, abuse their power in different forms, one of them is imposition.

5.2.2 Imposing Beliefs

We can see imposing rhetoric or insights taking part through racist discourse in the LMF page, where the Madams impose the *correct* way to be clean or work on domestic workers. An example can be seen, "Imagine! I'm running after her to clean herself and eat with a knife and fork" and, "The one I have folds my clothes on the kitchen floor."

These relate to the manner by which in- and outgroups are discursively produced, more or less intentionally, in pursuit of different social, political, psychological or linguistic

goals. In the terms of the Madam, it can be seen that they might be imposing their own situation where women in Lebanon are expected to follow certain standards of cleanliness, housework and their general role as a woman. This is a form of racist discourse, since it justifies the belief that the Superior group know better.

5.2.3 Imposing stereotypes

This normalizes the racist practices, rhetoric or insights and discourse that emerges from Us and Superior groups, where the Madams (Us and Superior groups) impose certain stereotypes towards domestic workers. For example:

“How can you trust them when they have run away and stolen. All the fault is the maid’s and

she is a criminal of the worst kind”

Additionally, this can be seen in:

“Please don’t forget about the issue of the lies. It’s in their bloodddd, in their blooddddd.”

In the case of this study, the Madams believe that they are more superior from the domestic workers and that their practices or rhetoric or insights are the correct way.

5.3 Conclusion

The impact of racist discourse in the LMF is an example of how such discourse normalizes the Kafala system. There are about 240,000 domestic workers that are employed

in Lebanon, most of which are women. The living conditions of domestic workers in Lebanon is could be based on the rhetoric or insights and practices of the employers and their lack of accountability by the state. The inability for domestic workers to communicate with the outside world and form communities is a major restriction on them. For example, a madam mentions, “Yes, I am against her talking with anyone she doesn’t know,” where the Madam justifies that she does not want the domestic worker to communicate with anyone, especially other domestic workers so that she will not learn to ask for certain things: more pay, days off etc.. Domestic workers are subject to long working hours, verbal and physical abuse and the expectations of taking part in tasks that are out of their work domain. Moreover, many domestic workers are not able to form a community.

Although domestic workers in Lebanon work in a household among individuals, in many cases, they still feel alone. This is due to the hierarchy that is present in the household, where the Madam holds the power and controls the life of the domestic workers. For example, the Madam controls the expected chores and duties, as well as the relationships and interactions the domestic workers have inside and outside the household. The household becomes a society of itself, where domestic workers follow the rules and regulations imposed by the Madams.. As seen in the data, we can see how the domestic workers are seen as evil or dirty, just because they do not follow the same norms or household practices that women in Lebanon are expected to follow.

In the case of Lebanon, Lebanese citizens hold power over minorities, due to the minorities lack of legal rights and the lack of accountability of injustice. Moreover, since domestic workers live in the home of their employer, the household becomes a society of its own rules and regulations. Moreover, the ideas and rhetoric or insights of the household

ly become enforced onto the domestic workers, racial ideologies and rhetoric or insights become embedded in the culture and thus, define what is normalized and appropriate for the society, also known as cultural racism (Oliver, 2001). This is supported in the media (e.g., the overrepresentation of groups associated with violence or poverty) and in the law system (e.g., racial differences in those convicted), which should be taken into consideration in relation to the LMF, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

When a certain group has the power to define the values of a society, cultural racism occurs. Such racism involves not only a preference for the culture, heritage, and values of one's own group (as in the case of domestic workers in Lebanese households), but also the imposition of this culture on other groups (Jones, 1991). Cultural racism includes being prejudice against minorities specifically because of their culture. Consequences of cultural racism are that minorities are encouraged to turn their back on their own culture and to become absorbed by the majority culture (Jones, 1991). The cultural racism found in the LMF could be related to the laws and the Kafala system. This is why the discourse and insights in the LMF could be used to compare to the rhetoric of the laws and insights about how it is actually practiced using a brief examination of the laws to speak to my findings in the LMF. For this reason, the following sections will briefly explore an analysis and discussion of the laws concerning domestic workers in Lebanon, and how the discourse may manifest into the LMF, or vice versa. This will result into how both the LMF and the laws impact on the Kafala system.

6.1.2 Laws

I will briefly discuss the two main laws in Lebanon that are directed towards domestic workers, to then show the relationship between these laws and the racist discourse on the LMF.

6.1.2.1 Analysis Law #1: Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract

Lebanon's Standard Unified Contract stipulates the few situations that allow a domestic worker to request termination of her contract if she is not satisfied with her employer. They include:

- A) nonpayment of wages for three consecutive months or more;**
- B) physical or sexual abuse if medically certified**
- C) employment in a capacity other than domestic work without consent.**

6.1.2.1.1 Lack of resources, Proof and Abuse

What is found in the language of this law is ambiguity in the phrase of the regulation "physical or sexual abuse if medically certified." "Physical or sexual abuse if medically certified" is ambiguous in the fact that it is not possible for domestic workers to prove the cases of abuse. The Madam's have the choice not to admit to the abuse or consent to the termination of the contract, which leaves the domestic workers with no rights not able to provide proof. Moreover, the term physical or sexual abuse can mean a variety of different things. Stating that both cases of abuse have to be medically certified, is most probably referring to the extreme cases of abuse where physical evidence is available. However, what about sexual or physical abuse that does not leave any visible marks that a doctor could verify. This leaves the domestic workers without a witness to testify, since in most cases the abuse happens in the household where only the family members or the madam live. Additionally, even if someone were to witness the abuse, the law does not clarify if a witness could be used.

Using the phrase “physical or sexual abuse if medically certified” leaves the ambiguous idea that any medical profession can provide the proof. In this case, the government does not provide a neutral medical profession to carry out the investigation. This leaves the employers to use their power and provide their own medical professional, which most likely will have a social connection towards them. Additionally, if the General Security carries out the investigation, they will provide a medical professional that works for the security. In both cases, the domestic workers cannot be certain that they can retrieve the proof they need in order to terminate their contract. This is due to the fact that the term medically certified physician is not exactly defined. Moreover, the law does not mention the testimony of the domestic workers concerning their abuse, which disregards their own experiences. Who chooses the physician? What exactly constitutes as a medically certified physician? The underlying legal power that lies in this allows the domestic workers to feel powerless, as well as the perpetrators to hide from the consequences.

6.1.2.2 Analysis Law #2: General Security’s stipulations for Migrant Domestic workers

The General Security’s stipulations for Migrant Domestic workers law comes from the government’s security forces who drafted a list of rights and obligations the domestic workers should follow. The list mentions the expectations that the domestic workers must comply with both in the household and in society. If the domestic workers break any of the following rules or regulations, it will lead to their imprisonment or deportation.

- A. Respect Lebanese laws and regulations**
- B. Respect the members of the family whom she is working for**

- C. Be committed to the nature of her work as a housemaid and protect the contents of the house she is working in and not expose family secrets**
- D. Adapt to the family and its way of living**
- E. Not leaving her employer’s house and without their prior approval or in accordance with the “work contract”**
- F. Signing the wage slip after the collection of her salary as receipt**
- G. Not to work outside of the employer’s house or in another domain other than that of a maid**
- H. Not to get married (to a Lebanese or a foreigner) during her stay in Lebanon (she has the right to get married after leaving Lebanon and return again according to the applicable laws of such case) (Kanchana, 2018)**

6.1.2.2.1 Confinement

What is found in the language of this law is ambiguity in the phrases of

- E. Not leaving her employer’s house and without their prior approval or in accordance with the “work contract”**
- F. Not to get married (to a Lebanese or a foreigner) during her stay in Lebanon (she has the right to get married after leaving Lebanon and return again according to the applicable laws of such case)**

Confinement in this case is denying the domestic workers right to get married, which holds a deeper meaning beyond that. The domestic workers are expected to refrain from leaving the household without their employers’ consent. The ambiguity that lies in

now allowing domestic workers to get married, stems beyond the concept of marriage. Employers can use this ambiguity to constrain domestic workers from leaving the household and interacting with anyone outside the household. This can allow the employer to completely ban the domestic workers from leaving the household altogether. Although another interpretation could be that the domestic workers could leave the household, however, only by prior notice to the employer. However, in many cases, the ambiguity is used by the employer to confine the domestic workers into the household and not have access to the outside world.

The ambiguity that lies within the “accordance of the work contract” is in referral to the several hours that domestic workers should work per day. However, with the support of the previous ambiguous rules and regulations, in several cases, this leads to the employer to abuse the terms of the work contract and force the domestic workers to work more hours. Additionally, the domestic workers do not have any source of freedom, where the domestic workers cannot leave the household unless her employer allows her to do so. This results in the justification of the confinement of the domestic workers in the household, since she will not be able to leave before she completes the number of hours the employers believe she should complete.

6.2 Relationship between the Laws and LMF

The Kafala system constitutes the previously mentioned set of laws that govern migrant workers migration to the Middle East. Additionally, the discourse and insights found in the LMF may be a result of the laws, or vice versa. Since we have a brief insight and analysis

of the laws, I will discuss both the laws and LMF, in order to see their impact on the Kafala system.

What's interesting about the LMF is that it shows insights and behavior towards domestic workers through the discourse, this helps indicate how the themes of the law and what the law says may manifest into the society and lead to racist tendencies. However, the language of the law and the racist discourse within it, also leads to questioning whether the culture itself, and the normalization of the Kafala system, may have led to the way the laws are. This is interesting to question, since the relationship between the laws, the rhetoric or insights of society and the racist tendencies that occur are intertwined in many ways.

The laws could be the cause of the rhetoric or insights of the Madams, which leads to the mistreatment of domestic workers. However, the culture itself, and the normalization of racist acts, may also be the pillar of what led to the law to be built in that specific way. Moreover, it may be more than a cause-effect relationship, such as, the two factors affecting each other simultaneously. This is why the racist discourse found in both the laws and the LMF, help identify, both the social and political effects towards the mistreatment of domestic workers in Lebanon. Looking at both the laws and the LMF, helps identify patterns or themes, which may show us the possibility of there being a relationship, or perhaps something beyond that. Together, they show the reality of the Kafala system.

There is the language of the laws and the LMF, thus, I will discuss 3 main themes that arise from my analysis of the laws and the LMF. These categories will be divided into the following section:

A. Normalization of Kafala

B. Lack of accountability

6.2.1 Normalization of Kafala

The ambiguity and lack of clarity of the laws concerning migrant workers in Lebanon, may lead to the legitimization of the Kafala system. The ambiguity found in the laws allow domestic workers employers whether intentional or not, to easily violate laws. Abstract and vague standards in the law are linguistically designed to control certain aspects of a society. This is seen in the laws towards domestic workers, since there is no effort by the Lebanese government to articulate an official clear law that should be followed by all recruitment agencies and employers. Employers become operators of the Kafala system, which gives them the power and freedom to act negatively towards domestic workers. Thus, as seen in the above laws, this allows employer to hold the power towards domestic workers, knowing the law will not punish them for many actions. The master/servant relationship normalizes the Kafala system, and the discriminative properties it stands for.

As seen in the analysis of law #1, there is ambiguity that lies mainly in the terms of physical and sexual abuse. The fact that a certified physician is needed to prove this abuse, this depicts that the domestic workers needs to have undergone a severe amount of abuse. Additionally, the law does not mention the testimony of the domestic workers concerning their abuse, which disregards their own experiences. This normalizes that physical and sexual abuse towards domestic workers can regularly happen if proof is not obtained. The Kafala system is already a system based on the decisions and power of the employer, where in many cases, abuse takes place in the household. This law, in addition to regulations in law #2, “A. Respect Lebanese laws and regulations and, B. Respect the members of the

family whom she is working for,” supports the normalization of the Kafala system, where domestic workers continue to have no rights that protect them.

A similar insight can be seen in the LMF, where a Madam mentions, “Those who are talking and defending that they are humans and feel for them, definitely don’t have an Ethiopian in their home and have never brought one. They have no idea how much they lie, how much they act up and how dirty they are.” This belief of the Lebanese (Us) vs the domestic workers (Them) is found where the Madam clarifies that domestic workers should not be defended for being humans, since in reality they have no idea about who they really are. This creates the concept of Us (Lebanese as innocent) and the Them (domestic workers as evil), with a separation that they are categorized in this certain way. The Kafala system is based on the Us (Madam Sponsor) and the Them (the item), that the Madam hold this ownership on them.

An additional similar insight can be seen in, “Let’s be logical, they come from very poor countries so they don’t mind sleeping anywhere whether it’s balcony, kitchen, living room etc... As long as they have a bed and a cover they are happy and thankful. Again, note that the helper in my mom's house sleeps in my room.” The Madam holds the superior role, where she believes that the domestic worker would not mind sleeping anywhere, since she is from a poor country. The underlying ideology that the Madams know better and therefore can make decisions for the domestic workers, shows the reality of the Kafala system and the normalization of the employers actions.

6.2.2 Lack of accountability

Domestic workers have the right to terminate their contract on the bases of law #1 which contains three categories that give them the right to cancel their contract. The fact that domestic workers cannot obtain proof towards their salary not being paid, by law, allows employers to abuse this concept, which they know will not allow the domestic workers have any proof. Specifically, since Law#1 is related to the domestic workers right to terminate her contract, due to the lack of resources and proof, this leads to the lack of accountability of employers. By definition of the law, the employers are supported by the law and do not fear the possibility of any repercussions. Additionally, exploiting domestic workers to work extra hours, or jobs outside the household, without extra pay, also allows employers to abuse the type of work domestic workers take part in. Since the domestic workers cannot say no to this exploitation and have no choice but to accept, this results in the employers to continuously ask the domestic workers to do different jobs. Here, we can see that the employer is not held accountable for taking part in the mistreatment towards domestic workers.

The lack of labor laws for domestic workers as well as no accountability towards their mistreatment, the Unified Stratified contract is problematic. Although termination of the contract can be for many reasons, when the reason is because of mistreatment and abuse, it is important to remember that the employee hold the power in this situation. The majority of domestic workers have their official documents taken away, as well as not getting paid their salary. Thus, asking their abusers for their consent towards terminating their contract does not result in victory. Instead, domestic workers have to refer to this contract to get approved for ending their contract. The ambiguity in the language of the law

and how the law is practiced allows the employers to go unpunished, as seen in the cases above.

A similar insight can be found in the LMF, “We are not monsters but, believe me, they really piss you off and you don’t know how to behave with them. We have to carry the responsibility for their craziness and ignorance so, please, forgive me - this is not racism it is just too much.” The Madam removes herself from being the perpetrator and clarifies that the domestic worker is in fact the perpetrator. Additionally, the Madam the Lebanese as racist and justifies this by saying that domestic worker are “too much.” This can show how Madams are not held accountable in terms of abuse or mistreatment, since the problem of racism is not seen. The LMF shows this theme in an example such as “We are being abused, not them,” where a Madam is justifying that they are the victims. This ideology of the domestic worker as a threat, is in fact the reality in Lebanon. Domestic worker are grouped into this perception that they are a threat, which could be a factor towards the normalization of their abuse and lack of accountability.

Due to the lack of accountability and normalization of the Kafala system in the laws and the LMF, it is seen that the language of the laws and the LMF are important to look into. The rhetoric and insights seen in the LMF (from the categories and sub-categories I created), for example, the restrictions that madams imposed since they believe that domestic workers are evil, can be problematic when the laws do not support domestic workers in this instance. For example, part of the laws gives the right for domestic workers to terminate their contract, but under very specific conditions. So if the domestic worker is being held captive in the household, since the Madam believes she is evil by nature and needs to be restricted from the outside world, the domestic worker cannot leave the

household and seek termination, since the law does not support that. This can allow employers to feel entitled to partake in such actions, where the law in a way, supports or reinforces it. This can normalize the Kafala system, by continuing to partake in the actions of modern slavery (captivation, abuse etc.), and results with the employers not being held accountable for such actions. This shows how the laws and the insights or rhetoric on the LMF, may be intertwined and in result, lead to the normalization of the Kafala system, as well as the lack of accountability.

6.3 Limitations

The racist discourse found on the LMF page, is not a representative sample of the whole Lebanese population. Despite the discourse from the LMF showing a variety of racist discourse themes, this does not show the different perceptions of Lebanese citizens across Lebanon.

Another limitation could be that my study does not deal directly with domestic workers, in order to provide their experiences in Lebanon. However, the vast amount of cases of abuse, discrimination and mistreatment towards domestic workers in Lebanon shows the reality of domestic workers in Lebanon. This limitation can in fact be used in the future, where the perceptions of domestic workers can be explored and added onto this research.

6.4 Future research

My study helps future studies, especially in Lebanon since there is a lack of studies on racist discourse in reference to domestic workers. Additionally, it helps in the sense that

my study helps show how language can help us understand people's rhetoric or insights towards certain things. Since Lebanon adopts the Kafala system, together with the laws and the present discourse surrounding domestic workers, it can be seen that something needs to be done. Perhaps my research could be used and further studied towards domestic workers, with a more in-depth look. Or in relation to general racist discourse, the new categories I have created can be used to analyze racist discourse online.

6.5 Conclusion

As seen in the results, the racist discourse shows the denial of racism that madams hold, along with other forms of racist tendencies, since they justify it by claiming domestic workers to be the perpetrators. The discourse of the LMF helped show the insights of the Madams towards domestic workers, and the different forms of racist discourse. Additionally, a small analysis of the laws took place, which was used to highlight that the discourse in the LMF does have relation to the normalization of Kafala system and lack of accountability by the employers of domestic workers.

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