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Socioeconomic Profile of Domestic Workers in the City of Mbujimayi (Democratic Republic of Congo)

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Abstract

Objective

The objective of this study is to describe the socioeconomic profile of domestic workers, Materials and methods.

The quantitative cross-sectional study with analytical aims which took place in the City of Mbuji-Mayi. She studies the socioeconomic profile of domestic workers.

The data for this study are collected using a questionnaire drawn up on the basis of our study parameters.

So, in this study, we used a positivist paradigm. It involves 250 subjects.

Results

At the end of the research, the results obtained reveal that the servants have a similar socio-economic profile provided that they come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are therefore subject to enormous problems.

Keywords: Socioeconomic Profile of Domestic Workers

1. Introduction

In the 19th century, the population was divided into four distinct social classes: the nobility and aristocracy, the bourgeoisie (the English middle class), the upper working class and the lower working class. Noble and bourgeois houses housed a large number of domestic staff (18% of the workforce in England) [1].

In fact, the functions assigned and the tasks required of the employee determine different types of behavior among housewives, which can be characterized according to a triple approach defined from interviews of field observations good bosses", and journalistic and literary sources, and which covers three attitudes: recognition, charity and negation. In the first case, the mistress of the house foresees a time of adaptation, of learning necessary to welcome "the other" in her house, new living environment for the young woman, so that she responds to the better to her demands and also provides the means for her own autonomy. In the second case, the host family, practicing Catholics, demonstrates Christian charity. This altruism, praiseworthy, towards the young employees goes hand in hand with a dependence based on the notion of family. In the third case, the immediate brutality of the demands set by the employer leads to violent exploitation of the domestic, denied as a human being and subject to forced labor at will. In fact, the fate of the employees who live under the same roof as their employers depends on the goodwill of the latter, who are not constrained by insufficient legislation concerning domestic work [2].

Certainly, domestic work is one of the most difficult forms of labor to address and combat due to its characteristics. Domestic workers are often hidden behind the walls of the home.

The International Labour Organization states that, except for a small number of domestic workers who sign fixed-term employment contracts with foreign employers, domestic workers' contractors much more prefer open-ended employment contracts [3].

In a previous study it was revealed that the majority of domestic workers are younger, sometimes minors, and that they are women [4]. Are we tempted to say that this domestic profession is carried out by a certain category of vulnerable people in our society?

However, in a city where society is plagued by several economic, social, health and cultural difficulties limiting opportunities both in terms of educational, economic and professional, it is undoubtedly easy for the population to turn to one profession or another, however difficult it may be, to meet the needs of society, even if they are basic [2].

From the above, our reflection proposes to examine the socio-economic profile of domestic workers in the city of Mbujimayi and to evaluate the future prospects and finally to make proposals that could improve their situation.

We believe that the difficult socio-economic situation, lack of adequate education, unemployment, poverty and destitution are the main socio-economic characteristics of domestic workers in our region.

To verify these postulates, the present work revolves around three points.

The first concerns the choice of methodology, the second focuses on the notions of domesticity, and finally the third point opens a debate on the results of the survey. A brief conclusion will be the epilogue of this study.

2. Methodology

From a methodological point of view, the present investigation was marked by the approach next:

- The first phase consisted of developing a state of the question using the documentation available on the profession of domestic servants.
- The second phase, more complex than the first, focused on understanding the economic and social logic of domestic workers in the city of Mbujimayi to date.

Only then did we develop the research on data collection through a qualitative questionnaire (open questions tested and validated) to be administered to a sample drawn at random from among the domestic workers of the city of Mbujimayi. These domestic workers were classified into three categories (household or cleaning staff, gardeners and guard or sentinel staff). The study will be conducted on a sample of 250 individuals.

To properly organize this research, we implemented a stratified archetype of considerations which is as follows:

- The population under study is considered to be all domestic workers in the city. from Mbujimayi;
- Considering the costs, time and availability, it is very difficult to make a comprehensive study of the population under study as a whole;
- The statistical unit is therefore the domestic worker working in the town of Mbujimayi;
- Our sample is selected based on a survey because of the non- availability of a reference sampling frame. The sample is made up of domestic workers taken at random and who agreed to answer the questions asked wil
- The study data were collected in all five communes of the city of Mbujimayi, mainly in the communes of Bipemba, Muya and Dibindi, which house a large number of domestic workers in the city of Mbujimayi;
- To make the quality of the survey effective, it took place during the period from November 20, 2019 to December 28, 2019 and was conducted by ourselves;
- More than ten variables were taken into account, including age, sex, marital status, housing status, secondary activity, etc.
- The encoding was done using Excel computer software while the processing was done using SPSS software.

3. The Job of Domestics

3.1 History of domesticity

As the etymology of the word "household" indicates, "to remain, to stay", the origin of the profession or trade of domestic servants is linked to the sedentarization of human beings [5].

Since the beginning of written records, we have evidence of the presence of servants in the household until the middle of the 19th century. However, only wealthy families from the bourgeoisie or the nobility hired servants (maids or valets). The servants were responsible for all household chores: they cleaned, did the shopping, looked after the children, received guests, etc.

Domesticity became widespread in 19th- century bourgeois society, where a considerable number of "household people" contributed to the standard of living and refinement of bourgeois families that made up Western capitalism. This observation finds particular expression in Victorian England, which had codified the roles of domesticity from the simple servant cook, to the first pale, to the governor or tutor. This distribution of roles was inherited from that established in the domesticities of the clan or city nobility in the 17th century [6].

In the DRC, the profession of domestic worker dates back to the pre-colonial period, however, only clan and village chiefs surrounded themselves with servants who kept their homes in order. It was with the arrival of Belgian settlers around 1908 that this profession gained momentum, many Congolese were recruited by the Belgians as domestic workers, cooks and others. Then after independence with the departure of the whites and the birth of a certain middle class, domesticity spread throughout the country [7].

3.2 The profession of domestic workers in the DRC

Domestic workers, often from lower castes, did not benefit from any legislation or specific rights until the end of the first half of the 20th century.

Before this time, cleaning staff lived within the employer's household and work hours could reach 16 hours a day. Their situation began to improve following labor reforms achieved in the 20th century. They are free to leave their job whenever they wish, they also have the right to social protection, although it only exists in a few countries. The International Labour Organization adopted Convention No. 189 for workers and domestic workers in June 2011.

This convention constitutes an important text for the protection and respect of the profession of domestic servants throughout the world [2].

In the DRC, although this agreement exists, the domestic profession remains poorly regulated and suffers from the application of the rules of the labor code. Breaches are frequent, concerning weekly rest days, working hours, payment methods and even the minimum wage, which, moreover, does not exist in the DRC [7].

Domestic workers in the Democratic Republic of Congo are isolated from other workers, the state and international organisations. This situation is manifested by the absence of a trade union in this profession, although the labour code recognises the formation of a union for each profession, even though ILO Convention No. 189 enshrines this freedom of association.

4. Results and Discussion

Profile of domestic workers in the city of Mbujimayi

Identification (Sex, Age, Marital status, Education level, Number of dependents, Municipality of residence, Housing occupancy status)

A. Variables related to Profile identification of servants

Table 1: Distribution of respondents according to variables linked to identification

Variables	Terms and conditions	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Sex	Male	56	22.4	22.4
	Female	194	77.6	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	
Ages	Under 18	48	19.2	19.2
	years			
	18 - 35	138	55.2	74.4
	36 - 45	46	18.4	92.8
	More than 45	18	7.2	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	
Marital status	Bride)	123	49.2	49.2
	Bachelor	79	31.6	80.8
	Others	48	19.2	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	
Level instruction	Primary	122	48.8	48.8
	CO	82	32.8	81.6
	Diploma	46	18.4	100
	Total	250	100.0	
Number of the dependents	1-5	100	40.0	40.0
	6-10	117	46.8	86.8
	>10	33	13.2	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	
Commune of residence	Bipemba	102	40.8	40.8
	Dibindi	10	4	45.2
	Diulu	61	24.4	69.6
	Kanshi	33	13.2	82.8
	Muya	44	17.6	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
Occupation status of the habitat	Owner 6		2.4	2.4
	Tenant	65	97.6	100.0
	Total	250	100.0	

Source: Our surveys

It is clear from the data in the table above that the majority of employees Domestic workers in the city of Mbujimayi are women, representing 77.6% of the sample surveyed.

The data in the table above reveals that 19.2% are under 18 years old, 55.2% are aged between 18 and 35, 18.4% of domestic workers are aged between 36 and 45 years old.

Looking at this table, it tells us that 49.2% of the domestic workers surveyed are married compared to 31.6% who are single compared to 19.2% who have another marital status.

When asked about the level of education of the respondents, we observed that 48.8% have a primary level; 32.8% have a CO level against 18.4% who are graduates.

The data presented above show that 40% of respondents have at least five dependents; 46.8% have at least ten dependents, compared to 13.2% who have more than ten dependents.

In relation to the commune of residence of the respondents, the data collected shows us that 40.8% of domestic workers live in the commune of Bipemba; 10.2% live in the commune of Dibindi; 24.4% live in the commune of Diulu; 13.2% live in the commune of Kanshi against 17.6% live in the commune of Muya.

This table shows that 97.6% of respondents are tenants compared to 2.4% who own their residence.

B. Variables for the Exercise of the Activity

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to variables linked to the respondent's activity

Variables	Terms and conditions	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative %
Seniority in the job	Under 5 years 98		39.2	39.2
	6 – 15	103	41.2	80.4
	Over 15 years	49	20.6	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
Income height	< or = $20	38	15.2	15.2
	$21-40	135	54.0	69.2
	> $40	77	29.8	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
Regularity of income	Yes	92	36.8	36.8
	No	158	63.2	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
Consistency of income % needs of household	**Yes**	**79**	**31.6**	**31.6**
	No	**171**	**68.4**	**100.0**
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
Secondary activity	Yes	202	80.8	80.8
	No	48	19.2	100.0
	Total	**98**	**100.0**	
Kind of activities secondary	The Little Trade	46	18.4	18.4
	Agriculture	18	7.2	25.6
	Breeding	48	19.2	44.8
	Others	138	55.2	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
Difficulties encountered in the profession practiced	Distance	70	28.0	2.0
	abuse	9	3.6	31.6
	lack of consideration	171	68.4	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	

Having considered the seniority in the domestic profession, our surveys revealed that 39.2% have a seniority of less than 5 years, 41.2% have between 6 and 15 years of seniority, 20.6% have a seniority of more than 15 years.

After reading this table, we observe that the majority of respondents, 54.0%, have a monthly income varying between $21 and $40; 29.8% of respondents have an income exceeding $40 compared to 15.2% who have an income less than or equal to $20.

It is clear from this table that most of the respondents, i.e. 63.2%, revealed that their income is regular, compared to 36.8% who do not have a regular income.

The data reproduced above shows that 68.4% of respondents responded that their income was not consistent.

The data in this table shows that the majority, 80.6% of respondents, have a secondary activity while the rest do not.

After reading, we observe that 55.2% of the respondents have an activity other than that included in this research; 18.4% are small traders, 7.2% are involved in agriculture and the rest are involved in livestock farming.

Considering the difficulties encountered, we note that the majority of respondents, 68.4%, say they are subject to a lack of consideration, compared to 28.0% who consider the distance between their home and the place where they work to be very long.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents according to variables linked to the spouse's activity and those linked to households

Variables	Terms and conditions	Frequency %	%	Cumulative
The profession practiced by the spouse	Yes	120	97.6	69.3
	No	3	2.4	100.0
	Total	**123**	**100.0**	
Type of professions practiced by the spouse	Sentinel	48	40.0	40.0
	Small Trader 21		17.5	57.5
	Teacher	4	3.3	60.8
	Driver	14	11.7	71.7
	Diamond cutter	18	15.0	86.7
	Money changer	8	6.7	93.4
	Others	7	5.8	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
Spouse's income	ÿ $ 50	25	20.8	20.8
	$50-100	53	44.7	65.5
	> $100	42	34.5	100.0
	Total	**120**	**100.0**	
The height of the total income of the household	ÿ $100	135	54.0	54.0
	$100-150	73	29.2	83.2
	> $150	52	16.8	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
Income provides for needs household	Yes	11	4.4	4.4
	No	239	95.6	100.0
	Total	**250**	**100.0**	
	Total	**98**	**100.0**	

This table shows that 97.6% of the respondents' spouses have a profession, compared to 2.4% who do not.

When asked what type of professions the spouses practice, the surveys reveal that 40% are sentries; 17.5% are small traders; 15.0% are diamond dealers; the others are teachers, drivers, etc.

After reading this table, we observe that 44.7% of respondents have a monthly income varying between $50 and $100; 34.5% of respondents have an income exceeding $100 against 20.8% who have an income less than or equal to $50.

Looking at this table, we observe that the majority of respondents, i.e. 54.0%, have an income less than or equal to $100; 29.2% have a monthly income varying between $100 and $150 compared to 16.8% of respondents who have an income exceeding $150.

The table above shows that 95.6% of respondents say they do not have an income that meets their family needs, compared to 4.4% who say they meet their needs with their income.

The presentation of the results above reveals the following:

ÿ Concerning the profile of domestic workers in the town of Mbujimayi, they are mostly women. This same observation is made by Issopha NSANGOU (2012) [8] who points out that there are more women in this profession than men. Their age, they are young and are under 45 years old, we note that 49% are married against 31.6% of single people; as for their level of education, a good number of the respondents have a primary education level, that is 49%. We also note that the majority of domestic workers are tenants.

ÿ Regarding the exercise of the profession of domestic, the domestics of the city of Mbujimayi resort to this profession to ensure the survival of their family, they affirm that they resort to a secondary activity because of the low income from their activity, i.e. 88.4% of those surveyed.

- As for income, domestic workers in the city of Mbujimayi receive a small amount of money as monthly income, with only 29.8% of those surveyed receiving more than $40 monthly.

ÿ Most domestic workers, 72% of the sample, say they are victims of a lack of consideration and sometimes mistreatment on the part of their employers. The same results were obtained by Catherine COQUERY-VIDROVITCH (2013) [9].

ÿ 68.4% of respondents said their income was not substantial. ÿ 80.6% of respondents have a secondary activity while the rest do not.

- The majority of domestic workers, 68.4%, are subject to lack of consideration. ÿ 97.6% of the respondents' spouses have a profession.

ÿ The majority of households surveyed, i.e. more than 79%, have an income less than or equal to $100. These results are identical to those found by Florence Bonnet et al (2022) [9];

- 95.6% of respondents say they do not have an income that meets their needs family.

5. Conclusion

Ultimately, we are saying that domesticity dates back a long time, it dates back to the Middle Ages and continues to survive in the town of Mbujimayi.

There are many factors that contribute to the survival of this profession, including the difficult socio-economic situation, lack of adequate education, unemployment, poverty and destitution, etc.

At the end of the research, the results obtained reveal that domestic workers have a similar socio- economic profile as long as they come from disadvantaged backgrounds and are therefore subject to enormous problems, particularly those mentioned above.

In perspective, the domestic workers of the City of Mbujimayi must, like all domestic workers around the world, join together in a union and form small corporations in order to claim their rights and ordinary occupational status like all other professions in society. To achieve this, the State has an obligation to support them in this process while giving everyone equal access to basic social needs such as education and employment.

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