

# Immigrant domestic workers transform childcare methods

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Domestic work carried out by immigrants is changing the way Spanish families care for their children, according to a study done by a researcher at Universidad Carlos III in Madrid who is analyzing this subject. Credit: Articulación Feminista Marcosur

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The care given shapes a kind of cultural construct that is modified by the transformations produced in its historical and [social context](#). "Currently, the greater presence of women in the public sphere and the la consolidation of the [migration](#) of [females](#) have led to a re-examining of [motherhood](#) from a practical and ideological point of view", explains

Magdalena Díaz Gorfinkiel, of UC3M's Department of Political Science and Sociology. "The ideal of motherhood no longer means the romantic idea of intensive motherhood, but rather includes forms of shared motherhood or "distance" motherhood", adds the author of the study, which was recently published in the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*.

This study may be useful when analyzing the changes that are taking place with regard to the concept of family, in order to adapt a variety of social dimensions to these transformations. "The most relevant – the professor points out – would be related to family and gender equality policies, since the present different forms of motherhood imply diverse relationships within families, as do the geographic origin of the women and children ", she adds.

In order to carry out this research, a qualitative methodology was used, using five discussion groups and seventy-one in-depth interviews. In both cases employers as well as employees participated, with the objective being to obtain complementary visions of the processes of domestic work and of the distinct forms of motherhood. In addition, the variables of social class, in the case of the employers, and geographic origin, in the case of the employees, were taken into account.

This analysis of the changing forms of motherhood and the care of minors is part of a larger research project related to the development of immigrant domestic employment in Spain. "The construct of care is a fundamental issue in forming societies, and in this time of change it would be of help to propose a profound reconsideration of the subject, avoiding the formation of care hierarchies related to the economic and social situations of the families and people involved", points out Professor Díaz Gorfinkiel. To this end, this study may serve to provide answers to some questions, such as whether or not gender relations within families are really changing or if they are simply adapting to new

times, or whether the new constructs of motherhood affect all families equally, regardless of their social class or geographic origin.

According to the experts, there are many questions still to be analyzed in this area of research. Among them several stand out: the influence of immigration policies and [family](#) policies on the formation of diverse types of families and concepts of care, as well as the social segmentation that these policies may create. In addition, research could be done on the role of other social participants in care, such as men or companies, or a diachronic examination could be done of the evolution of care relationships in the employing families and paid domestic employees.

**More information:** Title: Migrant Domestic Work and Changes in the Ideas of Childcare

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