



## First Conference of the Research Network on Domestic Work in Latin America (RITHAL)

**March 26 – 28, 2022**

The **Network of Researchers of Domestic Work in Latin America** invites researchers, undergraduate and postgraduate students, activists, and unionists to participate in the first congress of **RITHAL**, scheduled to take place virtually from March 26-28, 2022.

**RITHAL** was founded in 2017 to create spaces for dialogue and exchange between those who study domestic work in different countries of Latin America. The network includes 125 members in 19 countries. The conference will be a great opportunity to strengthen ties within the network and add more researchers who study topics related to domestic work.

For this first event, our objective is to reflect on the analytical paths of the field since the publication of the book *"Muchachas No More: Household Workers in Latin America and the Caribbean"*, in 1986 - a project organized by Elsa Chaney and Mary Garcia Castro - which has served since then, as a framework for research on this topic. In 1996 a version of this collection was published in Spanish as *"Muchacha, cachifa, criada, empleada, empregadinha, sirvienta... y nada más: trabajadoras del hogar en América Latina y el Caribe"*.

### **Track 1: Ten years since Convention 189: Where do domestic workers' rights stand?**

Coordinators: Romina Lerussi (CONICET-CIFFYH/UNC) and Lorena Poblete (CONICET-IDAES/UNSAM)

In June 2011, the International Labor Organization approved Convention 189 and Resolution 201 to establish a legal framework for the recognition of labor rights and social security for paid domestic workers. The agreement highlighted two fundamental aspects. On the one hand, the urgency of establishing an international regulatory framework for a sector historically neglected and denied labor rights. On the other hand, the need to protect women workers in situations of increasing vulnerability, namely, minors and migrant workers.

In Latin America, Convention 189 became a catalyst for regulatory reforms that began at the turn of the century thanks to the activism of domestic worker groups and unions, as well as the alliances with other sectors' unions, and the involvement of social movements - such as women's and human rights movements - and the contributions of academics and government officials

committed to domestic workers' rights. Since 2011, almost all the countries in the region have made progress towards recognizing these rights by ratifying Convention 189 and by subsequently adapting the regulatory regimes provided for this sector, either through special statutes or by including these workers in the common regulations that govern typical labor relations as a whole. This has meant, in turn, a wide deployment (with variations depending on the place) of more effective implementation mechanisms and communication strategies aimed at women workers, the employer, and society as a whole, in order to effectively register domestic workers, a fundamental element for the enjoyment of full labor rights.

Within this framework, and ten years after the approval of Convention 189, the papers submitted for consideration in this track may consider the following points:

- effects of the Convention on the legal reforms established in the different countries that have ratified it;
- ways in which compliance is sought through the regulations of each country, including the strategies of organized workers, other union, movement and academic actors, as well as state mechanisms planned for each case;
- conflicts and agreements between different social actors that participated in the regulatory reforms (unions and associations of workers, legislators, civil associations, etc.);
- critical analyses and study of the implications for those states that have not ratified the Convention, or those which have, but have not yet adapted national regulations;
- remaining weaknesses in state regulations, both in the norms themselves as well as in their monitoring and, above all, in their effective application in terms of worker registration and the enjoyment of full labor rights according to the frameworks;
- current challenges faced by domestic workers in terms of collective organizing (including collective agreements);
- linkages between unions and social movements, as well as the impact of state intervention.

## **Track 2: Cultural representations of domestic work**

*Coordinators:* Jorgelina Loza (CONICET - UBA / IIGG), Lucía Campanella (Udelar) , Leda Pérez (UP) and Mónica Patricia Toledo-González (UATx)

Since the publication of *Muchachas No More* in 1989, the field of study of domestic work in Latin America and the Caribbean has diversified, including a

plurality of views and positions. There is a vast literature that addresses the cultural representations of housework and domestic workers through different mediums (Gregorio, 2007; Pires and Silveira, 2009; Durin and Vázquez, 2013; Núñez, 2015; Ugarte, 2017; Rossi and Campanella, 2018; Rossi, 2020) which integrates issues such as: the feminization of this job; work insecurity; the link between gender, class, ethnicity and racialization processes; asymmetry and power relations in private spaces; and the processes of organization and resistance, among others.

In recent years, research has analyzed the representations of women who engage in this work, for example, in soap operas, literature, and art exhibits. Cinematographic works such as *Roma* (Cuarón, 2018), an Academy award winner, have sparked debates about the film's representation of its protagonist and of the middle-class family that employs her.

In this track, studies that analyze cultural representations of this labor sector, such as: artistic production; performances; literature; visual arts; and cinematic works, among others, are welcome. We also welcome pieces that take into account the cultural products created by the workers themselves, in their self-representation and activism, as well as works developed through artistic collaborations with the academy or civil society.

The main questions guiding this track are:

- What are the new positions/perspectives that are emerging on this subject in Latin American academic research?
- What interdisciplinary experiences can we highlight, and what can be learned from these in the future?
- What representations about life and work do the messages produced by domestic workers convey?
- What links can we sketch between these representations and the conditions in which domestic workers work?

### **Track 3: Domestic workers' social movements: their struggles, actions, and self-representations**

Coordinators: Carmen Cruz (Conlactraho), Luísa Dantas (UFPA), Louisa Acciari (UCL) and Maria Noeli dos Santos (Sindicato dos trabalhadoras domésticas do município do Rio de Janeiro)

Household workers in Latin America have been organizing themselves since the early 20th century, as workers' associations and labor unions, intensifying their efforts in the 1980s to secure changes in national legislation and rights. In 1988, representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Costa Rica and

Guatemala came together in Bogotá to form the Latin American and Caribbean Confederation of Domestic Workers (CONLACTRAHO), the first regional confederation and, to date, still one of the strongest networks of domestic workers in the world. The formation of CONLACTRAHO built on decades of activism on the part of workers, as well as their participation in the Latin American Studies Association's (LASA) annual conference in 1986, along with the researchers Mary Garcia Castro and Elsa Chaney. This partnership would lead to the publication of the foundational book *Muchachas No More* (1989), in which representatives of the domestic workers' movement had chapters that they authored themselves.

Following the path opened by *Muchachas No More*, this track proposes a dialogue among the organizations representing domestic workers in Latin America and the academic world, where we can reflect on the changes that have occurred over the last 30 years. Our goal is to create a space that fosters the exchange of knowledges and experiences, in order to bring together activists and academics and strengthen solidarity. Since the book's publication, the movement has grown stronger, more countries have joined CONLACTRAHO, labor reforms and new rights have been achieved in nearly the entire continent, and, in 2011, ILO Convention 189, which guarantees decent work for domestic workers, was adopted. However, Latin America has suffered great setbacks in terms of labor rights and gender and racial equality, as recently-elected conservative governments threaten legislative gains. In addition, since March of 2020, the Covid-19 pandemic has created extreme difficulties for domestic workers and their representative organizations, as they struggle to survive in the midst of an unprecedented crisis.

Therefore, some of the questions this track proposes are:

- What are the achievements and setbacks of the organized movement of domestic workers in Latin America since the publication of *Muchachas No More* in 1989?
- How and why do these workers organize? What forms do their actions and demands take?
- How has the relationship between the movement and the academic world changed? Where can we support each other and find forms of solidarity?

We encourage combined presentations by researchers and movement representatives, as well as individual contributions from unionists, in which the workers/activists are authors and not just objects of study. We invite presentations in various formats (written, spoken, audiovisual, etc.) that promote the coproduction of and dialogue between different forms of knowledge. The presentations can focus on a particular case, of one organization or country, or on the national or sub-regional level. We look forward to your creativity and solidarity!

## **Track 4: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives on Inequalities in Domestic Work**

Coordinators: Erynn Massi de Casanova (UC) y Lucas Torres (CONICET-INDES-UNSE)

Paid household work (domestic service) has historically been invisible in society as well as in the academy. However, we can see that from the early 2000s until today, paid domestic work has drawn the interest of scholars, who analyze it from different perspectives. Just to mention a few of the contributions, we could name analyses of labor inequality in terms of working conditions, such as precarity and informality; perspectives that focus on social inequalities within and across genders; studies of care, emotions, and work; legal studies of legislation and norms related to this sector; and historical research. These studies show that the lack of massive organization in this sector is due to the particular characteristics of the occupation, such as the dispersed workplaces and isolation within employers' homes, as well as the burden of informality, the heterogeneity of working conditions, and workers' reluctance to identify with a strongly stigmatized type of employment. In addition, research on the complicated relationships between workers and employers has advanced knowledge about this occupation and about families.

The research to date demonstrates intersectional barriers, that is, the way that gender inequalities interact with class and race inequalities. Domestic work continues to employ women who are disadvantaged, which strengthens a hierarchical relationship between rich and poor women, and depending on the local context, between white populations and Indigenous or Black populations.

In this track we are looking to bring together studies of the unique problematics and dynamics that predominate in this occupational sector. Students and early-career researchers are encouraged to submit individual proposals, or propose panels (with at least one panelist who has a doctorate degree).


## **Professional Development Workshops for Emerging Researchers**


As part of the Congress, we will be providing professional development experiences for early-career researchers, including students.


We define "emerging researchers" as persons who are studying in a university, either at the undergraduate (Bachelors) or graduate level (Masters, PhD), and we also include those who have received their Masters or doctorate since 2016.

Emerging researchers can sign up for the following professional development workshops:



 **Workshop 1:** How to turn your dissertation into a book

 **Workshop 2:** Networking for early-career researchers

 **Workshop 3:** How to publish an academic journal article

 **Workshop 4:** How to pursue a graduate degree in Latin America

## Forms of Participation

### **individual presentations**

Proposals can include research (ongoing or published), as well as accounts from activists and domestic worker organizations.

Proposals must contain: **title; name; institutional affiliation of author(s); e-mail address; abstract of maximum 300 words.**

The approved individual proposals will be organized into panels by the coordinators of the tracks.

Undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, PhDs, activists, and union members can submit proposals.

### **Panel proposals**

Panels should include: **title; name of the organizers (maximum of two) and institutional affiliation; discussant (optional); short panel description (150 words); from 3 to 5 presentation abstracts (maximum 300 words) accompanied by the names of the authors, institutional affiliation and email address.**

Panels must include at least one person with a PhD or a trade unionist or activist.

### **Roundtable proposals**

Roundtables aim to generate a space for discussion of a specific topic, not in the form of papers, but to encourage debates suggested by the proponents. Tables can have 3 to 5 participants.

The proposal must include: **title; name of the organizer and participants; institutional affiliation; summary of the discussion theme (maximum 150 words).**

The roundtables must include at least one person with a PhD or a trade unionist or activist.



## **Conversations about publications or cultural products**

These discussions can be developed around books, edited books, special issues of academic journals, or cultural products (films, novels, works of art, television series, etc.), published in the last three years on the subject of domestic work. Proposals must include: **the reference of the book or other project to be presented; names and institutions of commentators, and commentators' emails.**

The format and moderation of the discussion is determined by the proposer(s). Undergraduate and graduate students, researchers, PhDs, activists, and union members can submit proposals.

All proposals can be submitted in **Spanish**, **Portuguese**, or **English**. However, at this time we can not guarantee English interpretation will be available during the event.

 **Proposals must be received by October 31.**

### **Important dates**

- 10/31/2021 • Proposals due**
- 12/01/2021 • Notice of acceptance**
- 02/15/2022 • Papers due**
- 02/01/2022 • Advance registration deadline**
- 03/20/2022 • Regular registration deadline**

### **Advance Registration** (*by February 1, 2022*)

<b>Participants from Latin America</b>		<b>Participants from other countries</b>	
Professors and researchers	20 USD	Professors and researchers	40 USD
Students (undergraduate and graduate)	5 USD	Students (undergraduate and graduate)	10 USD
Activists and union members	no charge	Activists and union members	no charge
Attendee	10 USD	Attendee	15 USD



## Regular Registration

### Participants from Latin America

Professors and researchers	40 USD
Students (undergraduate and graduate)	10 USD
Activists and union members	no charge
Attendee	15 USD

### Participants from other countries

Professors and researchers	60 USD
Students (undergraduate and graduate)	20 USD
Activists and union members	no charge
Attendee	25 USD