

PLATFORM-MEDIATED DOMESTIC WORK IN BRAZIL

Continuities and changes of an “old profession”

<http://dx.doi.org/10.25091/S01013300202600010003>

ANA CAROLINA BRITO BRANDÃO*

ABSTRACT

Domestic work in Brazil, deeply rooted in slavery, only saw an expansion of rights with Constitutional Amendment n. 72/2013. However, the exclusion of day labor domestic workers and the persistence of a neoliberal agenda have maintained conditions of precarity. The mediation of this kind of work by digital platforms has introduced new elements, such as algorithmic management. This study analyzes whether this mediation reconfigures or reproduces historical inequalities, based on focus groups and a workshop conducted with workers.

KEYWORDS: *paid domestic work; social reproduction; digital platforms; focus groups; Brazil*

Trabalho doméstico mediado por plataformas no Brasil: continuidades e mudanças de uma “velha profissão”

RESUMO

O trabalho doméstico no Brasil, com fortes raízes na escravidão, teve ampliação de direitos somente com a PEC n. 72/2013. Contudo, a exclusão das diaristas e a agenda neoliberal mantiveram a precarização. A intermediação desse tipo de trabalho pelas plataformas digitais introduziu novos elementos, como a gestão algorítmica. A pesquisa analisa se essa mediação reconfigura ou reitera desigualdades históricas, com base em grupos focais e oficina com trabalhadoras.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *trabalho doméstico remunerado; reprodução social; plataformas digitais; grupos focais; Brasil*

[*] State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ), Rio de Janeiro; Brazil. E-mail: anacarolina.bbrandão@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In this study, I seek to understand trends that may alter—or fail to alter—the social and historical relations that constitute paid domestic work in Brazil as it becomes integrated into digital platforms. Considering the particularities of the Brazilian social formation, I examine how platforms interact with pre-existing social and institutional structures, specifically whether they tend to reinforce them or

produce change, and whether their operations point to the emergence of new institutional arrangements. To this end, an exploratory qualitative study was conducted with the aim of investigating this phenomenon and identifying patterns and relationships that, in dialogue with historical data and theoretical analysis, may generate hypotheses and reflections for future research.

Focus groups (Gondim, 2003) were conducted with domestic workers who did not use platforms as a means of labor market insertion and with those who relied on these platforms to obtain work.¹ Our objective was to understand their perceptions, learning dynamics, and experiences regarding these new platform-mediated relations, while fostering an environment of collective reflection among individuals who did not previously know one another. In this setting, participants were able to elaborate and re-elaborate their responses through processes of intersubjective interaction.

The research problem stems from a diagnosis shared by the Emerging Political Economies Network, which points to a crisis in the neoliberal political order. For the Center for Critical Imagination (CCI-Cebrap), linked to the network, this crisis is best understood as a destabilization of the hegemonic bloc identified by Fraser (2022) as “progressive neoliberalism.” This order sought to reconcile the economic prescriptions of the Chicago School — associated with the dismantling of social policies and labor rights — with democratizing measures, such as the recognition of the rights of sexual, racial, and gender minorities. This destabilization was marked by the 2008 global financial crisis, triggered by speculation in the U.S. mortgage market, which led to protests in various parts of the world. One of its most notable consequences has been the rise of the far right through elections in countries with democratic constitutions. Among the Network’s objectives is the investigation of post-neoliberal paradigms that may emerge from this crisis. In this context, our contribution seeks to explore its effects on the world of work, focusing in particular on the new dynamics introduced by digital platforms.

The characterization of domestic work as an “old profession”² in the title of this article is drawn from one of the study’s participants, in response to a discussion about why official data indicate the aging of this occupational category. Domestic work has a long history in Brazil’s social formation and was one of the sectors most reliant on enslaved labor.³ Despite its historical centrality, domestic work was excluded from the major legal frameworks governing the formalization and recognition of labor rights in Brazil.

In 1943, the Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT) extended protection only to urban workers, with the aim of promoting industrialization. The 1988 Constitution — often referred to as the “Citizen

[1] I would like to thank Monise Picanço for her collaboration, both in reviewing this manuscript and in leading the focus groups and the workshop.

[2] Although the term “profession” is commonly associated with occupations requiring formal qualifications, the word originally used by the speaker was retained because it can also refer to extensive training.

[3] In 1872, nearly half of all enslaved people were employed in domestic service (Souza, 2023, p. 198), with a distribution of 38% men and 62% women. Based on the 1895 general census of the Republic of the United States of Brazil, Souza (2023) notes that shortly after abolition, 27% of the economically active population worked in domestic service. Over the following 50 years, this share declined significantly, reaching 5% by 1940. According to data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), drawn from the Continuous National Household Sample Survey (PNAD Continua), in 2022 there were 5.8 million people employed in paid domestic work. Of this total, 91.4% were women and 67.3% were Black.

[4] Law n. 5,859/1972 granted domestic workers certain rights, including registration in the employment record book, protection against dismissal during pregnancy, and inclusion in the social security system under the Organic Law of Social Security.

Constitution” due to its broad recognition of individual, social, and cultural rights, established in the context of democratization following the military dictatorship, — extended rights to rural workers but continued to exclude domestic workers from full access to fundamental rights and guarantees.⁴ Equal treatment was achieved only with the approval of Constitutional Amendment n. 72 in 2013, later regulated by Complementary Law n. 150/2015. This legislation defined domestic employment as work performed in a residential setting, without profit motive, for a person or family, in a continuous, subordinate, remunerated, and personal manner, for more than two days per week. By establishing a temporal criterion, the law effectively excluded daily domestic workers (i.e., day labor domestic workers) from formal employment, thereby reinforcing informality across the category. As a result, only 24.7% of domestic workers reported having a formal employment contract in 2022.

It can therefore be argued that paid domestic work has traversed a broad historical trajectory and undergone significant institutional changes, maintaining its relevance — particularly for women’s participation in the labor market — without achieving substantial gains in terms of rights and remuneration. In 1995, domestic work accounted for 17.3% of the female labor force. In 2019, this proportion declined to 14.3%, but rises to 17.9% among Black women (Pinheiro et al., 2020). Despite a gradual decrease in labor absorption, domestic work still represents nearly 6% of the workforce in Brazil.

At first glance, the gradual decline in its relative weight might suggest that its marginalization in the process of labor formalization reflects a vestige of an archaic colonial relationship, presumably on the verge of disappearing. However, following Francisco de Oliveira (2003), I argue that such “archaic” relations were incorporated into capitalist modernity in Brazil because they enabled low-cost social reproduction. According to Oliveira, Brazil’s rapid industrialization was marked by the absence of the structural conditions necessary to finance the service sector, a gap that was resolved “through the non-capitalist growth of the tertiary sector” (Oliveira, 2003, p. 38). The provision of these services outside the family required an infrastructure that cities lacked; thus, this gap was addressed “based on pure labor power, remunerated at very low levels” (Oliveira, 2003, p. 38).

Although he did not analytically examine paid domestic work, the sociologist notes in a footnote that “certain types of strictly personal services, provided directly to the consumer and even within families” (Oliveira, 2003, p. 104) also constitute — often in veiled form — mechanisms of exploitation that support capital accumulation. Thus, the systematic and institutional devaluation of domestic work in Brazil should be understood not in terms of neglect, invisibility, or

lack of importance for economic relations, but as a functional component of the symbiosis of “Brazilian capitalist modernity,” whose expansion depended on the social reproduction of the workforce without corporate or state investment.

This formulation resonates strongly with social reproduction theory, developed by Marxist feminists during the second wave of feminism in the 1970s, which sought to understand women’s oppression through an analytical framework that articulates production and reproduction — social processes separated under capitalism, yet constitutively intertwined in their effects on social reality. This field seeks to analyze the material bases, institutions, social practices, and subjects involved in the vital processes of gestation, formation, and maintenance of the human beings who constitute the labor force.

With the emergence of capitalism, reproductive activities became largely confined to the domestic sphere, carried out by women through non-market relations. This separation from the sphere of production fostered the perception that these were distinct and independent systems; however, social reproduction theory⁵ demonstrates that they in fact form integrated circuits, such that transformations in one sphere directly affect the other, and vice versa (Bhattacharya, 2023). They constitute a contradictory unity: in the sphere of production, profit tends to increase as the costs of reproduction are reduced; yet the precariousness of the conditions necessary for reproduction ultimately undermines the availability of the labor force responsible for generating surplus value.

Under neoliberalism, this contradiction intensifies, giving rise to what has become known as the “care crisis” (Fraser, 2023). This crisis can be understood as the paradox between the continuous need to replenish the labor force and the implementation of mechanisms that systematically weaken the primary structures through which reproductive work is carried out. At the same time, it represents a moment of historical opening for redefining the boundaries between these spheres (Fraser, 2023, p. 51). Fraser (2023) shows that, across different phases of capitalist accumulation, the organization of the reproductive sphere has shaped relations between the state and civil society, particularly in the search for institutional responses aimed at preventing systemic breakdown.

In countries with established welfare states, the care crisis has been driven by the dismantling of social policies and the large-scale entry of women — traditionally the main caregivers within families — into the labor market. According to Nadya Guimarães (2023), however, the care crisis in Brazil assumes a distinct configuration. The organization of social reproduction is marked by profound inequality and by the gendered and racialized hierarchies that structure the country’s formation.

[5] Since the emergence of the International Women’s Strike in 2017, a group of feminist scholars has renewed interest in social reproduction theory - an approach consolidated during the second wave of feminism in the 1970s through struggles for wages for domestic work - in order to analyze the so-called “care crisis,” which intensified following the austerity policies adopted after 2008. A key reference in this renewed body of work is Bhattacharya (2023), which brings together contributions from leading scholars in the field.

The absence of a consolidated welfare state has historically tied social reproduction to unpaid domestic labor within the family. Although the 1988 Constitution formally distributed responsibility for care among the family, the state, the market, and the community, fiscal constraints and weak public policies reinforced what Guimarães describes as “the familyist bias that has been the hallmark of our normative institutions. That is why the State continued to be represented as a complementary protagonist, activated only where the family faltered” (Guimarães, 2023, p. 221 ; my trans.).

From this perspective, the organization of social reproduction in Brazil can be understood as largely privatized and domesticated and, when commodified, carried out under informal and poorly remunerated conditions. In light of the global crisis of neoliberalism, it is important to emphasize that informalization and the super-exploitation of labor are not new phenomena within Brazil’s social formation. As Comin (2023) argues, countries such as Brazil — characterized by fragile labor protections, limited access to public services supporting social reproduction, and a large contingent of workers engaged in precarious or casual labor — offer fertile ground for the expansion of platform-based labor. Although the technological and organizational models of digital platforms originated in wealthier countries, the social and institutional conditions that enable their operation are more prevalent in peripheral contexts.

The dynamics of platformization have expanded into various service sectors, including delivery, ride-hailing, and, more recently, domestic cleaning and janitorial services (often categorized as location-based services).⁶ Although part of the hiring process occurs in digital environments, a significant portion unfolds in the physical space of cities. Platforms must therefore interact with local social and institutional structures, either reinforcing or transforming them. While applications for paid domestic work have been established for longer in the Global North, in Brazil they encountered a labor market historically structured by informality, racial and gender hierarchies, personal relationships, and highly unequal arrangements between domestic workers and employers.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to understand how these applications have become established in Brazil, what kinds of innovations they introduce through digital mediation, the norms and institutions they engage with, the extent to which they offer alternatives to the social relations that have historically shaped domestic work, and whether they effectively generate new practices and dynamics between domestic workers and “clients” — previously identified as “employers.” To this end, the article is organized into four sections, in addition to this introduction: the first examines the emergence of domestic work platforms

[6] This concept refers to platform-mediated, in-person work whose performance depends on local contextual conditions. For a more detailed definition, see Schmidt (2017).

in Brazil; the second discusses our methodological approach and the focus group dynamics; the third organizes the main findings into four analytical axes; and the final section offers concluding remarks.

DOMESTIC WORK PLATFORMS IN BRAZIL

To address domestic work platforms, one encounters conceptual frameworks that have been increasingly developed — particularly in the sociology of labor and labor law — under the categories of “uberization” and “platformization.”⁷ Abílio, Amorim, and Grohmann (2021, p. 26) argue that “uberization” refers to “a new type of management and control of the workforce, marked by the consolidation of on-demand work”. However, they caution that this definition should not lead to technological determinism, as the phenomenon intensifies trends inherent to capitalist development itself, such as the organization of dispersed workers and the consolidation of on-demand labor. On-demand work is defined as labor remunerated only for the effective time spent on production or service provision, thereby excluding periods of availability, travel, and preparation.

In the literature of the Global North, services contracted through platforms are often associated with the gig economy (with *gig* referring to an “odd job”), that is, temporary work performed between formal employment arrangements. As Schmidt (2017) notes, these are small-scale jobs carried out in individuals’ free time to generate supplementary income. In the Brazilian case, however, this concept does not adequately capture certain types of work that have been incorporated into platforms. In the focus groups, for instance, participants described trajectories of women who had worked in domestic service from a very young age, often beginning as assistants to their mothers and without ever holding a formal employment contract. Although informal, such work cannot be classified as a “side job,” as it does not function as a temporary supplement but rather as a primary and continuous form of labor.

The process of informalization, which under neoliberalism has expanded across both the Global South and North, is constitutive of labor markets in peripheral economies. On-demand work, the transfer of risks and costs to workers, forms of subordinated self-management, and the prevalence of low-skilled and low-paid occupations are typical features of this context (Abílio; Amorim; Grohmann, 2021). An analytical focus on the periphery is therefore particularly useful for understanding the dynamics and trajectories of this phenomenon.

According to Abílio, Amorim, and Grohmann (2021, p. 30), “informalization expresses the loss of stable, contractually established, socially agreed-upon forms of rules governing work”. From this perspective, platform-mediated labor may, in some cases, limited intro-

[7] There are both theoretical and political differences in the use of these two terms. For an overview of this debate, see Rodrigues (2024, p. 73). Here, we adopt “platformization” to emphasize its distinction from the “Uber” business model.

duce forms of formalization for workers who previously entered the labor market as daily domestic workers — albeit without any normative idealization of this process. Historically, the work of day laborers has been organized through personal, direct, and informal arrangements, negotiated individually between workers and employers. By contrast, platform-mediated labor requires acceptance of standardized “Terms and Conditions of Use,” typically structured as adhesion contracts that define the rules governing the relationship and can be unilaterally modified by the company. In this sense, a new actor is introduced into the labor relationship, responsible for establishing rules and monitoring compliance.

In Brazil, according to Andrada et al. (2023, p. 12), there was a significant increase in applications for the management and coordination of care work from 2015 onward —, encompassing not only, domestic cleaning services, but also care for older adults and children - with a peak in 2020. This period coincided with rising levels of poverty and informality in domestic service occupations (Dieese, 2023, p. 13). In 2013, 62.5% of workers were monthly employees, compared to 37.5% daily workers; by 2023, these proportions had shifted to 56.5% and 43.6%, respectively. Conjunctural factors such as the 2015-2016 economic recession, the 2017 labor reform, and the 2020 health crisis contributed to this transformation.

The workers who participated in our research were registered on the platforms Parafuzo, Donamaid, and Tidmo, founded in 2014, 2017, and 2018, respectively. It is common for workers to have experience across multiple platforms or to migrate between them in response to changing conditions. In selecting participants, we focused on platforms that employ algorithmic management — that is, the extraction and combination of user data — not only to match supply and demand, but also to structure the labor process itself. This includes the determination of service pricing, quality control, the standardization of tasks according to the type of cleaning contracted, the quantification of required working time, and the definition of breaks for meals or rest. These platforms typically claim not to employ domestic workers directly, presenting themselves instead as technology companies operating in a marketplace format to facilitate the matching of supply and demand.⁸

Each platform maintains its own “Terms and Conditions of Use,” with varying degrees of regulation over the labor process. According to our interlocutors, Parafuzo,⁹ for instance, requires workers to watch instructional videos explaining how these rules operate, followed by a quiz designed to assess comprehension. Although these regulations formally apply to both service providers and clients, only workers are subject to this form of active monitoring.

[8] Some apps, such as GetNinjas, match supply and demand but allow clients and service providers to negotiate the terms of service privately.

[9] Given its prominent position in the market, Parafuzo is frequently used here as an example, as its business model is among the most widely adopted.

At Donamaid, for example, services are contracted based on a number of hours, without specifying the tasks to be performed. By contrast, on platforms such as Parafuzo¹⁰ and Tidmo, services are defined by the type of cleaning contracted, which determines a predefined set of tasks. Workers are instructed not to perform activities beyond the contracted time or service scope and must report any such requests through the application. Penalties — including fines, temporary suspension, and account deactivation — may be imposed for delays, absences, non-compliance with platform rules, or low user ratings. Each platform also establishes cancellation fees, which vary according to the notice period provided prior to the scheduled service.

These companies also monitor quality through rating systems, typically ranging from 0 to 5 stars, assigned at the end of each service, along with client comments reporting their experience. For example, according to the terms presented by the Parafuzo platform, account suspension may occur “in the event of a score lower than 4.60 in the categories of PUNCTUALITY AND FRIENDLINESS (Parafuzo, 2025), calculated as the average of the last 100 (one hundred) evaluations.”

Furthermore, a defining feature of this type of platform is what the literature refers to as “gamification,” that is, the use of rewards, benefits, and incentives to encourage workers to achieve specific targets and improve their ranking within the platform. On Parafuzo, for instance, workers can participate in a “Categories Program,” which classifies them as “bronze,” “silver,” or “gold” according to their level of engagement. One of the benefits offered is the waiver of the monthly subscription fee of R\$28 upon reaching the gold category.

In addition to the monthly subscription fee, Parafuzo is remunerated through a commission that ranges from 0% to 30% of the amount paid by the client for each mediated service, “depending on the dynamics of each contract.” According to its “Terms and Conditions of Use,” the price of the service is determined algorithmically, taking into account “the tasks contracted, estimated execution time, complexity, and the need for geographical displacement of the professional, as well as other related conditions.” Donamaid, by contrast, states in its terms that it charges only a usage fee to service providers for each contract arranged by clients. Despite the formal specification of these rules, participants in our study frequently reported difficulties in understanding how service prices are set and how much they actually receive.

Through this system of algorithmic management, several new elements in the organization of domestic work can be identified. First, it seeks to centralize and coordinate the labor process of a large and dispersed workforce. In Brazil, considering only daily domestic workers, this market comprises approximately 4.4 million individuals.

[10] In the case of Parafuzo, during registration, the domestic worker indicates the types of cleaning services she is available to perform. The platform offers four types of cleaning, in addition to ironing: regular cleaning, pre-move cleaning, post-construction cleaning, express cleaning, and commercial cleaning. It only assigns jobs that match her profile.

Although domestic service agencies have attempted to manage these labor relations since the mid-twentieth century, digital technologies enable broader and more agile forms of control. At the same time, the regulation imposed through adhesion contracts appears to introduce a degree of impersonality and automation into labor relations that have historically been structured through personal and private agreements — agreements that are negotiated or imposed depending on the intersubjective dynamics between workers and employers.

THE EXPERIENCE OF FOCUS GROUPS

Three in-person meetings were held at the headquarters of the Brazilian Center for Analysis and Planning (Cebap) with participants residing in the São Paulo metropolitan area. Participants were recruited based on criteria defined in advance by the research design, in order to identify the types of platforms to be analyzed and to ensure regional, age, and racial diversity.^[11] Initially, we aimed to include six participants per group,^[12] although small variations occurred due to unforeseen circumstances on the day of the meetings. In both groups, we established a minimum of two participants under 29 years of age, in order to capture the experiences of younger workers in these processes. We also specified that at least three participants in each group should self-identify as Black, reflecting the predominant racial composition of domestic work in Brazil and ensuring that this dimension was incorporated into the analysis.

For the group of workers who used digital platforms, we selected only platforms that employed algorithmic management not only to match supply and demand for cleaning services, but also to structure the labor process through features such as tracking, task standardization, and evaluation systems. Platforms that functioned solely as classified listings or advertising spaces — without mediating or monitoring the subsequent stages of work — were excluded from the study.

In the group of participants who did not use platforms as a means of labor market entry, we sought to include at least two workers with formal employment contracts and approximately two years of tenure, as well as two who worked predominantly as daily domestic workers. The third meeting — a workshop, described later — was composed of participants selected from the two previous groups.

The initial plan was to bring together six women: three platform users and three non-users. However, due to a health issue, one of the platform users was unable to attend. The remaining two were selected because they had either reported situations particularly relevant for further analysis or demonstrated detailed knowledge of

[11] To ensure that these criteria were adequately met, we hired the Center for Consulting and Research (CEAP) to assist with participant recruitment.

[12] All participants received financial compensation for their participation.

how platforms function, justifying their participation in the next stage of the research. In the non-user group, we included a salaried worker with a formal employment contract of approximately one and a half years, who also had prior experience using platforms, as well as daily domestic workers (i.e., day labor domestic workers) with distinct profiles. The first, a 34 year-old mother of three with over ten years of experience, reported that since childhood she had accompanied her mother to workplaces where she performed domestic services. The second, aged 57 and single, had over twenty years of experience in domestic work. This composition allowed for the inclusion of diverse trajectories among domestic workers not mediated by platforms.

Prior to the meetings, we administered a questionnaire to collect participant profiles, including income, place of residence, marital status, racial self-identification, family composition, presence of children or dependents, age, length of time working in domestic services, type of contract (exclusively through a platform or not; monthly or daily rate), registration as a MEI (Individual Microentrepreneur),¹³ and social security contributions, among other variables.

The first focus group, held on July 23, 2024, included only domestic workers who used digital platforms as a means of entering the labor market. Seven participants took part. One had worked as a daily domestic worker for over twenty years and had been using the Tidmo platform for two years (with MEI registration, as required by the platform), having previously worked on Parafuzo for six years. Another had seven years of experience as a cleaner and had joined Donamaid four months earlier to supplement her income. Two additional participants were registered on Donamaid: one had worked as a cleaner for ten years, remained on the platform for four years, and, after being blocked following a report of sexual harassment during work, migrated to Parafuzo. The other participants registered on Parafuzo had been active on the platform for two, four, and five years, respectively; the last worker amassed ten years of experience as a daily domestic worker.

On July 25, 2024, we conducted the second focus group with seven domestic workers who did not use digital platforms as a means of labor market entry. Of these participants, three were live-in domestic workers and four were daily domestic workers. Within the live-in workers, one had ten years of experience; another had five years of formal employment and had previously worked as a daily domestic worker; and the third had worked as a live-in domestic worker for one and a half years, after two years using the Parafuzo platform. For the four daily domestic workers, years of experience ranged from two to twenty years. The composition of the focus groups is detailed in the tables below, with fictitious names used to ensure anonymity.

[13] MEI is a Portuguese acronym for *Microempreendedor Individual* (Individual Microentrepreneur), a simplified legal framework for the formalization of small businesses.

[14] All names are pseudonyms used to preserve participants' anonymity.

[15] "Pardo" is a self-declared race/color classification system used in the Brazilian census by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, (IBGE) to indicate mixed ethnic ancestry (white, Indigenous, and African); However, as a result of the struggle of Black movements and due to their very similar social and racial conditions, people who self-identify as "Pardo" are officially included as part of the Black population by the IBGE and public policies. I would like to thank Rhaysa Ruas for suggesting that I keep the term in Portuguese— as it lack a direct translation into English — and for reviewing this footnote explaining this choice. I would also like to thank Camila Fernandes for suggesting that I add "brown" in parentheses after the Portuguese term to provide an immediate reference for English-speaking readers.

[16] All names are pseudonyms used to preserve participants' anonymity.

TABLE 1
Domestic Workers – App Users

Name ¹⁴	Age	Race/Color	Marital Status	Dependent Children	Time in Paid Domestic Work	Registered Platform	Time on Platform	Specificities
Dolores	37	<i>Parda</i> ¹⁵ (Brown)	Married	1	7 years	Donamaid and Famyle	5 years	Contributes to Social Security (INSS)
Tânia	28	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Single	2	10 years	Parafuzo (previously Donamaid and Mary Help)	5 months	N/A
Quênia	30	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Single	3	4 years	Parafuzo (previously Donamaid and Mary Help)	2 years	N/A
Carina	38	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Married	1	11 years	Parafuzo	5 years	N/A
Sandra	49	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Divorced	0	10 years	Parafuzo (previously Mary Help)	5 years	Contributes to Social Security (INSS)
Sônia	38	White	Single	1	+ 20 years	Tidmo (previously Parafuzo)	8 years	Registered as a Micro-Entrepreneur (MEI)
Olivia	25	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Married	3	7 years	Donamaid	4 months	N/A

Source: Personal Archive.

TABLE 2
Day and Monthly Workers – Non-app users

Name	Age	Race/Color	Marital Status	Dependent Children	Time in Paid Domestic Work	Labor Relation	Time in this labor relation	Specificities
Diva ¹⁶	48	Black	Married	0	10 years	Formal employment (CLT)	1.5 years	Contributes to Social Security (INSS)
Teresa	46	Black	Married	3	12 years	Day worker		N/A
Queren	34	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Married	3	10 years	Day worker		N/A
Cora	57	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Single	0	+ 20 years	Day worker		Contributes to Social Security (INSS)
Serena	37	Black	Married	2	4 years	Monthly	1.5 years	Worked for Parafuzo for 2 years. Contributes to Social Security (INSS)
Sueli	26	<i>Parda</i> (Brown)	Married	1	5 years	Formal employment (CLT)	2 years and 2 months	Contributes to Social Security (INSS)
Odete	35	Black	Married	2	2.5 years	Day worker		N/A

Source: Personal Archive.

Since my aim was to observe how domestic workers respond to different situations and conditions across various forms of employment (with or without platforms; monthly or daily arrangements), I developed an interview script (Appendix) with broader questions that could be adapted to these different contexts. Accordingly, the same script was used in both focus groups. The questions addressed topics such as the influence of place of residence on access to work opportunities and pricing; time allocation and strategies for securing jobs; service evaluation; the determination of tasks, working hours, and service pricing; costs related to food and transportation; situations involving absences and delays; experiences with control practices, discrimination, and racism, as well as reporting mechanisms or forms of recourse; modes of communication and organization among paid domestic workers; and issues related to health and safety in the workplace.

In the third meeting, we conducted a workshop designed to bring together, in equal proportions, workers who used platforms and those who did not. However, due to a last-minute unforeseen circumstance, only two platform users were present. The participation of a monthly worker with prior experience using platforms nonetheless contributed to maintaining a balanced discussion. The workshop included Tânia, Quênia, Cora, Queren, and Serena (see profiles in Tables 1 and 2). In the first part of the session, I introduced a video drawn from the Instagram page of a domestic worker influencer, Geisa Almeida — mentioned in one of the focus groups — to prompt discussion on the delimitation of tasks, a recurring theme in both groups.

Subsequently, I provided anonymized excerpts from participants' statements collected during the previous meetings, in order to observe their reactions and identify points of recognition or disagreement in relation to the topics discussed. I also displayed institutional images and statements from one of the platforms analyzed, to assess whether participants felt represented or included in these portrayals. Finally, I introduced a quotation from the sociologist Lélia Gonzalez as a way of reflecting on continuities and ruptures in the social relations that have historically structured domestic work.

FINDINGS FROM THE FOCUS GROUPS AND THEIR INTERACTIONS WITH SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL STRUCTURES

In what follows, I present some of the themes that generated the most discussion in the focus groups, relating them to the social and institutional structures that shape the relationships constituting paid domestic work in Brazil. My aim is to understand the condi-

tions that platforms encounter upon entering this context, how they engage with these circumstances, and whether they introduce new parameters or reinforce existing ones.

Limits and Support

In both focus groups, discussions about task boundaries strongly mobilized participants, with several accounts of requests considered abusive by clients or employers. In the words of one interlocutor who has worked for over twenty years as a daily domestic worker outside of platform-based work: “I’m tired of saying... this isn’t something a day laborer does, but they don’t even care. Many times, they take advantage of us.” The clear delineation of domestic work tasks remains a central concern. According to Angela Davis (2016, p. 239), this is one of the oldest demands of domestic workers’ unions in the United States. Davis emphasizes that organized workers reject the role of “substitute housewife,” since “the obligations of a housewife are endless and undefined”.

In the workshop, one of the statements that generated significant debate came from a live-in domestic worker, who remarked: “the live-in maid, at least in my case, becomes a member of the family.” Some participants interpreted this statement as naïve, while others emphasized that it depended largely on the specific relationship established. One interviewee, who has worked as a domestic worker for ten years outside platform-based arrangements, recounted the experience of her mother, who maintained a forty-year relationship with the family for whom she began working at the age of eight:

Today we call her former employer “grandma,” they consider us their grandchildren, the woman’s daughter is my godmother, and my mother is 60 years old. She left Minas Gerais and went to Salvador to work with them when she was eight years old. Eight years old... So, like I say, she was really lucky. Because they didn’t just take advantage of her... Because back then it was slavery, right? And even more so because she was Black... It was slavery. But in her case, she was lucky. But this whole idea that “it’s good to be a live-in maid because you become part of the family” is very relative. It’s very relative indeed. It’s about being lucky, having God’s help.

This account reveals the paradoxes that have historically structured domestic service in Brazil. The relationship perceived as positive by the interviewee and her mother was, in fact, built upon the exploitation of child labor. This experience contrasts with another later episode, when her mother, already an adult, worked for a different household. According to the interviewee, her mother became so devoted to that family that she made significant personal sacrifices and neglected her own health, leading to a late diagnosis of cancer:

She came to São Paulo when I was one year old — I'm now 28, so that was 27 years ago — and worked with the same family. She would leave one job and go to another, and another... until she discovered she had cancer. When that happened, people distanced themselves from her. That was four years ago, and no one ever helped her, not even with basic necessities... Because she would say, "I have to go to work, I have to pick up so-and-so's child from school... I'm not going to the doctor." She was in pain but didn't take care of herself because she wanted to keep taking care of others. And she thought very highly of them. Very highly indeed.

This participant then concluded: "we are only valued as long as we are serving, right? You can work for 50 years in the same household, and as long as you are there serving, you are treated as part of the family — you are everything. Just wait until you get sick, and you'll see." Lélia Gonzalez (1984), in her analysis of domestic workers in the formation of Brazilian society, refers to the figure of the *mucama*¹⁷ during slavery. Because of her presence in the private sphere of the household and her involvement in intimate family life, the domestic worker not recognized as a worker, but rather as a body available for all forms of service.

In this context, the standardization of tasks through platforms emerges as a relevant element, although not all platforms offer this functionality. The explicit definition of tasks as a means of delimiting responsibilities was positively received by some participants, as illustrated in the following statement:

[...] through the app, it works like this: they tell you what your tasks are. What you will do and what you won't do. Whether it's heavy cleaning or light cleaning. So, through the app, I know what I'm going to do in the house. In private work, I don't. In private work, everything has to be negotiated.

However, refusing such requests is not straightforward, since a low rating can reduce a worker's score, potentially leading to suspension, deactivation, or downgrading within the platform's ranking system, with consequent loss of benefits. Some participants emphasized that the evaluation mechanism itself places them in a vulnerable position when refusing tasks, as illustrated in the following statement: "But now the problem is the rating, right? If you don't do it, they'll go there and give you a low rating." In a similar vein, one participant noted: "Sometimes I prefer to take private jobs because you already know the employers, you already know the house. The problem with taking jobs through the app is that you don't know."

Platforms do provide support mechanisms. In situations where clients requested tasks beyond the agreed-upon scope, several accounts highlighted the platform's relative effectiveness in offering support.

[17] A "Mucama" was an enslaved Black woman who worked inside the house, usually caring for domestic tasks and children in colonial Brazil. The term is strongly connected to Brazil's history of slavery and racial inequality.

As one interviewee observed, “It’s because they profit from it.” Another added, “Yes, if you speak up, they immediately try to charge for what you did.” The two accounts below, from different participant, illustrate situations in which contacting platform support protected them from being assigned tasks beyond their contracted scope:

*There was one time he hired me just to wash dishes and take out the trash—for 50. But when I got there, he wanted me to do everything. I looked at him and said, “No, you hired me to wash dishes and take out the trash.” Then he said, “I hired a cleaner.” I said, “Okay, I’ll talk to the platform.” I explained that he wanted a full day’s work, which was not what I had been contracted for. They told me: “No, you should only do what you were hired to do. If he doesn’t allow you to do even that, you can leave and we will contact you.” Then he threatened me, yelled at me, insulted me. And the Platform^{*18} even told me, “If he becomes aggressive, you can activate the emergency button.” (Participant 1)*

[18] References to specific platforms in participants’ accounts have been replaced with “Platform^{*}” or “App^{*}” to preserve anonymity.

When I got there, it was an older man whose wife had Alzheimer’s disease, and she was very aggressive. He wanted to go to the pharmacy and asked me to stay with her. I said no, because if something happened, it wouldn’t be my responsibility—I was working through the app. He insisted, saying she would be fine. But she started shouting repeatedly, saying I was a “stranger.” I stepped outside and contacted the platform through the app. I explained the situation. They supported me, contacted him, and dismissed me from the job. I didn’t finish cleaning, but I still got paid. (Participant 2)

In other situations, workers themselves, once familiar with platform rules, used the service descriptions to refuse additional tasks without requiring platform intervention. The following accounts illustrate how workers mobilize these contractual definitions in interactions with clients:

When my client said, “I pay you x,” I replied, “You pay x, but I don’t receive x. I receive what the app pays me for the tasks described here. If you want something different, you need to adjust it with the platform. I was hired for this.” (Participant 1)

I told him I was finishing, and he said, “Then I want you to remove the tabs from these cans—I’m collecting them for donation.” I said, “I’m sorry, but I’m not going to do that.” Then he asked me to clean the fan. I said, “That’s not in the app.” I showed him the task description and explained that, if he wanted those services, he should have included them. He said, “I didn’t know it worked like that—I thought I hired you, paid you, and you did whatever I wanted.” (Participant 2)

In situations that did not involve tasks beyond those contracted, however, platform support proved less effective. Although all platforms maintain policies promoting gender equality and combating harassment and discrimination, some reports described cases in which workers were temporarily blocked while incidents were investigated. As one interviewee explained:

Yes, there is support, but in these cases they investigate first and only then respond. Imagine — we experience racism, and it takes a week. Meanwhile, you are blocked and cannot get any work. They listen to the client first, even if we have already filed a police report. Then they respond, apologize, explain what happened, and everything returns to normal — as if nothing had happened.

In the reported case of racism, it is notable that the worker avoided confronting the client or immediately calling the police, fearing that this might lead to being blocked by the platform. Instead, she attempted to leave the residence, as “abandoning work” would result only in a warning, which she believed would not lead to suspension. However, when she attempted to leave, the client tried to stop her, prompting her to call the police:

On the app, I am already marked as having a disability, because there are tasks I cannot perform. Then she asked me to scrub grout in the animal area. I said, “I can’t do that — I can’t stay on my knees for long.” She replied, “But how do you work then? Black women have to be strong. You were made to work.” I went to the bathroom and reported it through the app. They told me I could press the emergency button. I said no — I didn’t want to escalate it. Then they said I could call the police, because it was a case of racism. I hesitated, because if she left a negative review, I could be blocked before the platform resolved the case. I said, “I’m leaving.” But she tried to stop me from leaving the house, so I called the police. I had to file a report. I was blocked for a week, but with the police report they reinstated my account earlier.

In another case, a worker reported experiencing sexual harassment while performing a service arranged through the app. She recorded the incident on her phone and left, but the client attempted to prevent her from exiting the building. As a result, her account was suspended for 30 days, leading her to switch platforms and pursue legal action:

I went in, and the man kept asking me personal questions about my life — whether I was single, making comments about my body. I recorded everything, let him say whatever he wanted. Then I contacted the app’s support, and they blocked me for 30 days. They didn’t provide any support, so I filed a lawsuit. Because I’m working through the app — what if something worse

had happened? The man harassed me, and I was the one who got blocked because he complained that I left before finishing the job. He even tried to stop me from leaving the building.

Another worker recounted that when seeking support to report verbal abuse from a client, she discovered that this was the third complaint involving the same person. She believes this prior history contributed to her case being taken seriously, although she was still blocked for ten days:

I've had a client who was stressed and wanted to yell. I reported it through the app and said I was leaving. Then they checked and realized that this client had already mistreated other workers. That helped me, because there was already a history of complaints. But even so, until they verified everything, I was without work for about ten days.

Following a workplace accident, one worker reported that she was unable to complete the job and was paid only for the hours worked. Reflecting on this experience, she stated: “So now I’ve learned — if I get hurt, I won’t say anything. I’ll just deal with it myself.”

I've been injured before, but I managed to leave. Then they deducted my pay. I fell from a ladder, hurt both knees — I couldn't walk. It was serious. I thought, this isn't going to work... And in the end, you only get paid for the hours you worked. I really couldn't continue because I had injured both my legs.

Another interviewee reported a similar workplace accident while working through the app. Although she was not penalized, she attributed this outcome to the support she received from the client, rather than from the platform:

The person who supported me was the resident himself. He took me to the hospital, stayed with me, helped me through everything. The app didn't penalize me, but I think that was because of the client. I believe he reported that I had completed the job. The app didn't provide any support at all. It was the client who helped me with everything.

The presence of a third party in paid domestic work relations — namely, the platform — appears, in some cases, to limit situations perceived by workers as abusive, particularly when clients treat them as bodies available to perform any task. However, situations that do not involve tasks beyond those contracted do not seem to receive the same level of support from the platforms. Workers report being treated with suspicion and having to prove instances of harassment or racism

in order to regain access to their accounts and return to work. In this sense, platform mediation proves ineffective when clients violate the rules. Customers continue to benefit from the racial and gender hierarchies that have historically structured these relations, mobilizing them to control workers and subject them to their expectations and demands.

Control Mechanisms and Sanctions

Another recurring form of punishment in the platform environment is the issuance of fines. When asked about what happens in cases of absence or lateness due to unforeseen circumstances or illness, participants in the focus group composed of service providers who did not use platforms described these situations as negotiable and generally not harmful to the working relationship. As one monthly-paid domestic worker explained: “I let them know. Thank God, they are very understanding. They know I don’t miss work for no reason. If I say I’m feeling unwell, it’s because I really am.” A daily domestic worker stated: “If something happens, I just reschedule.” This was echoed by another participant who had been a monthly employee for a year and a half but previously worked as a daily domestic worker: “The good thing about being a day worker is that it offers flexibility. I’ve never had a problem. When I needed to reschedule, there was no issue.”

It was only later in the discussion — when addressing employers’ control over workers’ personal lives — that participants shared accounts of embarrassing or conflictive situations experienced by colleagues or relatives. One participant reported that a friend had to miss work due to dengue fever and was told by her employer: “But is it really dengue, or is it alcohol?” Another participant recounted that, when her mother was hospitalized, her own employers were understanding, whereas her sister — who worked as a caregiver — was reprimanded: “Her boss said, ‘Did your mother really get sick, or did you make it up?’ They had no idea what we went through — my mother was in the ICU. [...] My sister didn’t go back. She lost her job because she didn’t show up.”

In platform-mediated work, by contrast, any absence or lateness may result in a fine, regardless of justification (“even with a doctor’s note,” as one participant emphasized), if the platform is not notified within the established timeframe. Participants attempted to explain how these fines are applied. Although the details varied, their accounts suggest a rigid system with little flexibility, as illustrated below:

If it’s 6 p.m. and I haven’t canceled, I think I pay 20% of the daily rate. If it’s at night and the job is the next morning, I think I pay 50%. If I cancel in the morning for an afternoon job, then I pay 100% of the daily rate... I think you can cancel at the last minute three times. After that, you get blocked.

Participants also discussed the app's use of geolocation to monitor punctuality and ensure availability throughout the contracted service period. Platforms allow a limited tolerance for delays; if this threshold is exceeded, the client may cancel the service. Workers therefore depend on the client's willingness to accept delays, often negotiating directly via text messages: "Some accept it, others don't. So you either manage to arrive on time, or the job is canceled and you still have to pay."

Another participant noted: "I was once 35 minutes late, but the client was very flexible." At the same time, platforms do not allow workers to leave early, even when all contracted tasks have been completed. As a result, workers often seek additional tasks to fill the remaining time: "You can leave up to 35 minutes before the scheduled time. If it's less than that, they start asking why you're leaving early." One participant expressed frustration at not being able to leave to buy food, prompting others to comment: "You can order something or bring it with you, but you can't leave the workplace."

In classifying types of services contracted through digital platforms, Schmidt (2017) argues that gig work performed by a designated worker in a specific physical location entails greater personal risks. To mitigate these risks, platforms deploy control mechanisms intended to build trust on the client's side. In the case of services performed within the home — a private and intimate space — this distrust is even more pronounced, leading platforms to intensify tracking and surveillance. However, the risks involved do not fall exclusively on clients; they are equally borne by workers, who are exposed to unfamiliar individuals and environments in each service. Despite this, there is no equivalent system of surveillance or control directed at clients, whose evaluations are neither publicly available nor accessible to workers.

Everyday Forms of Resistance

The very configuration of domestic work — carried out within private households — poses additional obstacles to collective organization, as it limits opportunities for regular interaction among workers to discuss working conditions and articulate shared demands.¹⁹ In this context, social networks have provided alternative channels for communication and the circulation of grievances and aspirations. In addition to digital content creators who are domestic workers, such as Geisa on Instagram, there are also Facebook groups, as noted by Andrada et al. (2023), which have become important spaces for exchanging experiences.

In our focus groups, when asked about spaces for communication or collective organization, participants who did not use platforms referred primarily to social media, noting that they follow discus-

[19] Despite these challenges, domestic workers' unions remain active. In Brazil, one example is the National Federation of Domestic Workers (FENATRAD), founded in 1997.

sions but rarely comment or actively participate. Among those who used platforms, we identified the creation of a WhatsApp group in response to issues arising from platform-mediated work.

According to one interviewee, the platform initially created a group including both workers and company representatives, intended to gather input on specific issues. These meetings or consultations typically followed closed agendas. From this initial group, workers exchanged contact information and created a parallel group without platform representatives. Within this space, they coordinated their positions and developed strategies for presenting their demands when invited to participate in consultations. As one interviewee explained, it was necessary to align their perspectives in advance in order to be heard:

In the next meeting we're going to talk about this, we can expand on that, so it can't just be one person speaking. Because in these meetings or live sessions, usually two or three people speak more and the others just agree. Everyone needs to speak so that things can actually change.

One participant reported being invited twice to take part in live events hosted by the platform. On one occasion, the topic was the working conditions. She described feeling silenced by platform representatives when attempting to express her views: "When I started speaking, they just said, 'that's not the point.'" After this experience, she reported not being invited to participate again.

Regarding platform tracking and real-time monitoring, another participant described a tactic she uses to circumvent geolocation surveillance:

When I arrive at a client's place, I have to register my arrival. I check in, then I turn off location services. I actually use two phones, because the App only works on Android. Then I turn off my location and do what I need to do. I always ask the client, "Is there anything else you need?" If they say no and let me go, I explain that I'm not supposed to leave before the scheduled time. Like yesterday — I finished in three hours, but I was supposed to stay until eight at night. It doesn't make sense to stay there doing nothing. The client said, "No, you can go, I'll give you a good rating." Then, around 7:30 or 8:00, I turn my location back on at home. If they ask, I say I didn't have internet and was using Wi-Fi at home. Because I can't ask the client for Wi-Fi. So I always use that excuse.*

Performing domestic work within private households presents additional obstacles to collective organizing, as the liberal tradition structuring relations between the state and society imposes limits on oversight and intervention by public authorities. Furthermore, given the subordination produced by racial and gender hierarchies

in Brazil's social formation, workers' accounts and actions in conflicts with employers are often met with distrust and presumed culpability. Even so, resistance persists in everyday practices. The tactics described above illustrate the forms of agency mobilized by domestic workers, as well as the collective strategies they develop to confront exploitation and injustice within this new space of sociability mediated by platforms.

An "Old Profession" and Its Contemporary Contradictions

In the interview script, I included a question designed to prompt reflection on why statistics indicate that paid domestic work is an "aging" occupation. Currently, more than 85% of workers are over 30 years old. Many participants attributed this to increased access to education among younger generations, or to a lack of interest in what they described as "hard work." At the same time, several participants compared domestic work to other low-skilled occupations in Brazil, emphasizing that it can offer higher pay and greater flexibility than jobs often considered more prestigious. This comparison emerged in both focus groups.

In the statement below, the first participant contrasts the working conditions of domestic work with the returns it offers relative to other forms of employment. She is followed by another participant who reported leaving a stable job as an administrative assistant after becoming a mother; working as a daily domestic worker, she now earns more and is better able to reconcile paid work with childcare responsibilities. In the same group, another domestic worker described a similar trajectory, having previously worked as a sales supervisor.

It's really hard work. Sometimes my back hurts so much I can barely stand it. But it pays well. Today, the pay for a day worker or a monthly worker is good compared to the job market, like working in a shopping mall or in telemarketing. [...] I have a degree, even a postgraduate degree in administration. I worked for over ten years in the corporate world, but I left after I had my daughter. Why? Because as a day worker I have the flexibility to choose my days and hours — something I didn't have in an office. I had to work Monday to Friday, regular business hours, and there wasn't much flexibility. Now I have that flexibility, and I actually earn more than I did as an administrative assistant. So for me it's more profitable, more rewarding. I can spend more time with my daughter and still earn more. Of course, I don't have benefits — I don't have severance pay or social security — but I end up contributing on my own.

This point warrants further reflection, as it highlights important characteristics of the Brazilian labor market. These accounts point to the heterogeneity of labor market insertion, which cannot be understood through a simple dichotomy between formal and informal work.

Rather, the Brazilian labor market is characterized by varying degrees of formalization that do not correspond to a linear relationship between formal status, the guarantee of rights, working conditions, and levels of remuneration.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Digital location-based work platforms depend significantly on local conditions for their expansion. Their consolidation in the market is closely linked to the capacity of the institutional and regulatory frameworks governing the services they intermediate to adapt or be reshaped. Paid domestic work in Brazil has historically been structured through interpersonal and informal relationships, often based on trust and referrals. In many cases, employment terms are negotiated directly between worker and employer under highly unequal conditions.

The late extension of labor rights to domestic workers has not substantially altered this arrangement. Daily domestic workers have remained largely excluded from legal protection, as they were not fully covered by the legislation regulating domestic work. As a result, this occupation continues to be marked by dynamics of exploitation and forms of violence that are rendered invisible within the private sphere of the household.

The explicit definition of rules by platforms, along with the provision of support channels, may contribute to introducing a degree of formalization into domestic work. In particular, the delineation of tasks has the potential to impose limits on client practices often perceived as abusive by workers. Notably, this feature resonates with a longstanding demand of organized domestic workers, who contest the notion of the “substitute housewife,” characterized by undefined and potentially unlimited obligations.

At the same time, however, platforms are unable to disrupt the racial and gender hierarchies that have historically structured this occupation. When called upon to intervene in cases of harassment or discrimination, platform support systems often reinforce a presumption of worker culpability — a stance shaped by the racist and sexist structures underlying these labor relations. As reported by participants, in situations of conflict with clients, distrust is directed almost exclusively toward workers, who must provide evidence while their accounts are suspended pending investigation.

By positioning themselves as innovative actors grounded in algorithmic management, domestic work platforms operate as intermediaries in a specific service environment in which interactions are governed by rules defined and enforced by the platform. Formally, this mediation function is intended to ensure compliance by all parties.

Assigned editor: Renata Francisco.

Received for publication
on June 30, 2025.

Approved for publication
on December 10, 2025.

NOVOS ESTUDOS

CEBRAP

134, jan. - abr. 2026
pp. 1-27

DATA AVAILABILITY

The data extracted from the digital platforms mentioned in these study are available at the addresses presented in the bibliographic references, while the interviews conducted are stored in a private archive.

STATEMENT OF THE USE OF AI

No AI tools were used.

FINANCING

The article was funded by Center for Critical Imagination: political economy e cidadania/Cebrap with resources from the Open Society Foundations (OSF) between march 2024 and february 2025.

In practice, however, disciplinary mechanisms are disproportionately directed at workers.

Thus, while platforms establish standardized procedures and assume monitoring functions, this arrangement appears to confer a limited degree of formalization on labor relations historically characterized by informality — without any corresponding recognition of an employment relationship or extension of labor rights. This mode of formalization, despite introducing rules to regulate the labor process, does not necessarily translate into greater protection for workers. Although platforms mobilize a discourse of modernization, they have thus far done little to transform the underlying social dynamics of domestic work. In light of Oliveira (2003), this process can be understood as a reconfiguration of the articulation between modern elements and archaic practices within peripheral capitalism.

This study has sought to examine both continuities and shifts in the gendered, racialized, and class-based inequalities that structure domestic work in Brazil in the context of the expansion of digital platforms. Future research could further explore these emerging dynamics, contributing to a more comprehensive critical analysis of the processes identified here.

ANA CAROLINA BRITO BRANDÃO [<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6987-7669>] is a postdoctoral researcher in Theory and Philosophy of Law at the Graduate Program in Law at the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ). She holds an MA and a PhD in Theory of the State and Constitutional Law from Pontifia Catolic University (PUC-RIO).

REFERENCES

- Abílio, Ludmila; “A Era do trabalhador *just in time*?”. *Estudos avançados*, v. 34, n. 98, 2020, pp. 111-26.
- Abílio, Ludmila, Amorim, Henrique; Grohmann, Rafael. “Uberização e plataformação do trabalho no Brasil: conceitos, processos e formas”. *Sociologias*, n. 57, 2021, pp. 26-56.
- Andrada, Ana Carolina et al. “Plataformas digitais de cuidado no Brasil: Acesso e controle do trabalho no entrecruzamento de múltiplas crises”. *Tempo Social*, v. 35, n. 3, 2023, pp. 5-31.
- Bhattacharya, Tithi (org). *Teoria da Reprodução Social: remapear a classe, centralizar a opressão*. São Paulo: Elefante, 2023.
- “Blumpa e Parafuzo se unem em ‘Uber’ do serviço doméstico”. *O Estado de S. Paulo*, 1 dez. 2020. Disponível em: <istoedinheiro.com.br/blumpa-e-parafuzo-se-unem-em-uber-do-servico-domestico>. Accessed on: 5/3/25.

- Comin, Alvaro. “Futuro não é mais o que costumava ser: a crise brasileira em perspectiva internacional”. *Novos Estudos Cebrap* 107, v. 36, n. 1, 2017, pp. 59-70.
- Comin, Alvaro. “A Inteligência artificial e o futuro do trabalho e da proteção social”. *Cadernos do ILP* v. 4, n. 5, 2023, pp. 166-78.
- Davis, Angela. *Mulheres, Raça e Classe*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2016.
- Dieese. “O Trabalho Doméstico 10 anos após a PEC das Domésticas”. *Estudos e Pesquisas*, n. 106, 2023. Available at: <<https://www.dieese.org.br/estudosepesquisas/2023/estPesq106trabDomestico.pdf>>. Accessed on: 5/3/2026
- Fontoura, Natália et al. *Os Desafios do Passado no Trabalho Doméstico Do Século XXI: Reflexões para o Caso Brasileiro a partir dos dados da Pnad Contínua*. Brasília: IPEA, 2019. Available at: <https://www.ipea.gov.br/portal/images/stories/PDFs/TDs/td__2528.pdf> Accessed on: 5/3/2026
- Fraser, Nancy. “Crise do cuidado? Sobre as contradições sociorreprodutivas do capitalismo” In: Bhattacharya, Tithi (Org). *Teoria da Reprodução Social: remapear a classe, centralizar a opressão*. São Paulo: Elefante, 2023. pp. 45-70.
- Fraser, Nancy. *Cannibal Capitalism: how our System is devouring democracy, care, and the planet – and what we can do about it*. London: Verso, 2022.
- Gavras, Douglas; Viecei, Leonardo. “Dez anos após PEC das Domésticas, 3 em cada 4 delas trabalham sem carteira assinada”. *Folha de S. Paulo e Uol*. 23 mar. 2023. Available at: <www1.folha.uol.com.br/mercado/2023/03/dez-anos-apos-pec-das-domesticas-3-em-cada-4-delas-trabalham-sem-carteira-assinada.shtml>. Accessed on: 5/3/25.
- Gondim, Sônia Maria Guedes. “Grupos focais como técnica de investigação qualitativa: desafios metodológicos”. *Paidéia*, v. 12, n. 24, 2003, pp. 149-61.
- Gonzalez, Lelia. “Racismo e sexismo na cultura brasileira”. *Revista Ciências Sociais Hoje*, Anpocs, 1984, pp. 223-44. Available at: <bibliotecadigital.mdh.gov.br/jspui/handle/192/10316> Accessed on 5/3/25.
- Grohmann, Rafael (org). *Os Laboratórios do Trabalho Digital: entrevistas*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2021.
- Guimarães, Nadya. “Cuidados: tecendo e desfazendo direitos. Desigualdades sociais e desafios institucionais no Brasil”. *Política & Trabalho*, n. 59, 2023, pp. 204-25.
- Huws, Ursula. “Eating us out of house and home: The dynamics of commodification and de commodification of reproductive labour in the formation of virtual work”. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics*, v. 14, n. 1, 2018, pp. 111-18.
- Huwa, Ursula. “The hassle of housework: digitalisation and the commodification of domestic labour”. *Feminist Review*, v. 123, n. 1, 2019, pp. 8-23.
- Oliveira, Francisco de. *Crítica à razão dualista/O ornitorrinco*. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2003.
- Rodrigues, Gabriel Ferreira. *Plataformização do Trabalho Doméstico: a (Des)valorização das Diaristas na Plataforma Parafuzo*. Belo Horizonte: Fino Traço Editora, 2024.

- Schmidt, F. *Digital Labour Markets in the Platform Economy: Mapping the Political Challenges of Crowd Work and Gig Work*. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, 2017.
- Souza, Flávia Fernandes de. “Mulheres, raça e trabalho doméstico remunerado na formação de uma economia urbano-industrial (Rio de Janeiro 1890-1940)”. In: Machado, Bárbara A.; Souza, Flávia F. de (org.). *Gênero, Raça e Reprodução Social: teoria e história para uma perspectiva ampliada de classe trabalhadora*. São Paulo: Usina, 2023, pp. 188-221.
- Valdez, Jimena. “The Politics of Uber: Infrastructural Power in the United States and Europe”. *Regulation & Governance*, v. 17, n. 1, 2022, pp. 177-94.
- Van doorn, Neals. “Stepping Stone or Dead End? The Ambiguities of Platform Mediated Domestic Work under Conditions of Austerity. Comparative Landscapes of Austerity and the Gig Economy: New York and Berlin”. In: Aines, Donna; Cunningham, Ian (eds.). *Working in the Context of Austerity: challenges and struggles*. Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2020, pp. 49-69.
- Van doorn, Neals. “Platform labor: On the gendered and racialized exploitation of low-income service work in the ‘on-demand’ economy”. *Information, Communication & Society*, v. 20, n. 6, 2017, pp. 898-914.

APPENDIX

Interview Script for Domestic Workers Users and Non-Users of Cleaning Platforms

Good morning (good afternoon). My name is Monise, and I am a researcher at Cebrap. I will be conducting this session with you. Joining to me is Ana Carolina, a fellow researcher at Cebrap who studies domestic work.

Cebrap is a research center with over 50 years of experience, working on a wide range of topics, including domestic work. I would like to emphasize that we do not identify participants by name in any reports or research outputs. All responses are treated collectively and anonymously. We follow established ethical research standards, which are available on our website and in Cebrap's Code of Good Practices.

[Ask participants to speak one at a time.]

1. To begin, I would like to ask each of you to briefly introduce yourselves and tell us when you providing domestic work (either as a monthly-paid worker or a daily domestic worker).

a. Are you the main provider for your household, or one of the main income earners?

2. Do you think the place where you live influences your opportunities to find new jobs?

- a. Does where you live also influence how much you can charge for your work?
3. How do you usually find new jobs? Do you need to spend time actively looking for opportunities?
4. Do you seek references or information about clients before accepting a job?
 - a. Do you feel apprehensive when going to a new client's home?
 - b. What kind of information gives you more confidence in these situations?
5. Are you concerned about how clients evaluate your work? What do you think influences these evaluations?
 - a. Do you do anything to try to ensure client satisfaction?
 - b. What are your thoughts on client reviews?
 - c. Have you ever been asked to do something you considered unfair?
6. Are you able to negotiate with the client in advance on how the work will be carried out?
 - a. Do you agree in advance with the client on the number of working hours and tasks?
 - b. Does the amount you receive cover your food and transportation expenses?
 - c. What happens if the client asks for something outside what was agreed upon? What do you do?
 - i. Is it possible to refuse?
 - ii. Do you negotiate a higher price?
7. What happens when you need to be absent or arrive late?
 - a. What do you usually do if something unexpected prevents you from working? What typically happens in these situations?
[e.g., conflicts or problems with the client.]
 - b. In cases of illness—your own or that of a family member requiring care—how is this usually handled? What tends to happen?
[e.g., conflicts or problems with the client.]
8. Do you feel monitored or controlled by clients, either during work or outside of it?
[e.g., through social media.]
9. Have you ever felt unfairly treated or discriminated against at work?
[e.g., property damage accusations, racial or class discrimination.]
 - a. What did you do in response? Did you seek support anywhere?
[e.g., complaints, legal assistance.]

b. Have you ever had an argument or conflict with a client about this?

10. Is there any group or space where you can talk to other domestic workers, exchange experiences, or support each other?

11. How do you balance work and personal life?

- a. Taking care of your own health
- b. Caring for dependents
- c. Managing household tasks
- d. Leisure time

12. Do you have children? How did you manage work during pregnancy? Did you have paid maternity leave?

- a. Did you work until the end of your pregnancy?
- b. If you had maternity leave, how much time were you able to take off?
- c. How did you reconcile work and childcare in your children's early years?

13. There are data indicating that the domestic workforce is “aging” (according to IBGE, about 85% are over 30 years old). Do you think younger generations are less interested in this type of work?

Is there anything we have not asked that you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your participation.

