

Deficiencies and Limitations on Current Household Employment in Spain

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ABSTRACT In some labor sectors precariousness, vulnerability and abusive behavior have been a constant throughout employment history. The circumstances and reasons why this phenomenon persists are so many and varied that these unfair practices often seem impermeable to improvement and progress. Although governments throughout the world are currently adopting regulations to improve the working conditions of household employment, this is still a working context characterised by considerable informality in all countries at different levels of development. However, close analysis of what happens in these working environments might help to highlight the fundamental underlying problems, point out specific areas of feasible and effective improvement and work towards developing international labor standards in this sector. With this aim, the present work analyses a corpus of interviews and meetings with domestic employers, intermediaries and employees recorded in Spain. The results bring to light some key communicative and labor-related factors which lay down most precarious and informal situations affecting these workers, such as unclear contracts and contributions, normalized precariousness and vulnerability, intercultural unawareness and degrading stereotypes, confusion in roles and communicative registers, and psychological and ethical threads. The study will also point out that, although the new legislation seeks to include improvements across the board, its implementation is bringing more heterogeneity, informality and precariousness for this group of workers.