

## **From Required and Unlimited Intimacy to Troubling Unfree Labor: The Case of Domestic Workers**

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In this article I argue for a strong interlink between the intimacy required in domestic work and troubling unfree labor situations that are shaped by court decisions and legal policy. The difficulties in recognizing these situations as troubling ones stem from the blurriness that intimate work creates — which may explain why there are those who view domestic workers as part of the family and as strong agents, even more powerful at times than the employer — and simultaneously shape their work relationships in the most troubling way. I argue that intimacy in domestic work is not a private issue, but rather is highly regulated, and show how in Israel it is shaped by law and policy as required and unlimited, revealing that this serves as a justification for four forms of unfree labor: in terms of working time and space; in terms of intimacy with the employer alone; in terms of economic disadvantage; and in terms of specific employers. Recognition that these are unfree labor situations that infringe the worker's right to freedom in a troubling way should lead to taking action to prevent them. Even though there are rationales for encouraging intimate work and valuing its gains, there is an urgent need to address its problematic consequences. In the case of domestic workers the way to achieve this is by creating spheres of autonomy and limiting the intimacy required. Means of achieving this goal are presented in the final part of the article.