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Regulating Love: Around-the-Clock Home Care in Israel

This article examines how the regulation of foreign caregivers in Israel reflects and shapes the characteristics of carework. Whereas the literature has emphasized how regulation impacts the market dimension of carework—its working conditions—this article seeks to shed light on how regulation reflects and shapes the nonmarket characteristics of care as a relationship based on dedication, love, and dependence. From this perspective, the article first examines the development of care provision for the elderly through long-term care insurance, up to the phenomenon of around-the-clock care by foreign caregivers. While the creation of long-term care insurance was intended to address the market dimension of carework, around-the-clock care by foreign caregivers highlights the nonmarket elements of care as well. However, through an analysis of the system of tying foreign workers to a particular employer and the length of stay arrangement in Israel, the article demonstrates that the unique regulation applied to foreign caregivers reflects ambivalence regarding the nonmarket characteristics of carework. Accordingly, even when regulation is based on the nonmarket characteristics of the work, it actually promotes extreme commodification of care, which eliminates its nonmarket values.