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# The Entrapment of Migrant Workers in Servile Labour: The Case of Live-in Domestic Workers from Ukraine in Greece

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## Ο Εγκλωβισμός των Μεταναστών σε Υπηρετικά Επαγγέλματα: Η Περίπτωση των Ουκρανών Εσωτερικών Οικιακών Εργατριών στην Ελλάδα

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### ABSTRACT

The article presents an effort to analyze the entrapment of migrant domestic workers in their low-status jobs. This will be done by looking at the consequences of live-in domestic work on migrant women from Ukraine working as servants in Athens. The study utilizes a Marxo-Weberian framework that focuses on both working conditions and perceptions of migrant workers. It is argued that the emotional demands of domestic work result in migrants perceiving their tasks as an extension of familial relationships and obligations. These employment relationships are defined as 'pseudo-familial' and form the basis of deference in domestic work. Combined with the structural barriers in the labour market, deference represents the subjective element of the entrapment of migrants in their job.

**KEY WORDS:** Servitude, deference, live-in domestic work, migration, familial relationships

### ΠΕΡΙΛΗΨΗ

Το άρθρο αποτελεί μια απόπειρα ανάλυσης του εγκλωβισμού των μεταναστών στα χαμηλού κύρους επαγγέλματα. Αυτό γίνεται μέσα από την εξέταση των συνεπειών της εσωτερικής οικιακής εργασίας των Ουκρανών μεταναστριών που εργάζονται ως υπηρέτριες στην Αθήνα. Η μελέτη χρησιμοποιεί μια Μαρξοβεμπεριανή προσέγγιση που εστιάζει τόσο στις συνθήκες όσο και στις αντιλήψεις γύρω από την εργασία. Υποστηρίζεται πως οι συγκινησιακές απαιτήσεις της οικιακής εργασίας οδηγούν τις μετανάστριες στο να ερμηνεύουν τα καθήκοντά τους ως προέκταση οικογενειακών σχέσεων και υποχρεώσεων. Αυτές οι σχέσεις απασχόλησης ορίζονται ως 'ψευδο-οικογενειακές' και αποτελούν τη βάση της υποτακτικότητας στην οικιακή εργασία. Σε συνδυασμό με τα δομικά εμπόδια στην αγορά εργασίας, η υποτακτικότητα αποτελεί υποκειμενικό στοιχείο του εγκλωβισμού των μεταναστριών στο επάγγελμά τους.

**ΛΕΞΕΙΣ-ΚΛΕΙΔΙΑ:** Υπηρετικότητα, υποτακτικότητα, εσωτερική οικιακή εργασία, μετανάστευση, οικογενειακές σχέσεις

## Introduction

One of the most important problems faced by those who work in low-status jobs is the inability to move past those occupational positions and their corresponding social characteristics. It appears that work contributes to the crystallization of social disadvantage leading to the formation of a segment of the working class with no prospect of social mobility. Live-in migrant domestic workers represent an almost stereotypical example of this process of exclusion. This article will examine the reproduction of labour in this particular low status job, using a combination of Marxist and Weberian explanatory tools. The research tried to shed light to the reasons behind the prolonged stay of domestic workers in their job and the social deprivations that accompanies the entrapment<sup>1</sup> to their occupational position. It is suggested that domestic work, in spite of its exploitative working conditions, is perceived by workers in familial terms, thus naturalizing employers' domination, reproducing servile labour and resulting in the occupational ghettoization<sup>2</sup> of migrant domestic workers.

### 1. Servitude, deference and the reproduction of labour

The experience of servitude as a crucial aspect of work and employment has always played an essential part in the development of capitalism (Kolchin 1995, Engerman 1999, Bush 2000). As opposed to approaches that view servile labour as a remnant of pre-capitalist social relations (Coser 1973, Campani 2000, Thanopoulou 2007), capitalism seems to be carried on the shoulders of countless workers who spent their lives in the labour of obedience. Even more so in the context of internationalized late capitalism, where masses of workers are displaced from the periphery in order to seek employment in the core countries, mainly, but not exclusively, in the field of personal services (Sassen 1980, 1984, 1991, Cohen 2006). This represents nothing but the structural context in which nowadays one finds the servile migrant labour force, namely the workers in farming, in the catering industry, the sex industry and domestic work.

As important as this discussion may be, it provides but little insight to one of the greatest problems faced by sociology and social policy in recent times. That is the entrapment of these workers to their jobs and more importantly their apparent identification with the characteristics of their work and employment (Psimmenos 2013, Xypolytas 2013). Why is it that migrant workers in low-status jobs remain in their work for so long? Is it only structural barriers that prevent their escape from their employment condition or are there other factors at play which associate them with their work and bind them to servile employment relations? These questions will be addressed through the research on live-in migrant domestic workers from Ukraine who are employed in Greek households.

Once again it is important to note that in both the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> century servile labour coexisted along with traditional working class occupations and to a certain extent it was shaped by capitalist development itself (Psimmenos 2013). Especially in the case of women, historians and sociologists stressed the importance of domestic service as a survival strategy but also as a means of preparing the younger generation for their role in the working class family (Horn 1980, Beynon and Austrin 1994). Thus, for many women, domestic service represented a part of the life-cycle (Davidoff 1973, 1974), where the experience of servitude acted as the quintessential mechanism for disciplining them into their auxiliary role in the working class (Chantzaroula 2012).

However, the experience of servitude does not imply simply unfavorable conditions of work and obedience to the rules or whims of the employer. Its main quality was – and still is – its ability to transcend the “house gates” and play a significant role in molding characters of subordination (DuBois 1995, 1999). This is particularly important since servitude not only plays a vital role in the organization of domestic work, but also shapes the values of the workers even after the end of their employment. In his classical analysis, *The American Dilemma* (1976), Myrdal places particular emphasis to the crystallization of inequalities, not only through semi-permanent structural barriers, but more importantly through the shaping of mobility values to the workers themselves. In other words, the experience of servitude results in the personal identification of workers with their social role that binds them to their place in the social hierarchy and legitimizes the social inequality inherent in it (Myrdal 1976, DuBois 1999, Dollard 1957, Rodman 1963).

This entrapment, whose main characteristics are acceptance and legitimation, is best described in the classic studies of *deference* (Nordlinger 1967, Mann 1973, Newby 1977) that sought out to explain how it is that many groups of workers – more often than not – disregarded exploitation and identified their interests with those of their employers, thus undermining their own economic and social position as well as their prospects of social mobility. The result was that despite the working conditions and material deprivations, there existed an overarching principle that workers adhered to and acted as the main source of legitimation. In the case of farm workers in England, for example, this principle was the one of *ownership*. In other words, for the workers the arbitrary nature of employer decisions was naturalized and legitimized on the grounds of them being the owners of the land; and therefore given an almost divine right to be as arbitrary as they wished. So, deference was defined as “...the subscription to a moral order which endorses the individual's own political, material and social subordination, with the addition that this subordination should be legitimated on traditional grounds” (Parkin 1971: 84).

It is on these premises that the reproduction of labour for migrant live-in domestic workers is to be addressed. Domestic service requires the execution of tasks that are based on the notion of care. Whether these are household tasks, taking care of children or the elderly, the perceptions of work are largely de commodified and are based on a familial understanding behind the employment relationship. Thus, in this case, the overarching principle of legitimation lies within the notion of the *family*. The *pseudo-familial relationships* (Xypolytas 2013) that characterize domestic work conceal exploitation, naturalize servitude and bind workers to their occupational position. This focus on both conditions and perceptions of work represents the basis of the Marxo-Weberian tradition as well as the theoretical foundation of the present research.

## 2. Migrant domestic workers: The research context in Greece

**T**he focus on migrant domestic workers in Greece has by now a long tradition that works as a foundation for both this research as well as future efforts to approach the topic. During the 90s the focus was mainly on conditions of work and housing. A number of studies (Kassimati 1992, Psimmenos 1995, Anderson and Phizacklea 1997) looked at the tasks, the salaries, the relationships with the employers, housing and living conditions and, apart from their slight methodological and theoretical differences, they seemed to reach at similar conclusions. Domestic service represents a type of labour that, apart from the problematic working conditions, seriously undermines the social mobility of workers. As later research suggested, this particular job appears

to be one of the few employment options for migrant women with the exception of the sex industry in a segmented labour market (Sakelis and Spyropoulou 2007, Maroukis 2010). However the experience of work not only is plagued with exploitative conditions but it also binds workers allowing for little or no room for seeking other forms of employment outside domestic work.

As the academic interest on specific occupational groups raised so did the publications on the importance of servitude as a means of approaching scientifically domestic work. The research on *welfare marginalization* (Psimmenos 2007, 2009, Psimmenos and Skamnakis 2008, Skamnakis 2009) looked at the way servitude formed values on domestic workers concerning social protection. These values centered on the primary importance of the employer family as a source of social protection, which combined with formal access barriers generated attitudes of superfluosity towards formal welfare. This finding is particularly important as it shows how the reach of servitude extends well beyond the gates of the employer's house and it informs the values of workers concerning their social rights. Moreover, it suggests that the subjective aspects of domestic work create a vicious circle whereby all aspects of social life are mediated through the relationship with the employer, thus binding workers to their job (Xypolytas and Lazarescu 2013).

This aspect of "blocked social mobility" (Solomon and Gould 1974) was also addressed through the case study of Romanian domestic workers. Lazarescu (2015) suggested that even though a worker's continued employment in domestic service appears as a fundamental aspect of entrapment, there are subjective understandings that generate a sense of advancement or mobility. So, the change in employment status (live-in / live-out) or the moving up in an informal hierarchy of household tasks create a dynamic aspect to a job that appears static from an observer's point of view. This is not to suggest that there are indeed aspects of social mobility to the experience of domestic work, but instead that the subjective understandings of work are essential if one is to understand the process of "occupational ghettoization" and how this is perceived by workers themselves.

Other studies on servitude of domestic workers placed particular emphasis on the notion of the family as a mechanism of subordination and entrapment. Chantzaroula (2012) looked at internal migrants in pre-war Greece and suggested that working-class girls from a very young age were disciplined in household labour in order to find work as servants when they were teenagers. Similarly, the servitude experienced in employer households would act as a "training mechanism" for their marriage that was to follow the completion of their domestic service. The approach of the present research is certainly influenced by this historical study, to the extent that it stresses the importance of the institution of the family – and the obligations towards other family members – as an overarching principle upon which subordination is "crafted" and legitimated (Chantzaroula 2007).

### 3. Ukrainian live-in domestic workers in Greece: Methodology

**A**s the two previous sections suggest, in order to tackle the reproduction of servile migrant labour the emphasis must be placed on both the experience of work as well as the perceptions that are generated to workers themselves as a result of their labour. The international literature on migrant domestic workers, as one would expect, places strong emphasis on the exploitative characteristics of the job (Glenn 1981, 1986, Anderson and Phizacklea 1997, Anderson 2000, Hondagneu-Sotelo 2002, Romero 2002, ILO 2003, 2011a, 2011b). However, once again, one

of the most important problems by sociology and social policy is the construction of servitude in the context of the employment relationship and the prolonged stay of workers in their job. This process of 'entrapment' was put forward by workers themselves during various interviews and informal discussions, where one of the most frequent comments would be along the lines of "...I came here originally for a couple of months to save some money, and I ended up staying all these years". So, given the exploitative nature of the job, which the vast majority of interviewees was more than willing to report, what are the reasons behind the workers' lengthy stay? Is it just financial obligations to family back home or is there something in the experience of labour itself that could explain its reproduction?

The research took place between October 2008 and December of 2009 and it was based on 45 semi-structured interviews. In order to pursue answers concerning the reproduction of labour, the research focused on Ukrainian domestic workers. The reasons behind this choice were the following. *Firstly*, this specific nationality is overrepresented in live-in domestic work in Greece and *secondly*, there have been many relatively recent studies of Ukrainian workers (Kampouri 2007, Kassimati and Moussourou 2007, Sakellis and Spyropoulou 2007, Psimmenos and Skamnakis 2008, Nikolova and Maroufov 2010) that could provide ample room for comparison with the results of this research. The main criterion for participating in the research was that the interviewee had to live in Greece and work in this particular job for a period of no less than 10 years. By choosing this rather lengthy period as a prerequisite, the research tried to ensure that the participants have worked long enough as live-in domestic workers and through their interviews they can shed light on the reasons behind their prolonged stay. Similarly, in a period of 10 years, it is understandable that the women interviewed would have worked for a few employers, thus giving room for generalizations concerning their work and not just arriving to conclusions from the experience of a single household. Lastly, given that the interviews were conducted in Greek with Ukrainian interviewees, the 10 year period ensured, to a certain extent, a working knowledge of the Greek language.

As it was previously mentioned, the research was qualitative and semi-structured interviews were used a data-gathering method. The use of this specific methodology is directly related to the research question. The issue that is central to the analysis and determined the methodological tools that were used, is the way work is perceived and how this can lead to a prolonged stay in the specific type of job. As the literature in industrial sociology suggests, it is mainly in the perceptions of work that one can theoretically build on the issues of control, consent and reproduction (Beynon and Blackburn 1972, Burawoy 1979, Salaman 1979, Littler 1985). However, attitudinal data based on questionnaires with closed questions cannot provide the necessary depth for an analysis that centers on three important aspects of work; *the conditions of work, the relationships in the working environment* and most importantly, *the perceptions of workers concerning the executed tasks*. Hence, the interview guide was constructed in order to shed light on these three aspects, by giving room to the interviewees to provide details of their work, their appreciation of it, as well as the nature of the relationships that developed between them and their employers.

## 4.Reproduction of servile labour: Ukrainian live-in domestic workers in Athens

### *The tasks of live-in domestic workers*

**B**ased on the research, domestic work appears to involve three basic categories of tasks; a) *Household tasks*, b) *Care of young children or infants* and c) *Care of the elderly*<sup>3</sup>. Household tasks involve cleaning, cooking, gardening, going shopping, taking care of pets and generally servicing the household needs of the employers. The tasks associated with the care of young children depend on the age of the child or infant. In the case of newborns, domestic workers are supposed to clean, feed (with bottled breast milk) and spend time with the babies, while their parents are either working or resting in the house. For young children the tasks involve escorting them to the school or to the school bus stop, preparing their food, taking them to the park, playing with them at the house and putting them to bed. The third category, which involves taking care of the elderly, is the one Ukrainian domestic workers are mostly associated with in Greece. In this particular case the tasks depend on the condition of the old person. In other words, whether she or he can stand, walk or communicate are crucial aspects of the experience of work. Incapacitated old people require feeding, cleaning and often they are unable to communicate, whereas working with people who are able to take care of themselves involves executing the same tasks but in a less isolated environment (Xypolytas 2013).

The conditions of work are so demanding physically and mentally that domestic workers often reported various health problems to the skin and joints as well as mental disorders. Long, hours, low remuneration, lack of sleep, in certain cases insufficient food intake, sexual harassment were some of the problems that were brought out with the research, which of course serves mainly as a verification of disturbing findings that have surfaced with much previous research (Anderson 2000, ILO 2011a, 2011b). The most important issue, for the purposes of this article, however, is the way the actual work is perceived by workers themselves and how these perceptions contribute to the reproduction of labour.

## 5.Perceptions of work

**W**hen a sociologist is confronted with the issue of perceptions of work, one of the most important things to be considered is the tasks themselves. Since there is to a certain extent a consensus that work generates not only income but also meaning, then surely this cultural approach has to take into consideration the undertaking and completion of specific tasks that can gradually lead to the formation of specific values and beliefs. As it was described in the previous section, there are three categories of tasks in live-in domestic work; household tasks, care of young children or infants and care of the elderly. However, the successful completion of the tasks in these categories requires the exercise of *emotional labour* (Hochschild 2003), which Watson quite clearly defines as “*an element of work activity in which the worker is required to display certain emotions in order to complete work tasks in the way required by the employer*” (2003: 203).

What is rather interesting in the case of live-in domestic work is that the exercise of emotional labour leads to the internalization of the characteristics of work by the worker herself. There are two reasons for this. The *first* one is that in the context of this particular job, the worker



is required to constantly remain within the confines of the household where she is employed. As opposed to other workers, like Hochschild's famous example of flight attendants (2003), live-in domestics do not have the 'luxury' of separation between work and personal life. In the 1960's and 1970's the most important debates in industrial sociology focused on whether important conclusions about work can be drawn from life *inside* and *outside the factory gates* (Goldthorpe and Lockwood 1968, Benyon and Blackburn 1972, Edwards 1979). This important sociological distinction however, becomes not entirely relevant in the analysis of servitude in domestic work. The live-in domestic, differs from other workers, in that she is constantly at work, accessible and therefore far more vulnerable to the internalization of her job characteristics, since they are the central – if not the only – axis around which her social life revolves.

The *second* reason for the internalization of the characteristics of work and the development of subordination is the familial nature of the tasks themselves. The research showed that each category of tasks is perceived as a particular extension of familial obligations. These could be framed as *pseudo-familial relationships* and they operate in the following manner:

1. *Household tasks are perceived as an extension of "housewife" duties.*
2. *The care of children is perceived as an extension of motherly duties.*
3. *The care of the elderly is perceived as a duty of the young towards the old and as an extension of duties of the children towards their parents.*

### **- Perceptions of household tasks**

During the interviews the domestic workers that were employed in households as live-in maids, described the tasks that they had to complete during the working day. After the initial period of employment, where all the workers followed the instructions of the employer, the tasks and the way these were performed were presented as the subject of more autonomous decisions. Of course, this is a kind of autonomy that was granted by the employers given the trust that gradually developed between them and the domestic worker. This autonomy leads to perceptions of work that look at everyday routines as part of personal decision making and not as obligations of work. Thus, they conceal the employment relationship – and its obviously uneven distribution of power – instilling in the domestic worker the sense that she is in charge of the household. This appears as a role similar to the one of the "housewife" that workers filled in the country of origin while they were with their own family<sup>4</sup>. Galina describes this in the following way:

*"No! Now, I make the schedule myself. Let's say Monday, I do a thorough cleaning of the kitchen. On Tuesday, the master bedroom. On Wednesday, one child's bedroom. On Thursday, the other one. A thorough cleaning you know... Dust very well, take out all the books. Friday, I do the living room. I go through all the rooms each day. I leave nothing. I go through them fast. But one room has to be very well clean, because I like it this way. Not just doing only one room and leaving the rest. No, that's not nice"*

Apart from the "granted autonomy" that is frequently found in live-in maids, household tasks can be perceived as a non-work related aspect of everyday life in the case of domestic workers who take care of old people without anyone else present in the house. In this case, the employers, who are usually the children of the old person, rarely visit and the worker is also responsible for the reproduction of the entire household. These workers indeed enjoy an even greater amount of autonomy and their perception of work is almost entirely based on a sense of personal choice and involvement. Galina said the following concerning the household she was working at



*"I love this house and I take good care of it until now and I would feel very sorry if I had to go someplace else. Because six years I've been here and I am doing what I must. I mean there is a daughter that comes here once per week. She gives some money for food, for medicine, but I am the one in charge about all these things. I go to the pharmacy and I give the doctor's prescription. This feels like my one home"*

### **- Perceptions of care of young children**

It becomes rather obvious that in the case of young children, the emotional attachment that domestic workers feel can be a very significant aspect of the experience of work. The perceptions of the tasks are often in no way connected with work obligations or economic incentives. As it was previously stated, the reason for this also lies in the fact that domestic workers are in many cases employed as babysitters in order to care for infants and can stay with the same employer for many years. One should also keep in mind that the prolonged stay in a specific household can be linked to these attachments as Tonia suggests.

*"The children are my life! But of course I raised them ever since they were babies. Now they are 7 and 5 (years old). Where would I go? When they return from school and I sit at the living room and we paint together. This is the best! They come back from school and they tell me what the teacher said, or what a friend said. We talk, we laugh..."*

The attachment involved in taking care of young children is indeed rather obvious. However, an important aspect of the perceptions of care is the fact that many Ukrainian domestic workers already had children of their own before they migrated to Greece. These children were left behind with their fathers or members of the extended family. The literature (Anderson and Phizacklea 1997, Anderson 2000, Kofman et al 2000), as well as the present research, suggests that taking care of a child – often close at the age of their own daughter or son back home – fills the void of this separation. Nonetheless, this leads to an understanding of work that looks at everyday realities of care as an extension of motherly duties. Galina explains this rather clearly:

*"This is very hard! (Coming in Greece for the first time) You don't speak the language, you don't know anything. You're locked (in the employer's house), you're a young woman and you give your love to a stranger's child. And you have your own child back home that is 2 years old and that is so (hard) You see a stranger's children as your own. This is very, very hard"*

### **-Perceptions of care of the elderly**

The perceptions of work in this third category of tasks are rather important since it is the one where Ukrainian domestic workers are overrepresented. As with the case of care of young children, in this category, the tasks workers perform – as strenuous and exhausting as they may be – they demand a close and often physical contact. As Wolkowitz suggests in her analysis of body work (2006), this kind of tasks presupposes but also develops a strong sense of trust and familiarity. The research showed that these details of everyday care of old people lead to the formation of affectionate relationships. The pseudo-familial nature of these relationships is

further highlighted by the use of the word *giagia* (grandmother) or *papous* (grandfather) that workers often use to describe the people they work for. Liuba describes this in the following way.

*"The grandmother had to get up. So I get her out of bed, I take the oxygen tank and we go to the bathroom. We switch off the oxygen for about 10 minutes... I don't mind bathing her at all. I put her in the bathtub for 10 minutes and I wash her so she can always be clean. And she also has a problem with her breathing. I help her with that and I give her a massage, many times. Because she is running out of breath and it helps her a lot. Grandmother really likes that"*

The pseudo-familial relationships generated through the tasks can often become very strong. The language used in the previous extract is a fairly good indication, but one could argue that calling an old person 'grandmother' or 'grandfather' is commonly used in the Greek language. However, the tasks and the relationships with the employers are perceived not as a labour obligation but rather as an extension of workers' ability to express fondness and attachment. Zenia describes her gratification of the personal relationship she developed with her employer, whom she often called 'mother', not due to the workings of the Greek language but as a pure expression of affection.

*"This grandmother in Kalithea (area in Athens) I used to work, she didn't have children of her own and I was the first to call her 'mom'. When I used to call her 'mom Christina' she used to melt (expression that means she was deeply moved). This gave me great joy. The other thing that really impressed me was that she might have been in pain during the night, but she wouldn't call me so I wouldn't wake up and help her. But my mind was there and I was feeling her. I was feeling that she was in pain and I used to get up and ask her. 'Mom, what's wrong? Are you in pain?' And she would say, 'Yes, but I didn't want to wake you'"*

Looking at the perception of work in all three categories of tasks, what becomes clear is that extremely problematic conditions of work represent only one side of the coin that is labour. A side that is indeed troublesome, especially if one keeps in mind that the experiences of many domestic workers do not constitute a reality anymore for millions of workers since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Addams 1896, Ray and Qayum 2009). However, it is in this other side of the coin that the notions of servitude and deference are generated and the entrapment of domestic workers is to be understood.

## 6. Concluding remarks

The research set out to explain the reasons behind the prolonged stay of migrant domestic workers in their job. In order to tackle this issue it is important to understand the values that generated in working conditions of servitude. It may appear that there are indeed strong occupational mobility barriers that are set in labour markets that are structured around ethnic, racial and gender lines. However, from a sociological point of view, these barriers are not but one aspect of the problem. Arguably, a far more significant issue is the values that are instilled in workers themselves. These values reinforce occupational segregation by identifying workers with

their place within a specific labour market. In the case of migrant domestic workers these values revolve around the notions of servitude and the deference that is associated with it.

The pseudo-familial relationships that were described form the basis of employment but more importantly are the quintessential aspect of deferential labour. Caring for one's family appears as an undoubted duty or as a "labour of love" (Oakley 1974). The attachment of the workers to the employers, in the context of live-in domestic work, takes a pseudo-familial form legitimizing labour on the grounds of it being an objectively valid, humane and often selfless act. This way deference is based on the overarching principle of familial obligations. The duties of a mother, a daughter, or even a household carer seem to transcend the notions of labour demands or obligations. Such understandings of work come to naturalize the experience of servitude and, as Parkin (1971) would suggest, indeed subscribe to a moral order which endorses the individual's own political, material, social – and personal one may add – subordination. This intricate combination of objective conditions of work and subjective understandings of it represents the basis of deference of the live-in domestic worker.

However, what deference represents is not merely the acceptance of work and employment conditions. It is the basis upon which the mobility values of migrant domestic workers are built. The structural barriers that prevent exit from low-status jobs remain forever strong. What deference does is to decisively reinforce these with even stronger materials, which are none other than the values workers have concerning their place in economy and society. The experience of servile labour and the construction of deference naturalize subordination under the guise of family. But more importantly they lead to the formation of a segment of the working class that identifies on a personal level with the characteristics of their labour transforming the latter into an almost inescapable trap of social and economic deprivations.

## Notes

1. The entrapment of domestic workers refers to a combination of two processes that were unintentional by the workers themselves. It is the process of the prolonged stay in the occupation based on inability of access to different labour markets as well as the process of identification with the characteristics and demands of domestic work (Greggson and Lowe 1994, Chin 1998, Vidal-Coso and Vono de Vilhena 2015).
1. The term is taken from Glenn's study of Japanese domestic workers in the United States whose entrapment in their job lead to existence of three consecutive generations of Japanese servants (Glenn 1981, 1986).
3. It should be stressed is that these categories represent simply the "formal" reason that employers gave the worker for hiring her. Similarly, it must be noted that household tasks and care are not mutually exclusive categories, since taking care of an old person or a young child involves a variety of tasks such as cleaning after them, cooking their meal etc.
4. This aspect of the perceptions of work is crucially important as it shows that through domestic work, migrant women are familiarized with patriarchal understandings of gender, which often were less constricting and traditional in the country of origin (Abadan-Unat 1977, Anderson 2000, Kofman et al 2000).

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