



Single Mothers and the State: The Politics of Care in Sweden and the United States

Celia Winkler

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U.S. welfare rights activists have long envied women in Sweden, who benefited from social policies that made the incidence of poverty among children and solo mothers among the lowest in the world. This situation has begun to change with the rise of neoliberalism in Sweden from the late 1970s to the middle of the 1990s; social policy that had once dramatically improved the lives of solo mothers began to give way to policies that privatized their problems. Solo mothers in the United States were worse off, as conservative policymakers launched a clamorous campaign to restore the "traditional nuclear family" as the only guarantor of women's and children's well-being, blaming solo mothers for everything from juvenile crime to their own poverty.

In this revealing and timely book, sociologist and former legal services attorney, Celia Winkler, charts the policies in Sweden and the United States that transformed the social and economic situation of solo mothers, who are an early warning of more general danger: the canary in the coal mine.

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