



Policy is personal: sex, gender and informal care

Ungerson, Clare (1987) *Policy is personal: sex, gender and informal care*, New York, US. Tavistock, 166pp. ,

Record type: **Book**

Abstract

The last ten years have seen an enormous upsurge in interest in policies for community care in all countries of the developed world. They all have ageing populations and most have governments committed to tight control of welfare expenditure. A major consequence has been the growing attention paid to the position of 'carers' - those who find themselves caring for their relatives in their own homes and for no pay. A considerable academic literature now exists documenting the problems of such carers, and pointing out that it is women who largely bear the burden of care. This book looks at the problem of care from a different angle and asks the question 'Why do people care?'. Using findings from her study of carers living in Canterbury, England, Clare Ungerson discusses the many different kinds of answer to that question.

In particular she draws attention to how men and women carers explain their

motivation differently, how women, especially, are 'negotiated' into caring by their relatives, and how men and women make sense of the caring they do using different kinds of language. The book develops our understanding of the complicated issues of familial love, duty, and kinship-based responsibility, and of masculine and feminine identity in the context of informal care. It will appeal to a wide audience, including students and teachers of social policy, sociology, women's studies, community care planners, social workers, and carers themselves.

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More information

Published date: **1987**

Identifiers

Local EPrints ID: **33962**

URI: **<https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/id/eprint/33962>**

ISBN: **0422785008**

PURE UUID: **d3de13bf-0594-4b72-9564-837402f12ce3**

Catalogue record

Date deposited: **05 Feb 2008**

Last modified: **30 May 2018 16:31**

Export record

ASCII Citation



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