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Welfare Reform in Australia and the United States: Tracing the Emergence and Critiques of the New Paternalism and Mutual Obligation

Kate Green, University of Sydney

ABSTRACT

Over the past thirty years, there has been a gradual shift toward the adoption of ‘new right’ ideologies in post-industrial advanced capitalist welfare state policies. Although the concept of the welfare state emerged out of capitalism’s structural inability to provide for the lower classes, this notion has been re-conceptualised to now include discourse about recipients’ obligations to the state. This paper traces the emergence and critiques of this concept of mutual obligation by focusing on the lead-up and response to the 1997 *Social Security Amendment (Work-for-the-Dole) Act* in Australia and the 1996 *Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act* in the U.S.

A native of Philadelphia, Kate Green lived in NSW for two and a half years. She was awarded a Master of Arts in Social Policy with Merit from the University of Sydney in May 2002. Kate has since returned to the U.S. and currently works with Chicago Legal Advocacy for Incarcerated Mothers.

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