

Public Abstract

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Most of the books and academic articles written on single motherhood have been devoted to poor or middle class single mothers. In this study I interview working class single mothers. Their unique position between the poor and the middle class leads to interesting observations about how women who straddle class lines understand and act out their social class. These women, while aware of the contradictions between their realities of being low income and their aspirations to belong to a higher class, attempted to establish a middle class sense of identity through their possessions and purchases, the way they raise their children and by resisting being associated with those they perceive to be in a lower class as well as those in the upper class. These findings indicate that class is a relevant feature in the life of working class single mothers and that they call upon strategies to maintain a sense of class identity and dignity.