



THE REFORMATION OF WELFARE

THE NEW FAITH OF THE
LABOUR MARKET

**TOM BOLAND
AND RAY GRIFFIN**



THE REFORMATION OF WELFARE

The New Faith of the Labour Market

Tom Boland and Ray Griffin



First published in Great Britain in 2021 by

Bristol University Press
University of Bristol
1-9 Old Park Hill
Bristol
BS2 8BB
UK
t: +44 (0)117 954 5940
e: bup-info@bristol.ac.uk

Details of international sales and distribution partners are available at
bristoluniversitypress.co.uk

© Bristol University Press 2021

The digital PDF versions of Chapters 1 and 3 are available Open Access and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 2.0 license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/2.0>) which permits reproduction and distribution for non-commercial use without further permission provided the original work is attributed.

The work of the last author was supported by the HECAT project, funded within the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation Horizon 2020, under grant number 870702.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-5292-1132-0 hardcover

ISBN 978-1-5292-1135-1 ePub

ISBN 978-1-5292-1134-4 ePdf

The right of Tom Boland and Ray Griffin to be identified as authors of this work has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved: no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the prior permission of Bristol University Press.

Every reasonable effort has been made to obtain permission to reproduce copyrighted material. If, however, anyone knows of an oversight, please contact the publisher.

The statements and opinions contained within this publication are solely those of the authors and not of the University of Bristol or Bristol University Press. The University of Bristol and Bristol University Press disclaim responsibility for any injury to persons or property resulting from any material published in this publication.

Bristol University Press works to counter discrimination on grounds of gender, race, disability, age and sexuality.

Cover design: blu inc, Bristol

Front cover image: Cadeau (The Gift). Museum: © Man Ray Trust.

Album/Alamy Stock Photo.

Bristol University Press uses environmentally responsible print partners.

Printed in Great Britain by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY



In memory of Paddy O'Carroll,
1937–2015

Introduction: Paradoxes of Welfare

Welfare policy is both in crisis and stagnant, a chronic stasis. Occasionally there are moments of change and transformation – times of reform – yet repeatedly, these yield to the return of familiar tensions and frustrations. This is because there is a contradiction or paradox at the heart of the welfare state; it both ‘giveth and taketh away’ (Job 1:21) With one hand it supports the unemployed, yet simultaneously it demands certain things of them, mainly that they seek work, but also attend meetings, undergo assessment, write CVs, work on themselves, retrain, and strive continuously to redeem themselves. These demands are usually made with threats of sanctions for non-compliance: reduced payments or being cut off completely. This is known as ‘welfare conditionality’ or ‘activation’ in recent academic or policy terms, and obviously the welfare state also provides for others in a different manner, for instance, the retired, but the impulse towards ‘reform’ has been extended in recent decades, for instance, towards single-parents.

Intermittently, how the unemployed are treated becomes a contentious public issue, with interest waxing and waning as the dole queue lengthens, and policymakers, scholars and critics incessantly debate the issue and produce research supporting their arguments. Strikingly, key ideas seem to persist over time; for instance, the contemporary idea of ‘rights and responsibilities’ echoes older ideas of morality or good character. There is a notable confluence of right and left: conservatives argue for more state investment in getting the unemployed back to work, despite their historic antipathy to the ‘big state’; socialists argue for policies which ensure that everyone is supported into work.

Even the big ‘revolutionary’ ideas have advocates across the political divide: the idea of a universal basic income – basically tax-funded support for everyone – is supported by radical leftists like Guy Standing (2015), and right-wing polemicists like Charles Murray (2006). Taking little heed of such radical alternatives, policymakers continue with ‘welfare reforms’, tinkering with systems of support and activation, to ‘get people back to work’ at almost any cost. Meanwhile, the looming threats of roboticization or automation and ecological unsustainability are acknowledged but scarcely addressed: what matters is the present, the current rate of unemployment, the effectiveness of existing activation measures. Politicians occasionally announce sweeping new reforms, but under inspection this is ‘old wine in new bottles’, the repetition or reiteration of strikingly familiar impulses.

Why? In this book we argue that welfare reforms are derived from cultural models within modern society that are decisively influenced by the Judeo-Christian inheritance. Both the impulse to give, to alleviate the suffering of the poor, and the attempt to reform or redeem people have theological or religious roots. These ideas exist in tension, in varying strengths and combinations in modern states, which are the inheritors of the ‘pastoral power’ of the medieval church. Recognizing and understanding our ideas and impulses towards reform can help us understand social policy in the present.

Herein, we will explore unemployment, work, careers, jobseeking, CVs and more, through strange yet familiar religious ideas – purgatory, vocation, providence, confession, pilgrimage and so forth. This is not an exercise in obscurity – theological or historical expertise is not needed to read this book – but a matter of reflexivity, of recognizing the presence of half-forgotten ideas at the heart of how we think about the world, both at the micro and macro level – individual life and the wider world. Of course, there are many intellectual inheritances, beyond the theological, but these are perhaps the most neglected, due to modern claims to live in a secular world or a post-religious society. Ironically, the claim to have gone beyond superstition is an idea rooted in theology; the rejection of tradition or iconoclasm – literally the breaking of idols – is a constantly retold story in the West. Our work here is neither for nor against religion, nor does it suggest we should believe in anything. Rather, it attempts to recover an awareness of how certain ideas, cultural models and attitudes towards life are derived from religion and shape our lives and institutions, most particularly welfare policy and unemployment.

Our approach

Our approach is best described as archaic anthropology – an attempt to historicize the present, to recognize the presence of the past in the present. These initially incongruous terms, archaic and anthropology, are combined to provoke a rethinking of modern phenomena, to cultivate a sense of the contingency and historicity of everyday society, not of secret origins or underlying structures, but to restore a long-term perspective on state, society, economy and culture, things hidden in plain sight. Archaic, in its original Greek sense of *arche*, refers to central and persistent ideas rather than the contemporary image of lost fragments of the ancient world. Anthropology entails participation and observation; an ethnography of our shared experience. Our work draws on almost a decade of ethnographic engagement in the curious world of unemployment, interviews with the unemployed, explorations of welfare offices, media discourses, policy making, policy submissions, statistics, jobseeking advice and digital platforms; there is no scientific white coat which separates us neatly from our data. These explorations are then illuminated by the genealogical method of Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and Agamben, who challenge us to recognize the historicity of things and ideas that appear to have no history – key ideas like choice or work or selfhood.

This method does not mean searching for ‘origins’ but recognizing our deep entanglement in history and that therefore religious ideas have shaped supposedly secular modern phenomena; even economic categories like unemployment, welfare or the labour market. Nietzsche suggested that even though ‘God is dead, and we have killed him’, religious ideas permeate our contemporary morality and attitudes towards suffering. Weber reveals how religious ethics inform our contemporary economic practices – most famously, the Protestant work ethic provides the ‘spirit of capitalism’. Foucault’s studies of governmental power illuminate the welfare state as an echo of the pastoral power of the church over its flock. Agamben identified how the economy and the state are interpreted as providential mechanisms within modernity, imprinting a theological model despite secularization. Taken together, these theorists provide an approach to history which allows us to recognize how official policyspeak and academic scholarship create the very things they seek to describe.

Reader beware! This book is not a history of the welfare state or unemployment, or a contribution to policy, or a detailed case study of contemporary experiences of jobseekers. Nor is it an excoriating

critique of neoliberal ideology and the contemporary ‘dismantling of the welfare state’; it will not suddenly awaken policymakers or politicians to the futility or cruelty of their policies, or inspire resistance or prompt revolution. Nor does it propose any new solution to the intractable problems of welfare. Such books already exist, some of which are reviewed herein. Instead, this book is a call to recognize the presence of history in the present and how religious ideas animate the contemporary world. Such a reflexive and philosophical undertaking is open to any reader, specialist or otherwise, who is open to considering that their ideas may be derived from society or from history, and often in uncomfortable ways – and that even critics may have common ground with their opponents. Recognizing the persistence of history, especially our disavowed religious inheritance, is vital to understanding why perennial problems seem so intractable, and offers a clue as to why utilitarian policy solutions do not fix society. Work and welfare are more foundational, perhaps even primordial, to Western lives than is commonly imagined.

Most critics of welfare insist that the capacity to contest widely accepted definitions of how the world works is an important political tool, and any historical approach asserts that the world was not always thus, and might be remade. Certainly, our approach joins them in rejecting trite generalizations about the inevitability of certain political and social arrangements. An alternative and less comforting implication is that we can only think at all by using historically inherited ideas, and therefore, thinking differently is difficult indeed. Importantly, composing alternative histories or launching critiques or gathering anthropological evidence are practices with a long intellectual history. Rather than changing the world, we emphasize understanding our culture and society, with the acknowledgement that how we think about our world matters. Recognizing neglected historical influences on the present and the tensions and contradictions within them is a crucial precursor to trying to think anew, indeed another meaning of ‘radicalism’ is returning to roots.

The new trials of Job

Recent times have seen the emergence of the neologism ‘jobseeker’, basically meaning the unemployed. Words may seem like mere labels for an unchanging economic reality, yet the terms used to describe something shape it. Indeed, the term ‘unemployed’ is reshaped by the emergence of the statistical category of ‘unemployment’, which emerged in the late nineteenth century as states began to keep national

records of the numbers claiming poor relief (Walters, 2000; Burnett, 2002). This implied that not having work was a temporary economic situation, in contrast to medieval categories of ‘pauper’ or ‘poor’ which indicated a permanent state – or terms like ‘idler’ or ‘vagabond’ which implied immorality or even criminality (Mollat, 1986).

While the term ‘unemployed’ evokes the gathering of individuals together into a society-wide category of unemployment, ‘jobseeker’ envisages a person as a single economic unit. They are imagined as an active participant in the labour market, searching for opportunities, investing in their skills; an entrepreneur selling their labour to employers. Yet, simultaneously, they are unemployed, dependent on the welfare office, enduring months of frustrated jobseeking. The logic of welfare activation and conditionality is that unemployment and welfare jobseeking should be arranged so that an individual is compelled to engage in the labour market. The market competition for work has moral significance.

A revealing parallel to jobseeking is the Old Testament book of Job. Job – Iyov in Hebrew – is a pious and prosperous man who is tested by God at the instigation of the devil in a quixotic story. Catastrophically, his livestock, servants and children die in turn, yet distraught Job still blesses God in his prayers. After further torments, Job’s wife beseeches him to curse God. Job’s friends suggest that he must have done wrong to receive such a fate, and eventually Job accuses God of being unjust. One of Job’s friends chastises Job, saying God is never wrong and that we cannot comprehend all that God does. God appears in a whirlwind, demonstrating his reality and power, and restores Job’s good fortune, granting him a long life and children. Suffering here appears not as something to be overcome or circumvented by action or ignored in passivity but as a refiner of faith, a purifier of the soul.

The book of Job presents a poetic parable of suffering and faith – widely read to this day – and addresses the theological conundrum of theodicy – why an all-powerful, all-knowing and benevolent God allows bad things happen to good people. Religions offer justifications, whereas political realism simply says, ‘And the weak suffer what they must’ (Varoufakis, 2016). The sufferings of Job are also distinctly economic; his fortune depends upon God who then tests his faith by ruining him, yet without harming him personally.

The poetic myth of Job, commonly dated sometime between the 6th and 4th century BC, is a persistent source of food for thought, inspiring reflection on more immediate philosophical and political concerns: Negri (2009) argues that Job reflects labour resisting

capitalism; Deleuze (1994) suggests that Job demands recognition and accountability from a capricious deity; Spivack (1958) sees the parable as the development of an inner conscience and personal relationship to God; darker hints of sacrifice are detected by Girard (1987); for Jung ([1952] 2010), the story of Job reveals the devilish dimension of God, despite Christian and Enlightenment banishments of evil – considered simply as the absence of God or reason.

Each theorist attempts to explicate a hidden dimension of the parable, yet really the message is familiar and suffuses Christian, Western and modern culture. Misfortune is a test which tries our fortitude. What doesn't kill us makes us stronger. The sufferings of Job are a trial of faith; those who persist in hope despite everything will eventually succeed. Implicitly, suffering is a way of purifying, purging individuals of their sinful tendencies.

Growth through adversity is not only part of our philosophy of life; it suffuses our policies, and it is institutionalized in how the unemployed are treated. The economy is our primary test, where the invisible hand of the market replicates the hand of God (Cox, 2016). Those who need state support, especially the unemployed, are forced to suffer and put to the test of seeking work. Effectively, the state becomes the incarnation of providence, testing individuals to the limit (Agamben, 2011). Yet, like Job, the jobseeker must not despair but hopefully and interminably seek salvation in the form of employment (Pecchenino, 2015).

Strikingly, Job's good fortune is attributed to him being favoured by God – he is selected or elected by God's predetermined will. Just as swiftly, he is cast out of God's favour, a reversal of fortune faster than economic recession. Yet, he remonstrates with God, demanding justice, a fair test, a second chance (Deleuze, 1994). This enigmatic relationship of fate and faith, tests and trials, purging and redemption animates the modern economy and welfare state to this day.

The problem of unemployment

Politicians, policymakers and the public at large view unemployment as a problem to be solved, principally by jobs, delivered by economic growth, in the pursuit of full employment. Despite occasional recessions, temporary interruptions to continuous and compounded economic growth, almost every year more people work globally to create more goods and services than ever before. Yet since World War II, every decade has seen rates of unemployment edging upwards gradually almost everywhere, somehow, despite repeated economic recovery and growth – there were still people who needed a job. Modern capitalism

is a work culture of unlimited growth, but it is also haunted by a nostalgic dream that once upon a time everyone had work and that the economy was stable and functional; states across the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) work tirelessly to reduce unemployment to almost nothing; from their perspective the economic shocks simply temporarily enlarge the problem.

Through boom and bust, states manage unemployment continuously, not just through providing financial supports to alleviate poverty but through active labour market policies (ALMPs). These ALMPs have replaced alms for the poor – supports are no longer charitable, but exist to support work. ALMPs are varied, but basically they are attempts to reform or transform the individual, either by giving them training or education – ‘human capital building’ – or by putting pressure on them to find work, sometimes known as ‘welfare conditionality’. Rather than simply being supported, the unemployed must take part in case-officer meetings, group engagement, psychological and algorithmic profiling and motivational or CV workshops, and must carry out extensive monitored job searches and accept almost any employment or training they are offered. Failure to comply will eventually or immediately lead to sanctions; cuts or suspension of welfare payments, leaving individuals with no support.

Contemporary academic research has explored welfare conditionality extensively in different jurisdictions; for instance, the Danish system is more oriented towards flexible working, the French to rights-based administration, the Irish towards local adaptations and caprice, and the UK system towards increasingly harsher and punitive approaches (Boland and Griffin, 2015; Dwyer, 2019; Hansen, 2019). Across this research, it is clear that welfare sanctions sometimes push people into poverty, debt, homelessness, black-market activity and even suicide, with mental and physical health impacts which are hard to measure. Indeed, even those who are never sanctioned are pressured and stressed by the ever-present threat of sanctions.

Officially, ALMPs, conditionality and sanctions exist to get people back to work, and there is some evidence that they may shorten the average period of unemployment, although such statistical findings have been contested (Card et al, 2015). Critics have suggested that ALMPs simply accelerate a cycle of low-pay/no-pay by pushing individuals to take up precarious work (Shildrick and McDonald, 2012). While the threat of sanction may be a motivation, the actual impact of sanction on an individual may render them less likely to gain employment.

Despite these criticisms, the effort to ‘reform’ the unemployed intensifies: there is increased psychologized testing and behavioural

economics style ‘nudges’ to ‘activate’ jobseekers (Friedli and Stearn, 2015; Frayne, 2019). Pressure is applied to more and more groups, for instance, the chronically ill, migrants, people with disabilities, single parents of increasingly young children and those in part-time work (Watts and Fitzpatrick, 2018; Dwyer, 2019). Entitlements become increasingly conditionalized, for instance, the increased use of conditional cash transfers (CCTs) in South America and elsewhere which make support dependent on certain behaviour, re-education or even health or lifestyle choices (Humpage, 2019). Welfare conditionality has gone digital, with jobseekers required to register on certain websites and complete supervised online searches, having their CVs rewritten by motivational coaches.

Beyond examining the largely negative experiences of unemployed people subjected to welfare conditionality, scholars have analyzed the political and media debates around these policies, researched the inner workings of welfare offices and organizations and traced the impact on the experience of work (Demazière, 2020; Dwyer and Wright, 2014; Jensen and Tyler, 2015; Fletcher and Wright, 2018; Jordan, 2018; Whelan, 2020). All this cannot be summarized here, but broadly what emerges is that rather than simply supporting the unemployed, contemporary welfare offices intervene in the lives of individuals; basically, states govern the lives of jobseekers.

Governing the unemployed

The relationship between the welfare office and the unemployed may seem simple, it is even described by policy documents and official forms as a contract; the welfare office provides welfare payments and offers support and guidance in exchange for compliance with requirements for jobseeking by so-called ‘clients’ (DSP, 2012). Critics point out that this contractualization of welfare entitlements is effectively an offer you can’t refuse. Clearly, this is not a free-market arrangement but a power relationship, which we describe herein as disciplinary or governmental power.

This approach is associated with the field of governmentality studies, inspired by the work of Michel Foucault. By joining ‘govern’ and ‘mentality’, this approach refers to how states think about society, using academic disciplines, statistics, policy and so forth to conjure up a series of institutions which shape individual lives (Dean, 2010). This is not a simple dystopian nightmare of government control – though historically liberal thinkers have frequently criticized state tyranny – this form of power is taken on by individuals, literally empowering them.

For instance, without the governmentality of education, this book would scarcely be written or read. So, governmentality has multiple effects: its knowledge redefines reality, its disciplinary power pervades society and it shapes individuals' conduct and selfhood.

For Foucault, governmentality implied a certain governing rationality, an orientation towards transforming the lives of individuals and entire societies in pursuit of various ends. Broadly, governmentality assumes that it is always possible to improve and reform, to govern better, and attempts to survey the population and produce interventions and policies which 'optimize' people in specific ways, in an 'eternal optimism' that things can be made better (Miller and Rose, 2013). Yet, this governing rationality is not universal reason or infallible logic but a particular approach, expressing certain values and pursuing particular ends.

Governmental power is most visible at the street level; for instance, the lives of jobseekers are shaped by requirements to attend meetings, account for themselves, prove job-search efforts, undergo assessment, retrain and so forth (Brodkin and Marsden, 2013). Such power is clearly disciplining—shaping people's conduct by exercising intermittent surveillance and demanding compliance. Beyond this, academic disciplines shape how unemployment is interpreted as a problem (Bacchi, 2015). A combination of ideas from economics and sociology – explored in [Chapter 4](#) – suggests that the unemployed will fall into a poverty trap and draw the dole rather than work unless incentivized by welfare conditionality, that they will lose their skills and 'work-readiness' if they are not compelled into jobseeking, and incrementally enter a downward spiral of 'subjective deterioration' because work provides various social and individual goods. Consequently, jobseekers tend to blame themselves for failure to secure employment, rather than the lack of suitable openings or the number of candidates (Sharone, 2013).

Strikingly, two meanings of 'discipline' meet in the welfare office: first, policy is created by academic disciplines – forms of knowledge which define social phenomena in key ways – posing the problem of unemployment in specific ways (Bacchi, 2015). Second, the unemployed are subject to 'discipline'; interventions into their personal conduct, as though joblessness were a sickness or moral failing. Of course, the problem of widespread job shortages is acknowledged, yet ALMPs never create jobs, only reshape individual conduct. While in 1909 Beveridge published *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, the underlying assumption since then and long before is that unemployment is a problem of government.

Cruel to be kind?

Why must the unemployed be made to suffer? ALMPs primarily seek to free the unemployed from their situation – even to the point of being considered emancipation (Hansen, 2019). Welfare conditionality clearly has negative impacts, yet officially it is only ‘cruel to be kind’, a form of tough love, a sort of testing or challenging of the unemployed to motivate them to find jobs, despite being ineffective (Fletcher and Flint, 2018). How can we explain this government rationality? Why is suffering essential to the system? Previously we have described this impulse metaphorically as chemotherapy (Boland and Griffin, 2016), highlighting the medical model imposed upon unemployment, as though it were a pathology to be cured by tough but purifying measures. Yet, there is more at play: ALMPs are not just invasive treatments, and work coaches demand not just better conduct but also that the unemployed examine themselves. Furthermore, the test of the transformation of the unemployed individual is the labour market.

Unsurprisingly, many critics diagnose capitalism as the root problem; for instance, Grover (2012) suggests that these emergent forms of harsh conditionality serve the purpose of ‘commodifying labour’ – that is, turning individual lives into labour, a useful resource for employers, capitalists who exploit the productivity of real work to accumulate wealth. Furthermore, Grover (2019) argues that the state is complicit in these processes, as it exerts power over citizens, imposing precarity, austerity and inequality through the machinery of the welfare state – the very institution which was supposed to alleviate these difficulties.

Supposedly capitalism is ‘liberal’ in the sense of cultivating market freedoms, yet welfare conditionality is authoritarian: a paradoxical hybrid of ‘liberal authoritarianism’. In *Punishing the Poor* (2009), Wacquant describes the emergence of a hybrid ‘centaur state’, which deregulates and allows liberties to business and especially financial capitalism, but simultaneously imposes a starkly authoritarian rule upon the poor. This is most noticeable where states are ‘tough on crime’, through the growth of prisons and militarization of policing, but largely stems from welfare reform – dismantling and conditionalizing the welfare system which drives poverty and racial ghettoization, considered as problems of ‘law and order’ rather than economics and social policy. While there is something to this punitive–turn thesis, it scarcely accounts for the extensive governmental attempts to transform or reform jobseekers.

For decades researchers have examined the shaming and stigmatization of welfare claimants, and particularly the use of moralizing concepts of

the deserving and undeserving poor (Whelan, 2020). Such ideas are expressed in the media, increasingly as a form of popular entertainment (Jensen and Tyler, 2015), in politicized policymaking (Gaffney and Millar, 2019) and are even expressed in the very processes and architecture of welfare activation (Wright, 2016). Strikingly, those who are unemployed often tend to reproduce stigmatizing discourses about other, ‘real’ unemployed people – the ‘skivers/shirkers/spongers’ who have supposedly ‘never worked a day in their lives’ (Shildrick and MacDonald, 2013).

Indeed, stigmatization can be considered as a form of social control: Imogen Tyler’s *Stigma* (2020) argues that, beyond temporarily spoiling the identity of individuals through social shaming, concerted political and institutional efforts to stigmatize welfare claimants work precisely to reshape behaviour and leave psychic and even physical marks on the unemployed. Moving beyond the well-established ideas of Goffman about social-role stigmatization and the individual negotiation of shame, Tyler argues that stigmatization is a distinctly political and governmental project which produces docile – and damaged – jobseekers, and can only be resisted through collective solidarity.

Yet beyond the logic of the ‘stigma machine’, clearly welfare reform has a broader project than simply punishing the poor. Specifically, activation aims to retrain, reform and improve the unemployed, making them better jobseekers and eventually workers. From policymakers to street-level bureaucrats, the ambition is to reform the unemployed, and while moralizing judgements and harsh decisions are part of welfare conditionality, the system is not simply capriciously cruel. To understand this rationality of purifying people through suffering we must turn to theology.

Theology resurrected

For centuries the West has proclaimed its secular nature, yet there is something ironically religious in proclaiming a new age. Many social sciences are experiencing a ‘theological turn’ (Juergensmeyer, 2013; Schwarzkopf, 2020) which examines the religious roots of meaning, belief and the sacred in modernity (Habermas, 2008). The contemporary reformation of welfare is the result of states incrementally institutionalizing theological ideas through welfare policies, and thereby transforming the lives of individuals – something churches did more directly for centuries.

Most scholars of the welfare state consign the influence of religion to the past: the standard story of the influence of religion on the welfare state

is largely confined to the idea of charity. Before there were workhouses and poorhouses, medieval Europe gave alms to the poor and supported the destitute within the parish out of Christian obligation. Early theologians such as Pelagius and Dominus variously debated the morality of riches and obligations to the poor; for instance, St. Francis insisted on the idea of personal poverty, and many apocalyptic preachers demanded the radical redistribution of wealth. Yet, for millennia, Augustinian ideas of charity held sway: all humankind, rich and the poor, are fallen sinners, continuously straying from God's commandments and therefore always in need of redemption, and thus, charity should be a regular yet voluntary obligation (Holland, 2019). Welfare effectively occurred via the religious practice of expiating sins by giving alms to the poor. Eventually, the state took over the care of the poor from the church and parish authorities, along with the moral ideas of Christianity – the condemnation of idleness and the idealization of work.

Crucially, reforming welfare policy is not simply a matter of fine-tuning rules, processes and institutions within the state but follows cultural models. While political discussions often focus on the costs of welfare payments and their impact on the economy, these numbers describe deeper concerns; the lives, the behaviour, the very being of those who claim welfare payments. Ideas like 'incentives', 'culture of dependency' or 'human capital' may initially seem like academic abstractions, but they reflect inherited ideas. Policies which are simply described as 'labour market reforms' or 'activation' are attempts to transform individuals: whether through sticks and carrots of incentives or education and training, the aim is to reshape the attitudes, behaviour and decisions of individuals. This is an attempt at 'reform' – to purify and save the individual.

Architects of welfare conditionality are not coy about this goal; they tend to carefully avoid moralizing and religious language, but they explicitly aim to transform the unemployed into active jobseekers. Obviously, there are different approaches: some focus on incentives – which implies the unemployed are lazy, feckless and greedy, or too proud to take humble work and therefore need reformation; others formulate arguments around the 'culture of poverty' or 'welfare dependency' which imply the unemployed need to be re-educated in the 'work-ethic'. Recognizing that these concepts are shaped at least partially by religious inheritances may help us to better understand these ideas and the hold they exert on the imaginations of policymakers and populations.

Yet, this book is not simply a critique which identifies others as 'ideological' but a reflexive interrogation of how our Judeo-Christian

culture shapes our thoughts and lives today. Theological ideas are adapted and adopted by economics, but also sociology, anthropology, psychology and so forth. Specifically, the crucial idea here is that humans can be transformed by their experiences, yet they make their own choices and actions. This is the idea of socialization, but also of salvation. These ideas suffuse Western society beyond the ivory tower – which was hardly their origin in any case – and influence how states govern their subjects.

Crucially, states assume that individuals are transformable and that suffering and challenges will make them stronger. Therefore the state *reforms institutions to reform individuals*, historically by containing them within actual spaces – poorhouses, asylums and even work camps (Fletcher, 2015). Yet now, these are diffused throughout society, and the individual pressured, enticed and empowered to reform themselves in line with the priorities of governance. Perhaps these governmental projects are often ineffectual or may also be partially resisted by those subject to reformation, but what matters is how they permeate our contemporary thinking, almost to the eclipse of any other ideas, as the only way forward.

What is at stake in this book?

This book is intended to be thought provoking, exploring new avenues for understanding the contemporary transformations of welfare. Yet, it is relatively accessible, not requiring the reader to have an expert understanding of the sociology of unemployment, welfare policy, labour-market economics or esoteric theological knowledge. Rather than exposing secret hidden histories, this book restores connections, allowing us to recognize how the relatively well-known ideas of the Judeo-Christian world animate the modern world. These are usually discounted as fairy tales, yet the argument is not that policymakers believe in metaphysics or superstitions, but that our underlying ideas – models of human choice, versions of self-transformation, idealizations of work – inform and animate the welfare state. As such, this book is inevitably centred on the distinctly Western Judeo-Christian inheritance which matters mostly in Europe and in the Americas; the ideas presented here will be less resonant or even irrelevant for other places.

The phrase ‘reformation’ inescapably evokes Protestantism, which marks the rejection of alms and charity alongside the growth of reformatory institutions. Yet, new modes of ‘policing the poor’, anticipating the welfare state, predate Luther and Calvin (Michiels)

and Van Krieken, 1990). Indeed, Catholicism had its own reformation which equally set out ways of reforming individuals; for instance, inventing purgatory and penitential pilgrimages or regular confessions. Thus, this book is about the tensions between different principles which exist within Christianity rather than being for or against its various versions. Any religion or culture has competing demands and ideals within it, rather than a simple coherent ideology, and to an extent this book is an attempt to redress the current imbalance whereby we have drifted towards a punitive rather than forgiving ethic.

Thus, the book is clearly neither for nor against religion – indeed, the whole idea of assessing religion as if from outside is absurd. Claims to be post-religious, atheistic, secular and so forth rely, ironically, on Judaic or Christian models of iconoclasm, anti-idolatry and theological models of separate church and state. Rejecting religious ideas ironically reiterates the gesture of Moses and subsequent prophets who denounced idol worship as vain superstition – our aim is to recognize how these ideas shape us. Our archaic anthropology suggests the importance of recognizing that contemporary culture exists in the aftermath of millennia of organized belief, which not only contributes to how we organize the state and economy but constitutes the deep background of our philosophical ideas which are not mere abstractions, but shape how we experience the world and interpret our lives.

This book attempts to expand the horizons of existing scholarship; there is extensive and excellent research on welfare and unemployment, on individual experiences, social organization, cultural ideas and policy, yet the actual impact of this research is somewhat disappointing – certainly we were disappointed by the impact of our own research which was highly critical of welfare activation in Ireland. Whether in academic papers, the popular press or even in parliament, criticism does not have the desired effect of reversing the turn towards activation and instituting more humane treatment of the unemployed. Perhaps the ideological proponents of welfare activation are more convincing, or governments may be adherents of neoliberal ideology. Or perhaps, things might be even worse were it not for these critiques, which restrain other impulses in a plural public sphere. Perhaps we need more resonant cultural ideas.

We suggest that contemporary critique does not do enough to understand the deeper political and cultural impetus towards welfare activation. Critics often ‘reveal’ neoliberal ideology in politics or policy which unfairly suggests that others are delusional or evil. Such an approach not only tends to provoke policymakers into defensive positions but also frames the debate in terms of truth and illusion, so

that rival think tanks and academics can return the criticism – decrying ‘left-wing propaganda’ or ‘bleeding hearts groupthink’. The capacity of words to reveal the truth and change minds is often overestimated; indeed, criticism suffers from the law of diminishing returns – the more there is, the less effective it is – or the perverse logics of an arms race – the more one side critiques, the more they are critiqued in turn during an endless culture war. This book is not a revelation of other people’s illusions, but ruminates upon our shared culture.

Outline

Rather than starting at the next chapter, readers should note that many of the chapters of this book work as stand-alone analyses, particularly from [Chapter 4](#) to [7](#), and readers are welcome to sample these first. These focus on particular elements of economic life – work, welfare, jobseeking and CVs – and how deeper theological and religious ideas considerably shape our modern practices. These are not obscure ideas but remarkably familiar for Western ‘post-Christian’ readers, and largely still circulate in popular culture today; ideas of redemptive labour, purgatorial purification, pilgrimages of self-transformation and penitential conversions. Each of these appear initially as arcane superstitions, yet we will argue that they are part and parcel of contemporary thought – how we model human nature and society today.

So, in [Chapter 4](#) we revisit Weber’s famous Protestant ethic thesis, to examine the centrality of work in modern culture. Beyond the idea of frugal living and relentless reinvestment of profits, we suggest that work is also considered as a mode of self-transformation. While Weber turned to Benjamin Franklin as his exemplar of capitalism, we analyze Maslow’s idea of self-actualization, whereby to work is to test yourself and grow. From there, we examine how the absence of work in unemployment is considered in the popular imagination and sociology. Curiously, the absence of a job is figured as the opposite of monastic life, not just lacking discipline but implicitly damned rather than saved.

Extending an earlier article, ‘The Purgatorial Ethic and the Spirit of Welfare’, our fifth chapter outlines how contemporary welfare activation derives inspiration from purgatory, imposing purifying and redemptive suffering on individuals. Dismissed as mere superstition in modernity, purgatory returns in the numerous institutions of modernity which manage transformation, from penitentiaries to poorhouses. These buildings are now replaced with individualized treatment, so that

jobseekers carry a sense of perpetual obligation to redeem themselves; purgatory pervades their lives.

Initially more hopeful, our sixth chapter focuses on pilgrimage, the ritual of penance through travelling to a shrine, as informing the process of jobseeking – for the unemployed and job-changers or the perpetually precarious. Pilgrims seek out signs of favour and face personal challenges along their road, and thus, economic outcomes are converted into a moral drama of faith in the face of adversity, a balance of hope and despair. Such metaphors persist in modernity, where almost anything can be characterized as a ‘journey’, yet the idea that it would reform one’s character or reveal the truth is a distinctly religious idea. Interestingly, pilgrimage is markedly individualistic, even in supposedly communal medieval culture, so salvation is a personal matter, despite the collective problems of economics.

In [Chapter 7](#) we focus extensively on the CV or résumé, the key document of the labour market, desired by employers and required by welfare officers. Such a practical document nonetheless has a religious history in the obligation to confess, to reflect upon oneself, to tell the truth about oneself, to transform oneself in order to profess oneself to the world. Each tailored CV is a statement of faith in oneself and the labour market, yet in a world of proliferating jobseeking and compulsory applications for the unemployed, these supplications are made over and over again.

Our theoretical position and methodological approach are outlined in [Chapter 2](#), a combination of the sociological and the historical which we term archaic anthropology, an exploration of the presence of the past in the present. Drawing inspiration from key figures, particularly Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault and Agamben, we outline an approach which allows us to recognize how older, ancient, even archaic ideas echo, persist, animate and give meaning to the present. While our concern is welfare in particular, the broader roots of modern states in the pastoral power of the medieval church and the providential interpretation of the economy as the ‘hand of God’ are introduced to contextualize the impulse towards reform.

Informed by this method, our relatively self-contained chapters combine together into a larger argument centred on the idea of reform, which is explored in depth in our third chapter in regard to both policy reform and the reformation of individual unemployed people through welfare activation. Key ideas which are developed throughout the book are introduced here, particularly the idea of the transformative effect of suffering, imposed by governmentality in an effort to reform, and the idea of the economy as a test or even of life itself as a trial

INTRODUCTION

which reveals the truth. While punitive and stigmatizing impulses are part of the process, the governance of welfare is oriented towards reform, demanding work discipline and personal transformation, but also incorporating individual choices and positioning the market as the final judge; a providential expression of divine will. Combining detailed social-policy analysis and theological sources, this chapter is perhaps more challenging, but it is the key to our thesis, and also to our recommendations, which are summarized in our conclusion, that reform can be excessive and welfare would be better off wholly unconditional, especially in the face of contemporary challenges.

References

- Agamben, G. (1993) *The Coming Community*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Agamben, G. (1998) *Homo Sacer*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Agamben, G. (2011) *The Kingdom and the Glory: For a Theological Genealogy of Economy and Government*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Agamben, G. (2018) *The Sacrament of Language*, Oxford: Wiley & Sons.
- Agnew, J.C. (1986) *Worlds Apart: The Market and the Theatre in Anglo-American Thought, 1550–1750*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alexander, J. (2004) ‘Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy’, *Sociological Theory*, 22(4), 527–73.
- Allen, A. (2017) *The End of Progress: Decolonising Critical Theory*, Columbia: Columbia University Press.
- Allen, K. (2012) ‘The model pupil who faked the test: social policy in the Irish crisis’, *Critical Social Policy*, 32(3): 422–39.
- Althusser, L. (1971) ‘Ideology and ideological state apparatuses (notes towards an investigation)’ in L. Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays*, London: NLG.
- Anderson, E. (2019) *Private Government: How Employers Rule Our Lives (And Why We Don’t Talk about It)*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Aquinas, T. (1998) *Selected Writings*, London: Penguin.
- Arendt, H. (1989) *The Human Condition*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Augustine, S. (1961) *Confessions*, London: Penguin.
- Bacchi, C. (2015) ‘The turn to problematization: political implications of contrasting interpretive and poststructural adaptations’, *Open Journal of Political Science*, 5: 1–12.
- Baehr, P. and Gordon, D. (2012) ‘Unmasking and disclosure as sociological practices: contrasting modes for understanding religious and other beliefs’, *Journal of Sociology*, 48(4): 380–96.

- Barbier, J. (2004) 'Activation policies: a comparative perspective', in A.S. Pascual (ed) *Are Activation Models Converging in Europe? The European Employment Strategy for Young People*, Brussels: ETUI, pp 47–83.
- Bardwick, J. (1993) *Danger in the Comfort Zone: From Boardroom to Mailroom – How to Break the Entitlement Habit That's Killing American Business*, New York: Amacom Press.
- Bataille, G. (1998) *Essential Writings*, London: Sage.
- Batsleer, J.R. (2008) *Informal Learning in Youth Work*, Los Angeles: Sage.
- Bauman, Z. (1989) *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2000) *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge: Polity.
- Baxandall, P. (2004) *Constructing Unemployment: The Politics of Joblessness in East and West*, Aldershot: Gower Publishing, Ltd.
- Beatty, R. (1989) *The Perfect Cover Letter*, New York: Wiley.
- Beder, S. (2000) *Selling the Work Ethic: From Puritan Pulpit to Corporate PR*, New York: Scribe Publications.
- Beer, D. (2019) *The Quirks of Digital Culture*, London: Emerald Books.
- Benjamin, W. [1921] (1996) *Selected Writings* (Vol. 1), Harvard: Belknap Press.
- Bentham, J. (2010) *The Works of Jeremy Bentham, Vol. 8*, New York: Gale, Making of Modern Law.
- Berlin, I. (1974) 'The divorce between the sciences and the humanities', *Salmagundi*, 27: 9–39.
- Besamusca, J., Stănescu, I. and Vauhkonen, J. (2013) *The European Youth Guarantee: A Reality Check*, Brussels: FEPS.
- Beveridge, W. (1909) *Unemployment: A Problem of Industry*, London: Longmans, Green & Co.
- Bercovitch, S. (2012) *The American Jeremiad*, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Block, J. (2002) *101 Best Resumes to Sell Yourself*, New York: McGraw Hill.
- Boer, R. (2013) 'Revolution in the event: the problem of Kairos', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 30(2): 116–34.
- Boland, T. (2019) *The Spectacle of Critique: From Philosophy to Cacophony*, London: Routledge.
- Boland, T. and Griffin, R. (eds) (2015) *The Sociology of Unemployment*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Boland, T. and Griffin, R. (2016) 'Making sacrifices: how the ungenerous gifts of social welfare constitute the unemployed as scapegoats', *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory*, 17(2): 174–91.
- Boland, T. and Griffin, R. (2018) 'The purgatorial ethic and the spirit of welfare', *Journal of Classical Sociology*, 18(2): 87–103.

- Bolles, R. (1970) *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, New York: Ten Speed Press.
- Boltanski, L. (2011) *On Critique: Towards a Sociology of Emancipation*, London: Polity Press.
- Boltanski, L. and Chiapello, E. (2005) *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, London: Verso.
- Boltanski, L. and Thévenot, L. (2006) *On Justification: Economies of Worth*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bonoli, G. (2013) *The Origins of Active Social Policy: Labour Market and Childcare Policies in a Comparative Perspective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, L. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bright, J. and Earl, J. (2000) *Brilliant CV: What Employers Want to See and How to Say It*, London: Prentice Hall.
- Brodkin, E. and Marston, G. (2013) *Work and the Welfare State: Street-Level Organizations and Workfare Politics*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Bunyan, J. [1678] (1965) *The Pilgrim's Progress*, London: Penguin.
- Burnett, J. (2002) *Idle Hands: The Experience of Unemployment 1790–1990*, London: Routledge.
- Bussi, M. and Geyer, L. (2013) *Youth Guarantees and Recent Developments on Measures against Youth Unemployment: A Mapping Exercise*, Brussels: European Trade Union Institute.
- Butler, J. (1997) *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Butler, J. (1999) *Gender Trouble*, London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2001) 'Giving an account of oneself', *Diacritics*, 31(4): 22–40.
- Butterworth, P., Leach, L.S., Strazdins, L., Olesen, S.C., Rodgers, B. and Broom, D.H. (2011) 'The psychosocial quality of work determines whether employment has benefits for mental health: results from a longitudinal national household panel survey', *Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 68(11): 806–12.
- Callon, M. (1998) 'Introduction: the embeddedness of economic markets in economics', *The Sociological Review*, 46(1): 1–57.
- Campbell, C. (1988) *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Consumerism*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Card, D., Kluge, J. and Weber, A. (2015) *What Works? A Meta-Analysis of Recent Active Labor Market Program Evaluations* (IZA Discussion Paper no. 9236), Bonn: IZA.

- Carey, J. (1987) 'Time, space and the otherworld', *Proceedings of the Harvard Celtic Colloquium*, 7: 1–27.
- Chaucer, G. [1387] (2002) *The Canterbury Tales* (ed. D. Coote), Hertfordshire: Wordsworth editions.
- Cohn, N. (1971) *The Pursuit of the Millennium*, London: Paladin.
- Cohn, N. (1993) *Cosmos, Chaos, and the World to Come: The Ancient Roots of Apocalyptic Faith*, London: Yale University Press.
- Cole, M. (2007) 'Re-thinking unemployment: a challenge to the legacy of Jahoda et al', *Sociology*, 41(6): 1133–49.
- Cole, M. (2008) 'Sociology contra government? The contest for the meaning of unemployment in UK policy debates', *Work, Employment and Society*, 22(1): 27–43.
- Coleman, S. (1996) 'Words as things: language, aesthetics and the objectification of protestant evangelicalism', *Journal of Material Culture*, 1(1): 107–28.
- Coleman, S. and Eade, J. (2004) *Reframing Pilgrimage: Cultures in Motion*, London: Routledge.
- Coote, A. and Franklin, J. (eds) (2013) *Time on Our Side: Why We All Need a Shorter Working Week*, London: NEF.
- Coulter, C. and Nagle, A. (eds) (2015) *Ireland Under Austerity: Neoliberal Crisis, Neoliberal Solutions*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Council of the European Union (2013) 'Council recommendation of 22 April 2013 on establishing a youth guarantee', *Official Journal of the European Union*, 56: 1.
- Cox, H. (2016) *The Market as God*, Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Daguerre, A. (2007) *Active Labour Market Policies and Welfare Reform: Europe and the US in Comparative Perspective*, New York: Springer.
- Dante, A. [1320] (1969) *The Divine Comedy: II – Purgatory*, reprint, London: Penguin.
- Davies, G. (2000) *Religion in Modern Europe: A Memory Mutates*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dawkins, R. (1976) *The Selfish Gene*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dean, J. (2020) *The Good Glow: Charity and the Symbolic Power of Doing Good*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Dean, M. (1995) 'Governing the unemployed self in an active society', *Economy and Society*, 24(4): 559–83.
- Dean, M. (2010) *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*, London: Sage.
- Dean, M. (2012) 'Governmentality meets theology: "The king reigns, but he does not govern"', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 29(3): 145–58.
- Dean, M. (2013) *The Signature of Power*, London: Routledge.

- Dean M. (2017) 'Political acclamation, social media and the public mood', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 20(3): 417–34.
- Dean, M. (2019) 'What is economic theology? A new governmental–political paradigm?', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 36(3): 3–26.
- Deleuze, G. (1994) *Difference and Repetition*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Demazière, D. (2020) 'Job search success among the formerly-unemployed: paradoxically, a matter of self-discipline', *Critical Policy Studies*, DOI:10.1080/19460171.2020.1746372.
- Desiere, S. and Struyven, L. (2021) 'Using artificial intelligence to classify jobseekers: the accuracy–equity trade-off', *Journal of Social Policy*, 50(2): 367–85.
- DeSwaan, A. (1988) *In Care of the State: Health Care, Education and Welfare in Europe and the USA in the Modern Era*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Devereux, E. and Power, M. (2019) 'Fake news? A critical analysis of the “Welfare Cheats, Cheat Us All” campaign in Ireland', *Critical Discourse Studies*, 16(3): 347–62.
- Dingeldey, I. (2007) 'Between workfare and enablement – the different paths to transformation of the welfare state: a comparative analysis of activating labour market policies', *European Journal of Political Research*, 46(6): 823–51.
- DSP [Department of Social Protection] (2012) *Pathways to Work*, Dublin: DSP.
- Dubisch, J. (1996) 'Anthropology as pilgrimage', *Etnofoor*, 9(2): 66–77.
- Dunn, A. (2014) *Rethinking Unemployment and the Work Ethic: Beyond the 'Quasi-Titmuss' Paradigm*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Durkheim, E. (1995) *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, New York: The Free Press.
- DWP [Department for Work and Pensions] (2018) *Jobseeker's Allowance: Back to Work Scheme [JSABWS1] Guide*, Department of Work and Pensions: London.
- Dwyer, P. (ed) (2019) *Dealing with Welfare Conditionality: Implementation and Effects*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Dwyer, P. and Wright, S. (2014) 'Universal credit, ubiquitous conditionality and its implications for social citizenship', *The Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 22(1): 27.
- Edgell, S. (2012) *The Sociology of Work*, London: Sage.
- Edling, N. (ed) (2019) *The Changing Meanings of the Welfare State: Histories of a Key Concept in the Nordic Countries*, New York: Berghahn Books.
- Ehrler, F. (2012) 'New public governance and activation', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 32(5/6): 327–39.

- Eichhorst, W. and Rinne, U. (2017) *The European Youth Guarantee: A Preliminary Assessment and Broader Conceptual Implications*, (IZA Policy Paper, no. 128), Bonn: Institute of Labor Economics.
- Escudero, V. and Mourelo, E.L. (2017) 'The European Youth Guarantee: a systematic review of its implementation across countries', (Working Paper, 21), International Labour Organization: Research Department, Geneva.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (1990) *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Esping-Andersen, G. (2002) 'Towards the good society, once again?', in G. Esping-Andersen (ed) *Why We Need a New Welfare State*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp 1–25.
- Ewald, F. (2020) *The Birth of Solidarity: The History of the French Welfare State*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Fenn, R. (1995) *The Persistence of Purgatory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fisher, M. (2009) *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Alresford: Zer0 Books.
- Fletcher, D.R. (2011) 'Welfare reform, Jobcentre Plus and the street-level bureaucracy: towards inconsistent and discriminatory welfare for severely disadvantaged groups?', *Social Policy and Society*, 10(4): 445–58.
- Fletcher, D.R. (2015) 'Workfare – a blast from the past? Contemporary work conditionality for the unemployed in historical perspective', *Social Policy and Society*, 14(3): 329–39.
- Fletcher, D.R. and Flint, J. (2018) 'Welfare conditionality and social marginality: the folly of the tutelary state?', *Critical Social Policy*, 38(4): 771–91.
- Fletcher, D.R. and Wright, S. (2018) 'A hand up or a slap down? Criminalising benefit claimants in Britain via strategies of surveillance, sanctions and deterrence', *Critical Social Policy*, 38(2): 323–44.
- Folkers, A. (2016) 'Daring the truth: Foucault, parrhesia and the Genealogy of Critique', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 33(1): 3–28.
- Foucault, M. (1966) *Les mots et les choses*, Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M. (1972) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1976) *The History of Sexuality* (Vol. I), London: Random House LLC.
- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York: Random House LLC.
- Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, New York: Vintage.

- Foucault, M. (1981) 'Omnes et singulatim: towards a criticism of 'Political Reason'', in S.M. McMurrin (ed) *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, pp 223–54.
- Foucault, M. (1984) 'The subject and power', *Critical Inquiry*, 8(4): 777–95.
- Foucault, M. (1988) *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.
- Foucault, M. (1993) 'About the beginning of the hermeneutics of the self: two lectures at Dartmouth', *Political Theory*, 21(2): 198–227.
- Foucault, M. (1997) 'What is critique?' in S. Lotringer and L. Hochroth (eds) *The Politics of Truth*, New York: Semiotext(e).
- Foucault, M. (2000) 'Lives of infamous men', in: *Power, Truth, Strategy*. McArthur Press, pp 76–92.
- Foucault, M. (2003) *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976* (Vol. 1), London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2005) *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1981–1982*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2006) *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973–1974*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2007) *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, New York: Picador.
- Foucault, M. (2008) *The Birth of Bio-Politics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2011) *The Courage of Truth: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2014a) *The Government of the Living: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1979–1980*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2014b) *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avowal in Justice*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frankl, V. (2006) *Man's Search for Meaning*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Fraser, D. (1992) *The Evolution of the British Welfare State: A History of Social Policy since the Industrial Revolution*, London: Macmillan International Higher Education.
- Fraser, N. and Gordon, L. (1994) 'A genealogy of dependency: tracing a keyword of the US welfare state', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, 19(2): 309–36.
- Frayne, D. (2019) *The Work Cure: Critical Essays on Work and Wellness*, London: PCCS Books.
- Friedli, L. and Stearn, R. (2015) 'Positive affect as coercive strategy: conditionality, activation and the role of psychology in UK government workfare programmes', *Medical Humanities*, 41: 40–7.

- Friedman, S. and Laurison, D. (2019) *The Class Ceiling: Why It Pays to Be Privileged*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Frisby, D. (2013) *Fragments of Modernity: Theories of Modernity in the Work of Simmel, Kracauer and Benjamin*, London: Routledge.
- Fuentes, A. (2007) *Improving Employment Prospects in the Slovak Republic*, Paris: OECD.
- Fukuyama, F. (1989) 'The end of history?', *The National Interest*, 16: 3–18.
- Furlong, A. and Cartmel, F. (2007) *Young People and Social Change: New Perspectives* (2nd edn), Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press.
- Gaffney, S. and Millar, M. (2019) 'Rational skivers or desperate strivers? The problematisation of fraud in the Irish social protection system', *Critical Social Policy*, 40(1): 69–88.
- Gallie, D. and Paugam, S. (eds) (2000) *Welfare Regimes and the Experience of Unemployment in Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gershon, I. (2017) *Down and Out in the New Economy*, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.
- Gershon, I. (2019) 'Hailing the US job-seeker: origins and neoliberal uses of job applications', *Culture, Theory and Critique*, 60(1): 84–97.
- Giddens, A. (2013) *The Third Way and Its Critics*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Gide, C. [1889] cited in Donzelot, J. (1993) 'The promotion of the social' in Gane, M. and Johnson, T. (eds) *Foucault's New Domains*, London: Routledge, pp 106–38.
- Gillies, V. (2016) *Pushed to the Edge: Inclusion and Behaviour Support in Schools*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Girard, R. (1977) *Violence and the Sacred*, Baltimore/London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Girard, R. (1987) *Job, the Victim of his People*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Goffman, E. (1990) *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*, London: Penguin.
- Graeber, D. (2011) *Debt: The First 5000 Years*, New York: Melville House.
- Graeber, D. (2018) *Bullshit Jobs*, London: Verso.
- Gragnotati, M. (2005) *Experiencing the Afterlife: Soul and Body in Dante and Medieval Culture*, Boston: University of Notre Dame Press.
- Great Britain, Cabinet Office, Social Exclusion Unit (1999) *Bridging the Gap: New Opportunities for 16–18 Year Olds Not in Education, Employment or Training*, London: Stationery Office.
- Greenwood, W. (1933) *Love on the Dole*, London: Cape.

- Greer, I. (2016) 'Welfare reform, precarity and the re-commodification of labour', *Work, Employment and Society*, 30(1): 162–73.
- Greer, I., Schulte, L. and Symon, G. (2018) 'Creaming and parking in marketized employment services: an Anglo-German comparison', *Human Relations*, 71(11): 1427–53.
- Grey, C. (1997) 'Career as a project of the self and labour process discipline', *Sociology*, 28(2): 479–97.
- Grover, C. (2012) "'Personalised conditionality": observations on active proletarianisation in late modern Britain', *Capital & Class*, 36(2): 283–301.
- Grover, C. (2019) 'Violent proletarianisation: social murder, the reserve army of labour and social security "austerity" in Britain', *Critical Social Policy*, 39(3): 335–55.
- Habermas, J. (2008) *Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays*, Oxford: Polity Press.
- Hadot, P. (1953) 'Epistrophè et metanoia dans l'histoire de la philosophie', in *Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of Philosophy* (Vol. 12), Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, pp 31–6.
- Hakim, C. (1994) *We Are All Self-Employed: The New Social Contract for Working in a Changed World*, San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Hall, S. (1988) *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcher and the Crisis of the Left*, London: Verso.
- Handley, K. (2018) 'Anticipatory socialization and the construction of the employable graduate: a critical analysis of employers' graduate careers websites', *Work, Employment and Society*, 32(2): 239–56.
- Hansen, K. and Hansen, R. (1990) *Dynamic Cover Letters*, Berkeley: Ten Speed Press.
- Hansen, M.P. (2016) 'Non-normative critique: Foucault and pragmatic sociology as tactical re-politicization', *European Journal of Social Theory*, 19(1): 127–45.
- Hansen, M. (2019) *The Moral Economy of Activation: Ideas, Politics and Policies*, Bristol, Policy Press.
- Harvey, D. (2010) *The Enigma of Capital*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hayek, F. (2001) *The Road to Serfdom*, London: Penguin.
- Heidenreich, M. and Rice, D. (2016) *Integrating Social and Employment Policies in Europe: Active Inclusion and Challenges for Local Welfare Governance*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Heron, N. (2018) *Liturgical Power: Between Economic and Political Theology*, New York: Fordham University Press.
- Hick, R. (2017) 'Enter the Troika: the politics of social security during Ireland's bailout', *Journal of Social Policy*, 47(1): 1–20.

- Hien, J. (2019) 'The religious foundations of the European crisis', *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 57: 185–204.
- Hochschild, A. (2003) *The Managed Heart*, London: University of California Press.
- Holland, T. (2019) *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind*, London: Hachette UK.
- Horvath, A. (2013) *Modernism and Charisma*, Oxford: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Horvath, A. and Szokolczai, A. (2019) *Walking into the Void: A Historic Sociological and Political Anthropology of Walking*, London: Routledge.
- Humpage, L.V. (2015) *Policy Change, Public Attitudes and Social Citizenship: Does Neoliberalism Matter?*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Humpage, L. (2019) 'Innovation and improved social outcomes? "Payment for outcomes" in social services in New Zealand', *New Zealand Sociology*, 34(2): 149–74.
- Ingham, C. (1994) *Life Without Work: A Time for Change, Growth and Personal Transformation*, London: Thorsons.
- Ingold, T. (2011) *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, London: Taylor & Francis.
- Istance, D., Rees, G. and Williamson, H. (1994) *Young People Not in Education, Training or Employment in South Glamorgan*, Cardiff: South Glamorgan Training and Enterprise Council.
- Jahoda, M. (1982) *Employment and Unemployment: A Social–Psychological Analysis* (Vol. 1), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jahoda, M. and Zeisel, H. (2002) *Marienthal: The Sociography of an Unemployed Community*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.
- Janoski, T. (1990) *The Political Economy of Unemployment: Active Labor Market Policy in West Germany and the United States*, Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Jensen, T. and Tyler, I. (2015) "'Benefits broods": the cultural and political crafting of anti-welfare commonsense', *Critical Social Policy*, 35(4): 470–91.
- Jessop, B. (2019) 'Ordoliberalism and neoliberalization: governing through order or disorder', *Critical Sociology*, 45(7–8): 967–81.
- Jobcentre Plus (2010) *Find Your Way Back to Work: JobKit, Practical Advice and Help When Applying for Jobs*, London: Department of Work and Pensions.
- Johnson, J. (1993) *The Job Application Handbook*, Oxford: How To Books.
- Jones, O. (2012) *Chavs: The Demonization of the Working Class*, London: Verso.
- Jordan, J.D. (2018) 'Welfare grunTERS and workfare monsters? An empirical review of the operation of two UK "Work Programme" centres', *Journal of Social Policy*, 47(3): 583–601.

- Jung, C.G. [1952] (2010) *Answer to Job*, reprint, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Juncker, J.C. (2016) *State of the Union Address 2016: Towards a Better Europe – A Europe that Protects, Empowers and Defends*, Strasborg.
- Kagge, E. (2019) *Walking: One Step at a Time*, New York: Knopf/Doubleday.
- Kahl, S. (2005) ‘The religious roots of modern poverty policy: Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed Protestant traditions compared’, *European Journal of Sociology*, 46: 91–126.
- Keohane, K. and Kuhling, C. (2015) *The Domestic, Moral and Political Economies of Post-Celtic Tiger Ireland: What Rough Beast?*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Koch, M. and Bucha, M. (2017) *Postgrowth and Wellbeing: Challenges to Sustainable Welfare*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Koopman, C. (2013) *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity*, Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Koopman, C. (2019) *How We Became Our Data: A Genealogy of the Informational Person*, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Kotsko, A. (2018) *Neoliberalism’s Demons: On the Political Theology of Late Capital*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Laanani, M., Ghosn, W., Jouglu, E. and Rey, G. (2015) ‘Impact of unemployment variations on suicide mortality in Western European countries (2000–2010)’, *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 69(2): 103–9.
- Lane, C. (2012) *A Company of One: Insecurity, Independence, and the New World of White-Collar Unemployment*, Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- Lane, C. and Kwon, J. (2016) *The Anthropology of Unemployment: New Perspectives on Work and Its Absence*, Cornell: Cornell University Press.
- Larsen, F. and Mailand, M. (2007) ‘Danish activation policy: the role of the normative foundation, the institutional set-up and other drivers’, *Reshaping Welfare States and Activation Regimes in Europe*, 54: 99–127.
- Lassalle, F. (1862) ‘On the essence of constitutions’, speech delivered in Berlin, 25–31.
- Latour, B. (1990) ‘Technology is society made durable’, *The Sociological Review*, 1: 103–31.
- Latour, B. (1993) *We Have Never Been Modern*, London: Harvester.
- Latour, B. (2009) *Reassembling the Social*, London: Polity Press.
- Latour, B. and Woolgar, S. (1986) *Laboratory Life: The Construction of Scientific Facts*, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Le Goff, J. (1984) *The Invention of Purgatory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Le Goff, J. (2009) *The Birth of Europe*, Oxford: Wiley.

- Leschke, J., Russell, H., Smith, M. and Villa, P. (2019) 'Stressed economies, distressed policies, and distraught young people: European policies and outcomes from a youth perspective', in J. O'Reilly, J. Leschke, R. Ortlieb, M. Seeleib-Kaiser and P. Villa (eds) *Youth Labor in Transition: Inequalities, Mobility, and Policies in Europe*, New York: Oxford University Press, pp 104–31.
- Leshem, D. (2016) *The Origins of Neoliberalism: Modeling the Economy from Jesus to Foucault*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Levitas, R. (2005) *The Inclusive Society? Social Exclusion and New Labour*, New York: Springer.
- Lind, J. and Møller, I.H. (2006) 'Activation for what purpose? Lessons from Denmark', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 26(1–2): 5–19.
- Linebaugh, P. and Rediker, M. (2000) *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*, London: Verso.
- Lødemel, I. and Trickey, H. (2001) *An Offer You Can't Refuse – Workfare in International Perspective*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Loewenberg, F.M. (1994) 'On the development of philanthropic institutions in ancient Judaism: provisions for poor travelers', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 23(3): 193–207.
- Loewenberg, F.M. (1995) 'Financing philanthropic institutions in biblical and Talmudic times', *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 24(4): 307–20.
- Lynch, M. (2000) 'Against reflexivity as an academic virtue and source of privileged knowledge', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 17(3): 26–54.
- Macdonald, R., Shildrick, T. and Furlong, A. (2014) 'In search of "intergenerational cultures of worklessness": hunting the Yeti and shooting zombies', *Critical Social Policy*, 34(2): 199–220.
- Macfarlane, A. (1988) *The Origins of English Individualism*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Marquis, N. (2016) 'Performance et authenticité, changement individuel et changement collectif: une perspective sociologique sur quelques paradoxes apparents du développement personnel', *Communication Management*, 13(1): 47–62.
- Maslow, A. (1998) *Maslow on Management*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Maslow, A. (2000) *The Maslow Business Reader*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mauss, M. (2000) *The Gift*, with an introduction by Mary Douglas, London: Routledge.
- Mauss, M. (2003) *On Prayer: Text and Commentary*, Oxford: Berghahn Books.

- McCloskey, D. (2004) 'Avarice, prudence, and the bourgeois virtues', in C.T. Mathewes and W. Schweiker (eds) *Having: Property and Possession in Religious and Social Life*, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, pp 312–36.
- McDonald, C. and Marston, G. (2005) 'Workfare as welfare: governing unemployment in the advanced liberal state', *Critical Social Policy*, 25(3): 374–401.
- McGloin, C. and Georgeou, N. (2016) "'Looks good on your CV": the sociology of voluntourism recruitment in higher education', *Journal of Sociology*, 52(2): 403–17.
- McGuinness, S., Kelly, E. and Walsh, J.R. (2014) 'Predicting the probability of long-term unemployment in Ireland using administrative data', *Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) Research Series*, 51: 1–29, ESRI: Dublin.
- McGuinness, S., O'Connell, P.J. and Kelly, E. (2011) *Carrots Without Sticks: The Impacts of Job Search Assistance in a Regime with Minimal Monitoring and Sanctions* (ESRI Working Paper No. 409), Dublin: ESRI.
- Mead, L. (1986) *Beyond Entitlement: The Social Obligations of Citizenship*, New York: Free Press.
- Mead, L. (1993) *The New Politics of Poverty: The Non-Working Poor in America*, New York: Basic Books.
- Mead, L. (1997) *The New Paternalism: Supervisory Approaches to Poverty*, Washington, DC: Brookings Institute.
- Michielse, H. and Van Krieken, R. (1990) 'Policing the poor: J.L. Vives and the sixteenth century origins of modern social administration', *Social Service Review*, 64(1): 1–21.
- Miller, P. and Rose, N. (2013) 'Governing economic life', in M. Gane, and T. Johnson (eds) *Foucault's New Domains*, London: Routledge.
- Minas, R., Wright, S. and Van Berkel, R. (2012) 'Decentralization and centralization governing the activation of social assistance recipients in Europe', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, 32(5–6): 286–98.
- Mollat, M. (1986) *The Poor in the Middle Ages: An Essay in Social History*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Moran, R. (2016) *The Thing About Work: Showing Up and Other Important Matters*, London: Routledge.
- Murphy, M.P. (2016) 'Low road or high road? The post-crisis trajectory of Irish activation', *Critical Social Policy*, 36(3): 432–52.
- Murray, C. (2006) *In Our Hands: A Plan to Replace the Welfare State*, Washington, DC: AEI Press.
- Negri, A. (2009) *The Labor of Job: The Biblical Text as a Parable of Human Labor*, Durham: Duke University Press.

- Nietzsche, F. [1887] (1998) *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*, Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nietzsche, F. [1882] (2001) *The Gay Science*, reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nozick, R. (1974) *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, New York: Basic Books.
- O’Neill, M. and Roberts, J. (2019) *Walking Methods: Research on the Move*, London: Routledge.
- O’Callaghan, C. (2009) *Surviving the Axe: The Irish Guide to Handling Redundancy and Finding a New Job*, Dublin: Liberty.
- O’Carroll, J.P. (1987) ‘Strokes, cute hoors and sneaking regarders: the influence of local culture on Irish political style’, *Irish Political Studies*, 2(1): 77–92.
- O’Connell, P. J., McGuinness, S., Kelly, E. and Walsh, J.R. (2009) *National Profiling of the Unemployed in Ireland*, Dublin: ESRI.
- OECD (2019) *The Future of Work: OECD Employment Outlook 2019*, Paris: OECD.
- Offe, C. (1984) *Contradictions of the Welfare State*, Massachusetts: Cambridge MIT.
- Orwell, G. [1937] (2001) *The Road to Wigan Pier*, reprint, London: Penguin.
- Papacharissi, Z. (2009) ‘The virtual geographies of social networks: a comparative analysis of Facebook, LinkedIn and ASmallWorld’, *New Media & Society*, 11(1–2): 199–220.
- Pecchenino, R. (2011) ‘Preferences, choice, goal attainment, satisfaction: that’s life?’, *Journal of Socio-Economics*, 40(3): 237–41.
- Pecchenino, R. (2015) ‘Have we cause for despair?’, *Journal of Behavioural and Experimental Economics*, 58(3): 56–62.
- Peck, J. and Theodore, N. (2016) *Fast Policy: Experimental Statecraft at the Thresholds of Neo-liberalism*, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Peck, J. (1996) *Workplace: The Social Regulation of Labour Markets*, New York: Guilford Press.
- Petersen, A. (2011) ‘Authentic self-realization and depression’, *International Sociology*, 26(1): 5–24.
- Piketty, T. (2020) *Capital and Ideology*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Pleasants, N. (2019) ‘Free will, determinism and the “problem” of structure and agency in the social sciences’, *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 49(1): 3–30.
- Polanyi, K. (2001) *The Great Transformation*, London: Beacon Press.
- Popken, R. (1999) ‘The pedagogical dissemination of a genre: the resume in American business discourse textbooks, 1914–1939’, *Journal of Composition Theory*, 19(1): 91–116.

- Purser, G. and Hennigan, P. (2018) 'Disciples and dreamers: job readiness and the making of the US working class', *Dialect Anthropology*, 42: 149–61.
- Quinon, M. (1996) 'Welfare', *World Wide Words* [online], available from: <http://www.worldwidewords.org/topicalwords/tw-wel1.htm>, accessed: 23 May 2020.
- Rifkin, J. (1985) *The End of Work*, New York: Putnam.
- Roberts, K. (2004) 'School-to-work transitions: why the United Kingdom's educational ladders always fail to connect', *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 14(3): 203–16.
- Roberts, S. (2018) *Young Working-Class Men in Transition*, London: Routledge.
- Robinson, J. (1964) *Economic Philosophy*, reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Rogers, R. (2004) 'Ethical techniques of the self and the "good jobseeker"', in H. Dean (ed) *The Ethics of Welfare: Human Rights, Dependency and Responsibility*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp 155–72.
- Rosa, H. (2019) *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World*, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.
- Rose, N. (1989) 'The enterprising self', in P. Heelas and P. Morris (eds) *The Values of the Enterprise Culture: The Moral Debate*, London: Routledge, pp 141–63.
- Rose, N. (1996) *Inventing Our Selves*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Sahlins, M. (1972) *Stone Age Economics*, Chicago: Aldine-Atherton.
- Scarpetta, S., Sonnet, A. and Manfredi, T. (2010) 'Rising youth unemployment during the crisis: how to prevent negative long-term consequences on a generation?', *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Papers*, 106: Paris: Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development; Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs.
- Schwarzkopf, S. (2011) 'The political theology of consumer sovereignty: towards an ontology of consumer society', *Theory, Culture & Society*, 28(3): 106–29.
- Schwarzkopf, S. (2012) 'The market order as metaphysical loot: theology and the contested legitimacy of consumer capitalism', *Organization*, 19(3): 281–97.
- Schwarzkopf, S. (ed) (2020) *The Routledge Handbook of Economic Theology*, London: Routledge.
- Scott, J. (2017) *Against the Grain: A Deep History of the Earliest States*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Serrano Pascual, A. and Magnusson, L. (eds) (2007) *Reshaping Welfare States and Activation Regimes in Europe*, Brussels: Peter Lang.
- Sewell, W.H. (1992) 'A theory of structure: duality, agency and transformation', *American Journal of Sociology*, 98(1): 1–29.
- Sewell, W.H. (1996) 'Historical events as transformations of structures: inventing revolution at the Bastille', *Theory and Society*, 25(6): 841–81.
- Sharone, O. (2013) *Flawed System/Flawed Self: Job Searching and Unemployment Experiences*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Sharone, O. (2017) 'LinkedIn or LinkedOut? How social networking sites are reshaping the labor market', in S.P. Vallas (ed) *Emerging Conceptions of Work, Management and the Labor Market* (Research in the Sociology of Work, Vol. 30), Bingley: Emerald Publishing Limited, pp 1–31.
- Shildrick, T. and MacDonald, R. (2012) *Poverty and Insecurity: Life in Low-Pay, No-Pay Britain*, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Shildrick, T. and MacDonald, R. (2013) 'Poverty talk: how people experiencing poverty deny their poverty and why they blame "the poor"', *The Sociological Review*, 61(2): 285–303.
- Simmons, R., Thompson, R., Tabrizi, G. and Nartey, A. (2014) *Engaging Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training: The Case for a Youth Resolution*, London: University and College Union.
- Singh, D. (2018) *Divine Currency: The Theological Power of Money in the West*, Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Skeggs, B. (2004) *Class, Self, Culture*, London: Sage.
- Slok, C. (2020) 'Guilt' in S. Schwarzkopf (ed) *The Routledge Handbook of Economic Theology*, London: Routledge, pp 72–80.
- Smith, A. (2003) *The Wealth of Nations*, London: Penguin.
- Sørensen, B.M., Spoelstra, S., Höpfl, H. and Critchley, S. (2012) 'Theology and organization', *Organization*, 19(3): 267–79.
- Spivack, B. (1958) *Shakespeare and the Allegory of Evil: The History of a Metaphor in Relation to His Major Villains*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Springer, S. (2016) *The Discourse of Neo-liberalism: An Anatomy of a Powerful Idea*, Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Standing, G. (2011) *Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Standing, G. (2015) *Basic Income, and How We Can Make It Happen*, London: Pelican.
- Stark, R. (2006) *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism, and Western Success*, London: Random House Incorporated.
- Steinbeck, J. (1975) *The Grapes of Wrath*, London: Pan Books.

- Stimilli, E. (2017) *The Debt of the Living: Ascesis and Capitalism*, New York: SUNY Press.
- Stimilli, E. (2019) 'Debt economy and faith: philosophy in the Age of Terror', *Diacritics*, 47(2): 4–21.
- Szokolczai, A. (2013) *Comedy and the Public Sphere: The Re-birth of Theatre as Comedy and the Genealogy of the Modern Public Arena*, London: Routledge.
- Szokolczai, A. (2018) 'Neoclassical economics as a logic of subversion', in C.F. Roman, A. Horváth and G.G. Germain (eds) *Divinization and Technology*, London: Routledge, pp 165–86.
- Szokolczai, A. and Thomassen, B. (2019) *From Anthropology to Social Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Taylor, F.W. (1919) *Principles of Scientific Management*, London: Harper & Brothers.
- Taylor, C. (1989) *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Taylor, M.C. (2008) *Confidence Games: Money and Markets in a World without Redemption*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Thomassen, B. (2013) *Liminality and the Modern*, London: Ashgate.
- Thompson, E.P. (1967) 'Time-work discipline and Industrial Capitalism', *Past and Present*, 38: 56–97.
- Throness, L. (2008) *A Protestant Purgatory: Theological Origins of the Penitentiary Act, 1779*, Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Tilley, L. (2012) "'The bioarchaeology of care": The Archaeological Record (Special Issue)', *New Directions in Bioarchaeology*, 12(3): 39–41.
- Titmuss, R. (1970) *The Gift Relationship: From Human Blood to Social Policy*, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Turner, E. and Turner, V. (2011) *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Turner, V. (1969) *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure*, London: Routledge.
- Tyler, I. (2015) 'Classificatory struggles: class, culture and inequality in neoliberal times', *The Sociological Review*, 63(2): 493–511.
- Tyler, I. (2020) *Stigma: The Machinery of Inequality*, London: Zed Books.
- Tyler, I. and Slater, T. (2018) 'Rethinking the sociology of stigma', *The Sociological Review*, 66(4): 721–43.
- Underberg, N.M. and Zorn, E. (2013) *Digital Ethnography: Anthropology, Narrative, and New Media*, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Urciuoli, B. (2008) 'Skills and selves in the new workplace', *American Ethnologist*, 35: 211–28.

- Vallas, S. and Cummins, E. (2015) 'Personal branding and identity norms in the popular business press: enterprise culture in an age of precarity', *Organization Studies*, 36(3): 293–319.
- Vallas, S. and Christin, A. (2018) 'Work and identity in an era of precarious employment: how workers respond to "personal branding" discourse', *Work and Occupations*, 45(1): 3–37.
- van Berkel, R. and Møller, I.H. (eds) (2002) 'The concept of activation', in R. Van Berkel and I.H. Møller (eds) *Active Social Policies in the EU: Inclusion Through Participation?*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp 45–71.
- van Berkel, R., de Graaf, W. and Sirovátka, T. (2011) *The Governance of Active Welfare States*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Dijck, J. (2013) "'You have one identity": performing the self on Facebook and LinkedIn', *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(2): 199–215.
- Van Maanen, J. (2006) 'Ethnography then and now', *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 1(1): 13–21.
- Van Oort, M. (2015) 'Making the neoliberal precariat: two faces of job-searching in Minneapolis', *Ethnography*, 16(1): 74–94.
- Varoufakis, Y. (2016) *And the Weak Suffer What They Must?: Europe, Austerity and the Threat to Global Stability*, New York: Random House.
- Voegelin, E. (1969) *The New Science of Politics: An Introduction*, London: Aldwyn Press Ltd.
- Voegelin, E. (1997) *Science, Politics and Gnosticism: Two Essays*, Washington, DC: Regnery Publishing.
- Wacquant, L. (2009) *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Walls, J. (2002) *Purgatory: The Logic of Total Transformation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Walters, W. (2000) *Unemployment and Government: Genealogies of the Social*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Warr, P. (1987) *Work, Unemployment and Mental Health*, London: Clarendon Press.
- Watts, B. and Fitzpatrick, S. (2018) *Welfare Conditionality*, London: Routledge.
- Webb, D. (2007) *Pilgrimage in Medieval England*, New York: Hambledon Continuum.
- Weber, M. (1991) *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, London: Routledge.
- Weber, M. (1930) *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, reprint, London: Routledge, 1992.
- Wee, L. and Brooks, M. (2010) 'Personal branding and the commodification of reflexivity', *Cultural Sociology*, 4(1): 45–62.

- Weeks, K. (2011) *The Problem with Work: Feminism, Marxism, Anti-Work Politics and Post-Work Imaginaries*, Durham: Duke University Press.
- Weil, S. [1952] (2003) *The Need for Roots: Prelude to a Declaration of Duties Towards Mankind*, reprint, London: Routledge.
- Weinrich, H. (2008) *On Borrowed Time: The Art and Economy of Living with Deadlines*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Weishaupt, T. (2010) 'A silent revolution? New management ideas and the reinvention of European public employment services', *Socio-Economic Review*, 8(3): 461–86.
- Whelan, J. (2020) 'We have our dignity, yeah? Scrutiny under suspicion: experiences of welfare conditionality in the Irish social protection system', *Social Policy & Administration*, 55(1): 34–50.
- Wilkinson, R.G. and Pickett, K.E. (2009) 'Income inequality and social dysfunction', *Annual Review of Sociology*, 35: 493–511.
- Willis, E. (2008) 'The invention of purgatory: contributions to abstract time in capitalism', *Sociology*, 44(3): 249–64.
- Willis, P. (1977) *Learning to Labor: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, New York: Columbia University Press.
- Winter, Y. (2012) 'Plebeian politics', *Political Theory*, 40 (6): 736–66.
- Wood, E.M. (1999) *The Origin of Capitalism*, New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Wright, S. (2016) 'Conceptualising the active welfare subject: welfare reform in discourse, policy and lived experience', *Policy & Politics*, 44(2): 235–52.
- Wrigley, L. (2017) 'From “NEET” to “unknown”': who is responsible for young people not in education, employment and training', *Youth and Policy: The Journal of Critical Analysis*, available from: <https://www.youthandpolicy.org/articles/from-neet-to-unknown/>, accessed: 13 January 2021
- Wrong, D.H. (1961) 'The oversocialized conception of man in modern sociology', *American Sociological Review*, 26(2): 183–93.
- Yate, M. (2015) *Ultimate CV: Over 100 Winning CVs to Help You Get the Interview and the Job*, London: Kogan Page.
- Zuboff, S. (2019) *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism*, New York: Public Affairs.

“This immensely creative book provokes insights on the salvation rituals of jobseeking on nearly every page. It stands as an outstanding contribution to the theological genealogy of government and economy.”

Mitchell Dean, Copenhagen Business School

“Is work the path to salvation? One might imagine so given workfare’s sustained political appeal despite its modest, even negative, effects. This original book takes a long view of religious history to bring provocative new insights to old policy debates.”

Evelyn Brodtkin, University of Chicago

Tom Boland is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at University College Cork.

Ray Griffin is Lecturer in Strategic Management at Waterford Institute of Technology.

Western culture has ‘faith’ in the labour market as a test of the worth of each individual. For those who are out of work, welfare is now less of a support than a means of purification and redemption. Continuously reformed by the left and right in politics, the contemporary welfare state attempts to transform the unemployed into active jobseekers, punishing non-compliance.

Drawing on ideas from economic theology, this provocative book uncovers deep-rooted religious concepts and shows how they continue to influence contemporary views of work and unemployment: Jobcentres resemble purgatory where the unemployed attempt to redeem themselves, jobseeking is a form of pilgrimage in hope of salvation, and the economy appears as providence, whereby trials and tribulations test each individual. This book will be essential reading for those interested in the sociology and anthropology of modern economic life.

Chapters 1 and 3 are available Open Access via OAPEN under CC-BY-NC-ND licence.



@BrisUniPress

BristolUniversityPress
bristoluniversitypress.co.uk

ISBN 978-1-5292-1133-7



9 781529 211337